

The Geopolitics of Energy & Terrorism

Part 1

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Introduction

The following chapters are independent essays that were written between July 2015 and February 2016. They appear in random order, and therefore they do not have to be read in the order they appear.

The issue in all the essays is the connection between the energy policies of various countries, their foreign policies, and the wars that brake out at various parts of the globe, since all three are closely related. I describe many economic interests and many alliances in my essays. But alliances change and so do economic interest. Therefore what is more important for the reader is to have an idea of the global resources i.e. oil and natural gas in my essays, because global resources change at a much lower pace than economic interests and economic alliances.

The alliances and conflicts I describe in my essays might not exist in the near future, but if you have an idea of the global resources you will be able to see the alliances and the economic interests that will exist in the future.

I.A.

18.2.2016

Gazprom VS NATO : The War for Europe

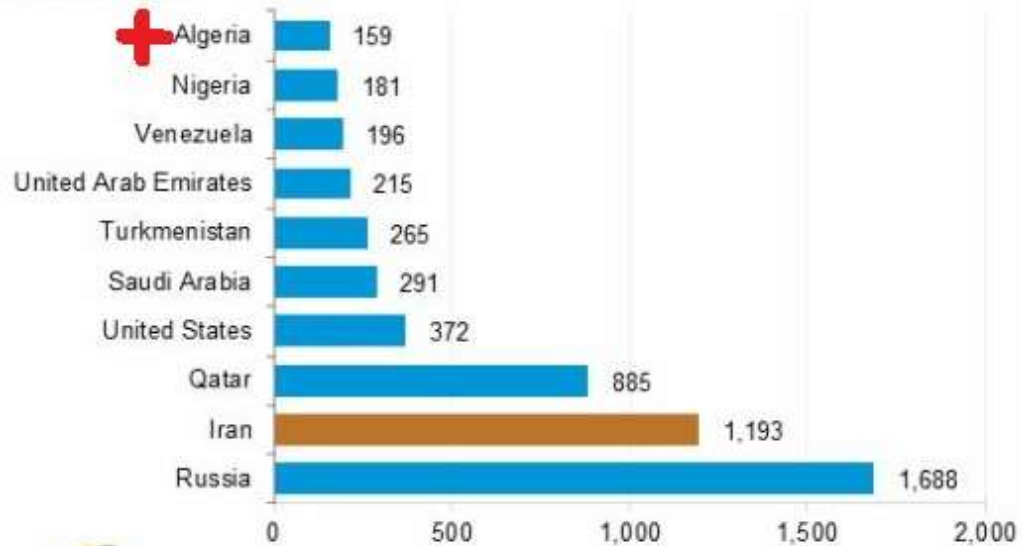
Most of the revenues of the Russian government come from oil exports. However it is natural gas exports that Putin has used as the main weapon of his foreign policy. Natural gas is a lot more potent from a geopolitical point of view, because it involves expensive pipeline networks which create geopolitical addictions and long term partnerships, which cannot be easily broken. Moreover the price of natural gas is not determined internationally, as it is the case with oil. The price of natural gas is negotiated between the buyer and the seller, and the seller can sell at lower prices to reward a friendly government, or sell at higher prices to penalize an unfriendly government. That's exactly what Russia is doing.

Putin's plan was relatively simple. Russia is Europe's largest natural gas supplier, with Norway and Algeria being the second and third largest suppliers of Europe. Norway is one of the largest natural gas producers, but her natural gas reserves are peanuts when compared to the Russian ones, and therefore Norway cannot threaten Gazprom's future. Algeria on the other hand is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of natural gas reserves, as you can see at the following table of Energy Information Administration.

Picture 1

Largest proved reserve holders of natural gas, January 2014

trillion cubic feet



Source: Oil & Gas Journal

Iran's natural gas infrastructure

Algeria is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of shale gas too, as you can see on the next energy information administration too.

Picture 2

Table 2. Top 10 countries with technically recoverable shale oil resources

Rank	Country	Shale oil (billion barrels)	
1	Russia	75	
2	U.S. ¹	58	(48)
3	China	32	
4	Argentina	27	
5	Libya	26	
6	Australia	18	
7	Venezuela	13	
8	Mexico	13	
9	Pakistan	9	
10	Canada	9	
World Total		345	(335)

¹ EIA estimates used for ranking order. ARI estimates in parentheses.

Table 3. Top 10 countries with technically recoverable shale gas resources

Rank	Country	Shale gas (trillion cubic feet)	
1	China	1,115	
2	Argentina	802	
3	 Algeria	707	
4	U.S. ¹	665	(1,161)
5	Canada	573	
6	Mexico	545	
7	Australia	437	
8	South Africa	390	
9	Russia	285	
10	Brazil	245	
World Total		7,299	(7,795)

¹ EIA estimates used for ranking order. ARI estimates in parentheses.

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=14431>

Algeria is already connected to Europe with three pipeline networks. The first one runs through Morocco and Spain (Maghreb-Europe Pipeline), the second runs through the Mediterranean Sea and Spain (Medgaz Pipeline), and the third one runs through Tunisia and Italy (Trans-Mediterranean Pipeline). You can see these networks at the following map.

Picture 3



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a9/Algeria_pipelines_map.jpg

Moreover Algeria, Nigeria and Niger agreed on the construction of the Trans-Saharan pipeline, which will send Nigeria's natural gas to Europe through Algeria. That is if the pipeline manages to pass Boko Haram, the Islamist organization which operates in the area, and has been aligned with ISIS. It is Turkey and Qatar which have significant influence over ISIS, but

it is also in the interest of Russia, Iran and the Arabs to block Nigeria's gas before it reaches Europe.

Picture 4



In 2006 Putin did something very simple. He tried to make sure that Gazprom acquired a stake in the Algerian gas company Sonatrach. Gazprom is the only company which can export Russian natural gas, and Sonatrach, is the only company which can export Algerian natural gas. Therefore if Russia acquired a portion of Sonatrach, Russia would control the European gas supplies from the south too. Libya is rich in oil but not in natural gas.

Picture 5



Algeria is an Arab country that was under Ottoman occupation from 1516 to 1831. In 1831 France took control of Algeria, and Algeria remained a French colony till 1962, when the Algerian socialists, with the help of the Soviet Union of course, managed to beat the French and declare independence, as you can read at the following Wikipedia article, titled “Algeria–Russia relations”.

2nd Paragraph

Throughout the Algerian War of Independence, the Soviet Union had been providing military, technical and material assistance to Algeria. The USSR was the first country in the world to de facto recognize the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic in October 1960, and then de jure on March 23, 1962, by establishing diplomatic relations with this country (a few months before the official proclamation of its independence).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria%E2%80%93Russia_relations

The Algerian socialists introduced a socialist dictatorship, and nobody threatened them until the 1990s. When the Soviet Union, which was Algeria's main arms supplier, collapsed in the 90's, the Arabs of the Persian Gulf grabbed the chance to support the Algerian islamists against the Algerian socialists. A bloody civil war followed, with over 100.000 dead Algerians. However the islamists did not manage to beat the socialists. Even when the Arab Spring broke out in 2011, the Algerian socialists managed to beat the Algerian islamists, as you can read at the following Foreign Affairs magazine, titled "The Algeria Alternative", April 2015. Today, Algeria's president is the socialist Ibdelaziz Buteflika, who has been in office since 1999.

1st Paragraph

The upheavals of the Arab Spring seemed to pass one country by: Algeria. To its east, Libya collapsed into civil war, and Tunisia suffered an upsurge of terrorism that imperiled its democratic transition and economic recovery. To the south, Mali is holding together, if barely, thanks to a French-led stabilization force. But all the while, Algeria has remained a reliable bulwark—if also something of a riddle.

9th Paragraph

For one, although Algeria strongly discourages other states from using force, especially across borders, it has readily used its powerful military at home. In 2013, the Algerian army swiftly ended the terrorist standoff on the In Amenas gas facility, freeing more than 700 hostages, including more than 100 foreigners. The government also deployed ground forces to almost entirely wipe out the extremist group Jund al-Khilafa, which is allied with the Islamic State (also called ISIS). The terrorist organization announced its existence in September 2014; by December, the army had decimated it and killed its key leaders.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2015-04-15/algeria-alternative>

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relationship between Russia and Algeria was relatively simple. Russia supplied Algeria with arms. The two countries were not competitors, because Russia did not sell oil or natural gas to NATO countries. At least she was not selling much. On the contrary, Algeria could not find better clients from the European countries.

But today things are different. Russia is the largest and Algeria the third largest suppliers of natural gas to Europe. If the Trans-Saharan pipeline is constructed, things can become even worse for Russia. That's why Russia tried to buy a stake in Sonatrach in 2006. As you can read at the following Stratfor article, titled "Algeria, Russia: Europe's Natural Gas Dilemma" August 2006, in 2006 Russia wrote off a 5 billion debt from Algeria, which referred to the purchase of Russian arms, in exchange for closer cooperation in the energy sector. Gazprom and Sonatrach did indeed cooperate in the energy sector.

Stratfor mentions that the Italian Minister of Energy was very worried at the time, and that he informed the European Union that the agreement between Gazprom and Sonatrach could increase Europe's dependence on a small group of countries. According to Stratfor, if Russia and Algeria managed to seal a deal, and they managed to bring Norway on board, the European countries would have no alternative but paying higher prices for their natural gas. The article also mentions that at the time Italy was buying 69% of her gas from Gazprom and Sonatrach.

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Paragraphs

A deal between Russia's Gazprom and Algeria's Sonatrach will increase Europe's dependence on natural gas supplies from a limited number of countries, Italian Energy Minister Pier Luigi Bersani said Aug. 9. Gazprom and Sonatrach signed a memorandum of understanding Aug. 4 on closer cooperation. Out of the many possible projects Russia and Algeria could be looking at — liquefied natural gas, pipeline construction, purchasing assets in a third country or collaborating on natural gas prices — the last is the most likely, leaving much of Europe at the mercy of two of its three largest natural gas suppliers.

A deal between Russia's Gazprom and Algeria's Sonatrach will increase Europe's dependence on natural gas supplies from a limited number of countries, Italian Energy Minister Pier Luigi Bersani said in a letter to EU Energy Commissioner Andris Pieļbāgs on Aug. 9. Gazprom and Sonatrach signed a memorandum of understanding Aug. 4 on closer cooperation.

Out of the many possible projects Russia and Algeria could be considering — liquefied natural gas (LNG), pipeline construction, purchasing assets in a third country or collaborating on natural gas prices — the last option is the most likely. This course would leave much of Europe at the mercy of two of its three largest natural gas suppliers. A relationship between Gazprom and Sonatrach has been in the works since Russian President Vladimir Putin made his first official state visit to Algeria in March, accompanied by a large delegation of defense and energy representatives. During that meeting, Putin wrote off nearly \$5 billion of Algerian debt to Russia, saying trade with Algeria is more beneficial to Russia than debt repayment. At that time, the energy talks between Gazprom and Sonatrach were overshadowed by a \$7.5 billion defense deal between the two countries.

11th Paragraph

If Gazprom and Sonatrach decide to raise natural gas prices jointly, most of Europe will have to live with it — even more so if the two companies can also get Norway in on the move. Jointly raising natural gas prices is much easier than any other collaboration between Gazprom and Sonatrach, since it does not involve sharing technology or building new infrastructure.

12th Paragraph

The Italian energy minister's concerns about the potential for this development derive from the fact that Italy relies for 69 percent of its natural gas on just two companies: Sonatrach (37 percent) and Gazprom (32 percent). Bersani thus said Gazprom-Sonatrach cooperation "confirms the concern already expressed about the effects on (natural) gas supplies to the European system, and on Italy in particular, derived from the dependence on imports from a limited number of supplying countries, which is expected to worsen in the coming years." A collaborative price increase would also hit at the worst time — the onset of winter.

<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/algeria-russia-europes-natural-gas-dilemma>

As you can read at the following article of New Europe, titled “EU to Monitor Gazprom Sonatrach Cooperation”, January 2007, the European Commissioner on energy issues, Andris Piebalgs, said that the European Union would closely monitor Sonatrach’s cooperation with Gazprom. I guess that what his statement really meant, was that if Gazprom and Sonatrach reduced production to increase prices, the European Union would retaliate.

1st and 2nd Paragraph

European Union Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said in Davos, Switzerland, that he favours market forces of supply and demand setting the oil price. "I am happy with the oil price with the growth rates we have in the world," he said.

Piebalgs also said he will monitor closely the links between Russian gas behemoth Gazprom and Algerian energy group Sonatrach, according to news reports.

<http://www.neurope.eu/article/eu-monitor-gazprom-sonatrach-cooperation/>

In the end the Algerians did not give Gazprom a share of Sonatrach, even though the two companies have worked together. But the two countries are competitors in the energy markets, and as you can read at the following Al

Monitor article, titled “Algeria buys Russian arms but keeps Moscow at arm's length”, March 2015, Algeria keeps buying arms from Russia, but keeps Russia at a distance.

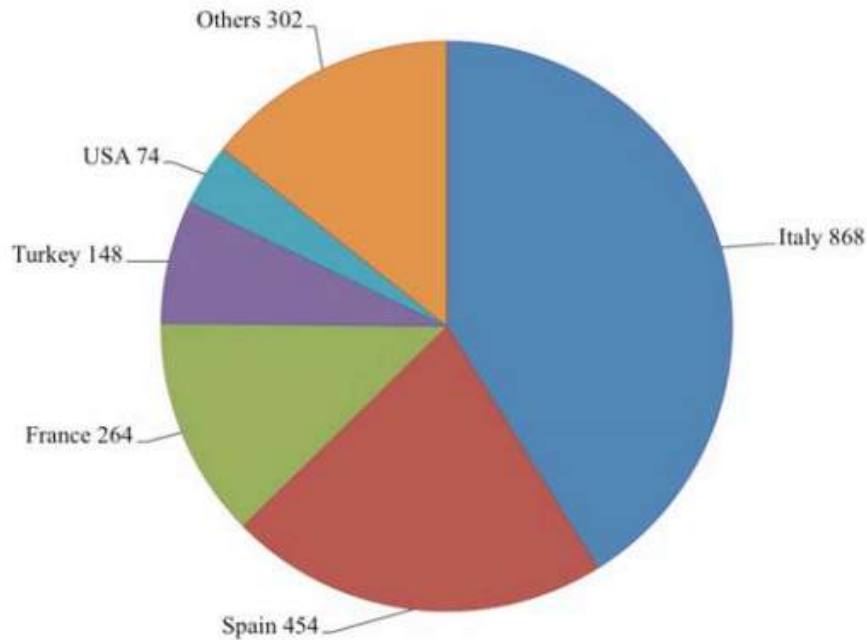
<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/russia-algeria-weapons-gas-bouteflika-putin.html>

The article mentions that the presidents of Algeria and Russia have not met many times in the last decade, and that Russia was not very happy with Algeria's somewhat neutral stance in Libya, where Russia whole heartedly supported Egypt's military operations against the islamists. I must say that the islamists in Libya are supported by Turkey, Qatar and Iran, and Turkey is one of the largest importers of Algerian gas, as you can see at following pie chart from Harvard's article, titled “The Geopolitics of Natural Gas The Changing Geopolitics of Natural Gas: The Case of Algeria”, November 2013.

Picture 6

Figure 1. Importers of Algerian Natural Gas in 2007

(Billion cubic feet)



Source: International Energy Agency

<http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/CES-pub-GeoGasAlgeria-110113.pdf>

Turkey is the 4th largest importer of Algerian gas. Moreover Italy, Spain and France are the three largest importers of Algerian natural gas, and they would not be very happy if Algeria was to follow Russia's hard energy game against the European Union and NATO. Therefore, as I already said, relations between Russia and Algeria will be harder in 21st century, at least when compared with the ones of the 20th century.

The point is that Putin's geostrategy was very simple during the first decade of the 21st century. With the North Stream (Russia-Germany) and the South

Stream (Russia-Bulgaria) pipelines, together with the Russian pipeline networks that run through Ukraine, and the Russian stake in Sonatrach, Russia would encircle Europe, and she would put a lot of pressure on the EU. By giving large stakes to the Germans (North Stream) and the Italians (South Stream and Blue Stream), and also minor stakes to the French, Putin tried to break NATO too.

The only other major danger for Russia was the Southern Energy Corridor, promoted by the EU, the US and Turkey, which is supposed to send natural gas from the Caspian Sea and the Middle East to Europe through Turkey. With the South Stream pipeline in the past, and with Turk Stream now, Putin is trying to absorb demand, in order to eliminate viability of a competing pipeline which will be supported by NATO. Putin managed to create many problems for the EU and NATO, but at a great cost for his country and his people. The war between Gazprom on one side, and NATO and the EU on the other, is not over yet.

Picture 7



Russia VS China

In World War 2 China was on the side of the allies, and Japan was on Germany's side. After the end of WW2 the communists of Mao Zedong won the national socialists of Chiang Kai-shek at the Chinese civil war, and the national socialists were left with Taiwan, in which they declared their own state. Till this day Taiwan is a separate country with very problematic relations with China. See map 1.

Picture 1



<http://www.taiwanese-secrets.com/image-files/china-taiwan-map.001.jpg>

The communists introduced a dictatorship in China, and the national socialists introduced a dictatorship in Taiwan. However in order to confront China, the national socialists had to align themselves with the West, and

gradually they were forced to democratize Taiwan. Today Taiwan is a western type democracy.

In the first years of the Second World War, the relations between China and Russia were satisfactory, but very soon many problems arose. One of the problems between Russia and China is India. India is a Russian ally but a major rival for China. Therefore China became an ally of Pakistan, which was India's other major rival. However Pakistan was an ally of the US and the Arabs of the Persian Gulf. Actually when the Russians invaded Afghanistan in 1979, in order to back the pro-Soviet communist government, China, together with the US, the Saudis and the Pakistanis, were training the Afghan Mujahideen, in order to fight the Afghan communists who were supported by the Indians and the Russians.

Actually, as you can read at the following Wikipedia link, titled "Competing Hegemonies", the Chinese were training Mujahideen even within China.

6th and 7th Paragraphs

China and Afghanistan had neutral relations with each other during the King's rule. When the pro Soviet Afghan Communists seized power in Afghanistan in 1978, relations between China and the Afghan communists quickly turned hostile. The Afghan pro Soviet communists supported China's enemies in Vietnam and blamed China for supporting Afghan anti communist militants. China responded to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan Mujahidin and ramping up their military presence near Afghanistan in Xinjiang.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split#Competing_hegemonies

However in other geographic locations the Chinese and the Soviets were cooperating, as was the case in Vietnam, where both of them were

supporting the communists of North Vietnam, and the US and their allies were supporting South Vietnam. Finally the communists won the war and they took control of the whole country in 1975. During the Korean War in the 50s, the Russian and the Chinese were both supporting the North Koreans, while the US was supporting South Korea.

Besides India, the very long borders between China and the Soviet Union were another factor of distrust between the two communist neighbors. For the Sino-Soviet borders see map 2

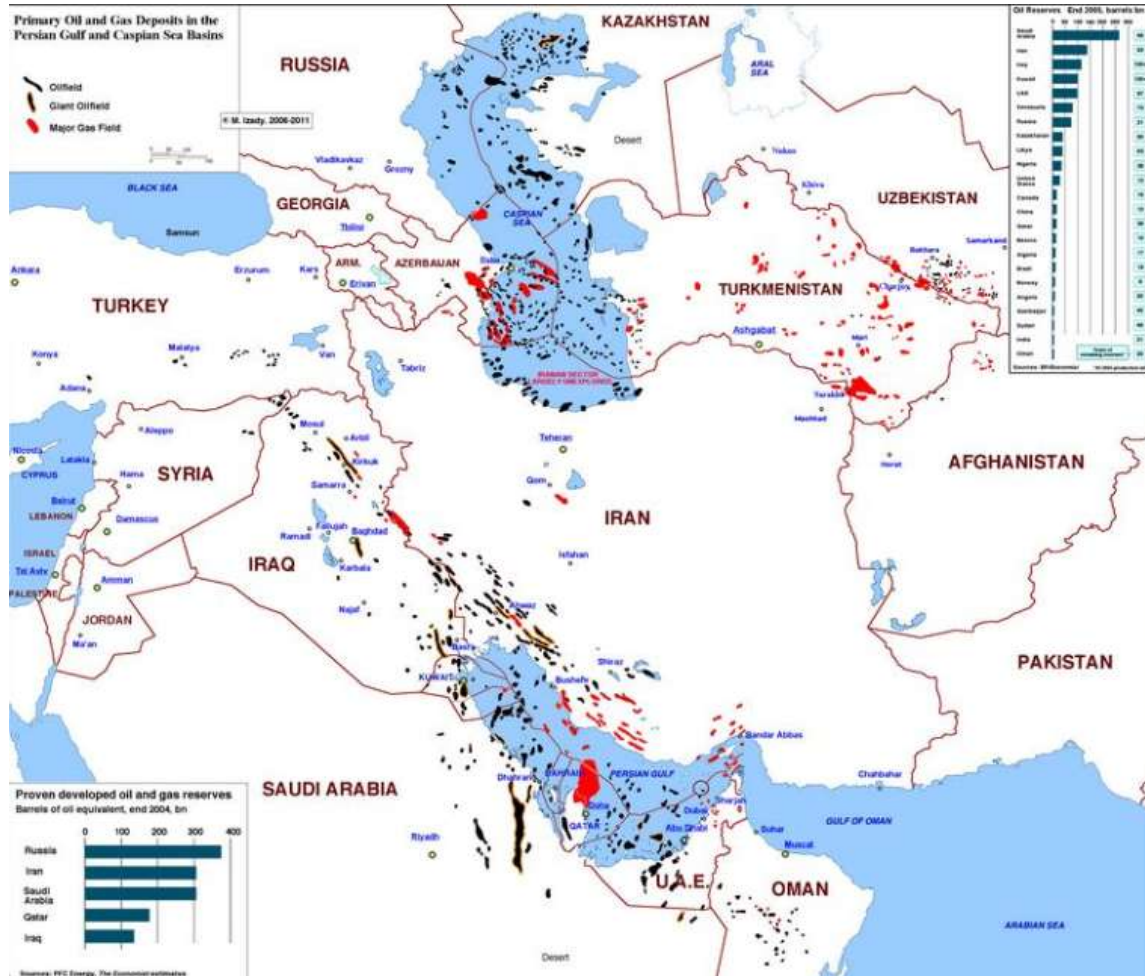
Picture 2



Until 1991 the countries of Central Asia were members of the Soviet Union, and they were controlled by Russia. Therefore the oil reserves of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and the natural gas reserves of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, were also controlled by Russia. As you can see at the following two maps, from Columbia University and the Energy Information

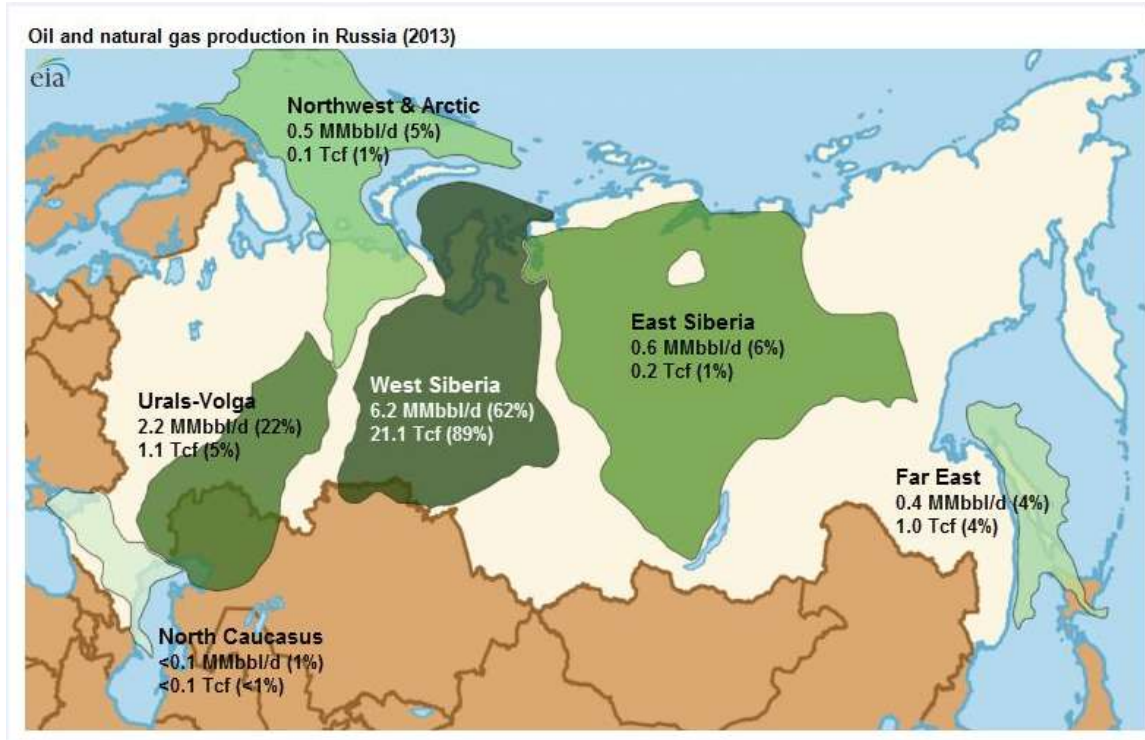
Administration, most of the oil and natural gas of the Soviet Union was located in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and West Siberia.

Picture 3



http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Oil_and_Oil_Facilities_lg.jpg

Picture 4



<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=18051>

As you can see from map 4, today 89% of the Russian natural gas, and 62% of the Russian oil, are produced in West Siberia. After 1991 the countries of Central Asia gained their independence. Note that 90% of the inhabitants of Central Asia i.e. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, are Muslims of Turkic origins, and there was no reason why the communists of the Soviet Union, and not the communists of China, should control their oil and gas. As you can read at the following Wikipedia article, titled “Competing Hegemonies”, the Soviets were moving more and more soldiers and air crafts near their borders with China i.e. at the borders with Xinjiang, which borders Central Asia. Obviously the Soviets were worried about a Chinese invasion in Central Asia. See map 5. Note that the map show some existing and some proposed pipelines which are irrelevant with what I am talking about now.

1st and 2nd Paragraphs

Meanwhile, during 1968, the Soviet Army had amassed along the 4,380 km (2,738 mi.) border with China—especially at the Xinjiang frontier, in north-west China, where the Soviets might readily induce Turkic separatists to insurrection. Militarily, in 1961, the USSR had 12 divisions and 200 aeroplanes at that border; in 1968, there were 25 divisions, 1,200 aeroplanes, and 120 medium-range missiles. Furthermore, although China had detonated its first nuclear weapon (the 596 Test), in October 1964, at Lop Nur basin, the People's Liberation Army was militarily inferior to the Red Army.[23]

*By March 1969, Sino-Russian border politics became the Sino-Soviet border conflict at the Ussuri River and on Damansky–Zhenbao Island; more small-scale warfare occurred at Tielieketi in August. In *The Coming War Between Russia and China* (1969), US journalist Harrison Salisbury reported that Soviet sources implied a possible first strike against the Lop Nur basin nuclear weapons testing site.[23]*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split#Border_war

Picture 5



China could move towards West Siberia too, because West Siberia is located after the Ural Mountains, which is Russia's shield at her eastern flank. That's why the Soviets had many military units stationed at Mongolia, which at the time was a communist country aligned with the Soviet Union. The Soviet military units at the Chinese borders were supposed to prevent the Chinese from moving towards Central Asia and West Siberia. That was something that annoyed the Chinese, as you can read at the following Wikipedia article, titled "Competing hegemonies". The Chinese wanted the Soviets to withdraw their military from Mongolia.

3rd Paragraph

In December 1979, the USSR invaded the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to sustain the Afghan Communist government. The PRC viewed the Soviet invasion as a local feint, within Russia's greater geopolitical encirclement of China. In response, the PRC entered a tri-partite alliance with the U.S. and Pakistan, to sponsor Islamist Afghan armed resistance to the Soviet Occupation (1979–89). (cf. Operation Storm-333) Meanwhile, the Sino-Soviet split became manifest when Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader of China, required the removal of "three obstacles" so that Sino-Soviet relations might improve:

- 1)The massed Soviet Army at the Sino-Soviet border, and in Mongolia.*
- 2)Soviet support of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea (Cambodia).*
- 3)The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.*

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split#Competing_hegemonies

From all the above it is obvious that Russia's interests are aligned with the ones of NATO and the EU, because no one can guarantee to the Russians that in the following decades the Chinese will not move towards West Siberia. If it wasn't for their rivalry with the US, the Chinese and the Russians would probably have very problematic relations. And that becomes

even worse if it is taken into account that the people of Siberia are talking about autonomy or even independence. Who would be a better patron than China for them in the next decades? See also “Russia vs Siberia”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/07/28/russia-vs-siberia/>

And as I said West Siberia is after the Ural Mountains, as you can see at the following map.

Picture 6



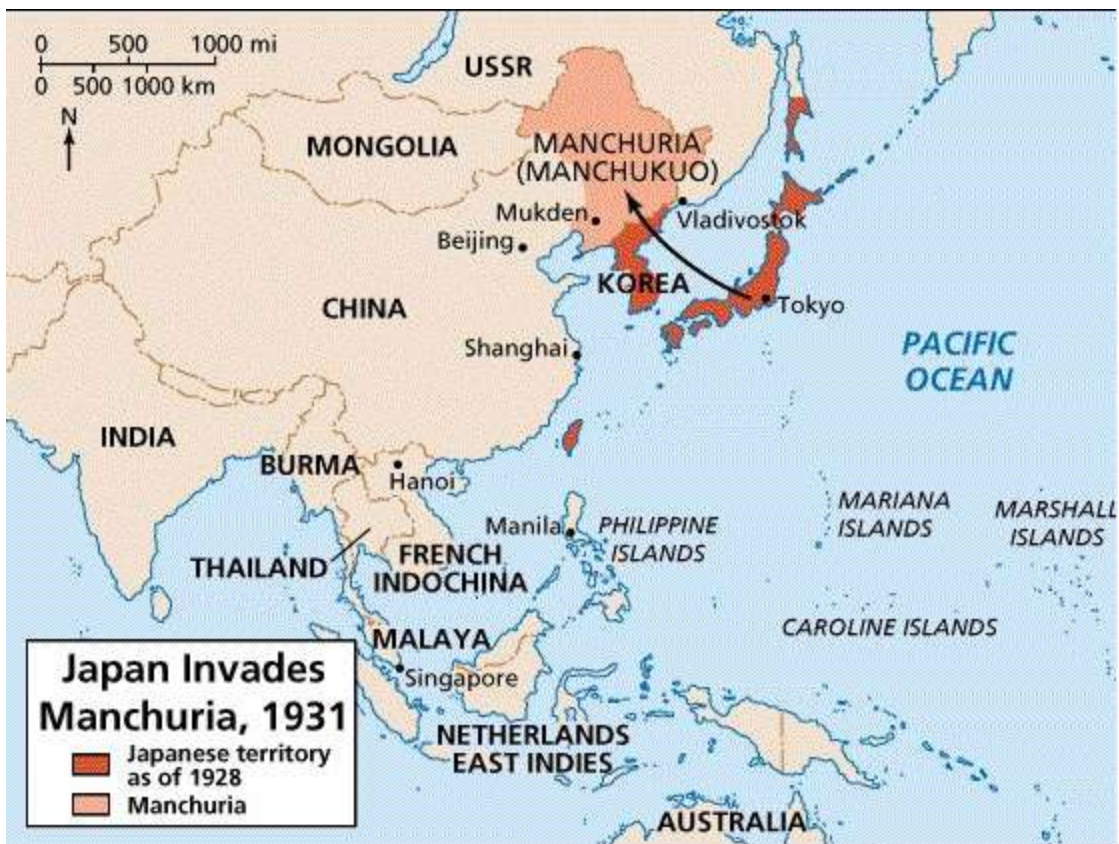
<http://media.web.britannica.com/eb-media/41/89941-050-51B0953D.gif>

Russia belongs to NATO, and her interests are totally aligned with the ones of the US and the EU. Russia must supply Europe with oil and natural gas,

and also provide Europe with military protection, so that the US can focus on China, which will be its main rival in the 21st Century. If Russia is a member of NATO she will be able to make sure that the Russian reserves in West Siberia remain under Russian control in the next decades, because with NATO's help Russia will be able to face China, even if she has to fight after the Ural Mountains.

Another problem in the Sino-Russian relations is that the region of Manchuria is on the East Sino-Soviet borders. Manchuria is very rich in coal, iron, and many other raw materials. You can see Manchuria at the following map.

Picture 7



http://go.hrw.com/venus_images/0531MC23.gif

The mini war between the Soviets and the Chinese in 1969 took place in the region of Manchuria. You can read about it at the following Wikipedia link, titled “Border Wars”.

1st and 2nd Paragraphs

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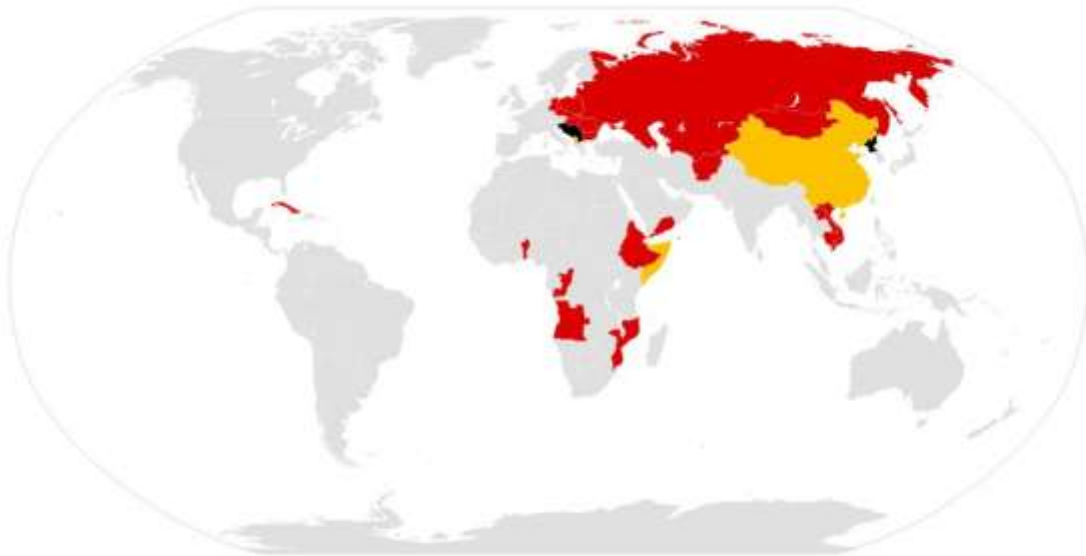
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split#Border_war

Manchuria was one of the main causes of conflict between the Chinese and the Japanese. Japan is an industrialized country but very poor in resources, and the Japanese thought that they could solve this problem by acquiring the resource rich Manchuria. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, and left only after her defeat at the end of WW2. For the Japanese invasion of Manchuria see “Japanese invasion of Manchuria”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_invasion_of_Manichuria

For all the above reasons the USSR and China started competing for influence over the countries that were run by communist dictatorships. At the following Wikipedia map you can see with red the communist countries which were aligned with USSR and with yellow the ones aligned with China.

Picture 8



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split#/media/File:Sino-Soviet_split_1980.svg

As you can see at the map, under Soviet control was Mongolia, Vietnam, Laos, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Cuba, and the countries of Eastern Europe i.e. Poland, Rumania etc. Under Chinese control were Somalia, and Albania. The ones with black are the non-aligned communists countries i.e. former Yugoslavia at the Balkans, and North Korea in Asia. Actually during the war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977, the Soviets were supporting the Ethiopians and the Chinese were supporting the Somali, and during the civil war in Angola the Soviets and the Chinese were again supporting different parties.

Note that one should not confuse the communist countries of the above map with the socialist dictatorships of the Middle East and North Africa. In the Middle East and North Africa there were socialist dictators who were Soviet allies i.e. Qaddafi in Libya and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, but they did not tolerate communists in their countries, because the communists wanted these countries to become Soviet satellites, and not Soviet allies, and that would give the Soviets control of the oil in these countries. And there was the strange phenomenon that the socialist dictators who were soviet allies were oppressing local communists, and the Soviets would not react.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Soviets lost Central Asia, and things became easier between China and Russia. The two countries improved their relations, and today they are allies. However Russia does not like the big Chinese influence in Central Asia. China is the big investor in the countries of Central Asia and buys most of their oil and natural gas, and has substituted Russia as the dominant power. Russia accepts this situation because China prevents the oil and gas of Central Asia to go to Europe and compete with the oil and natural gas of Russia. But it is a sure thing that Russia does not like the growing Chinese influence in Central Asia. Moreover Central Asia is located underneath West Siberia.

To conclude I will say that relations between Russia and China have been restored after 1991, but I will insist that Russia's interests are next to NATO and the EU. The problem is that for that to happen Russia must become a democratic country, like the other countries of the European Union. Only then Russia could have the first role in Europe. However Putin is turning

Russia to a fascist country, and it is possible that in the 21st Century Russia will become for China what Saudi Arabia was for the US in the 20th Century i.e. Russia will supply oil and gas to China, and China will supply Russia with arms. Because it is a sure thing that China will soon be a much greater arms producer than Russia.

Another great problem for Russia's democratization is that the Russians were never free. Freedom came for the Russians together with the economic collapse of 1991, and therefore the Russians are confused. They do not appreciate their freedom much because they confuse it with the economic collapse and pauperization. Therefore it is not very difficult to turn the Russian people towards socialism, especially when the media are controlled by the state, as it is the case with Putin's Russia.

I must also say that in 2014 Russia and China signed an agreement for the construction of two massive pipelines, which will carry Russian natural gas to China. See the following map. However it remains to be seen if the two countries will manage to construct these two pipelines. Many analysts say that the costs are too high, and that it is very difficult to construct pipelines in the unfriendly environment of Siberia.

Picture 9



http://amur-heilong.net/map/005maps/images/image/amur_world2.JPG

Turkey, Russia & China in Central Asia

At the following Wikipedia map, from the article “List of Turkic dynasties and countries”, you can see the Turkic countries. The term “Turkic” refers to the countries that are either of Turkic origin or they are Turkic speaking.

Picture 1



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Turkic_dynasties_and_countries

The list of Turkic countries includes Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Tajikistan has ethnic and linguistic ties with Iran and not Turkey, and that’s why Tajikistan does not appear with red on the map. There is even a Turkic Council, which has its base in Constantinople (Istanbul), and its members are Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have decided not to join the council, but they are welcome to join in the future if they decide so.

I have mentioned many times the great importance of the countries of Central Asia i.e. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, since two of them are very rich in oil (Kazakhstan) and gas (Turkmenistan). I have also mentioned many times Turkey's efforts to send the oil and natural gas of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to Europe, in order to keep a part of it, in order to earn huge transit fees, and finally in order to increase her geopolitical significance. But Turkey is not only interested in making some energy deals with the countries of Central Asia. As you can see at the following map, the countries of Central Asia are ex-members of the Soviet Union, and they are weak and unstable countries, encircled by Russia, China, Turkey and Iran. The countries of Central Asia are at the epicenter of the energy policies of these four countries.

Picture 2

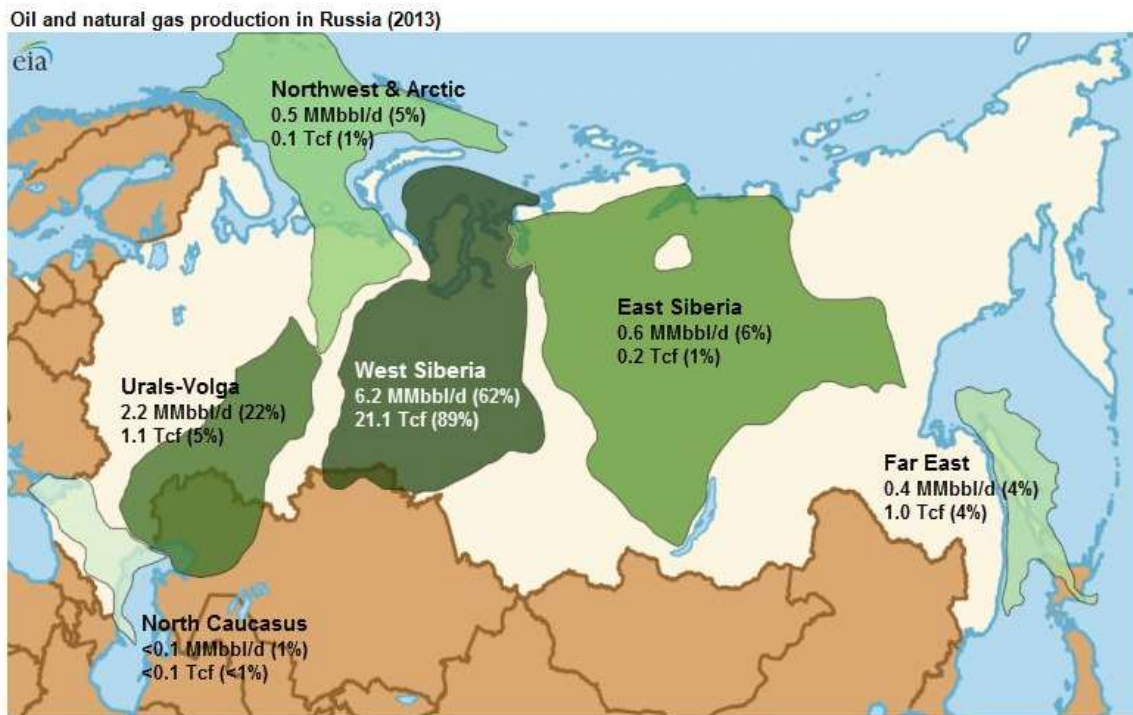


Turkey wants to send their natural gas and oil to Europe in order to reduce her dependence on Russia, but also to earn transit fees and increase her geopolitical significance. Turkey's advantage is that it offers an alternative to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, two countries which are surrounded by two competitors, Iran and Russia, and only one buyer i.e. China. These countries want to reduce their dependence on China, and get rid of Russia's pressures.

China wants to absorb the oil and gas of the region, in order to avoid the sea lanes, where the American Navy is dominant, but also because the oil and gas of Central Asia is a cheap source of energy for China, due to China's geographical proximity with Central Asia.

Russia wants to prevent the oil and gas of Central Asia from reaching the European markets, where Russia is the dominant player. Russia is annoyed by the increased Chinese influence in Central Asia, but Russia puts up with the Chinese influence, because by absorbing the resources of the region, the Chinese make it harder for the oil and gas of the region to reach to Europe. However it must be noted that the increased cooperation between China and Central Asia will at some point bring military cooperation too, and that's a problem for Russia, because Central Asia is located under West Siberia, and most of the Russian oil (62%) and natural gas (89%) production comes from West Siberia, as you can see at the following Energy Information Administration map. You can see that West Siberia is located above Kazakhstan, and it lies after the Ural Mountains, which are Russia's natural shield at her eastern flank.

Picture 3



<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=18051>

Therefore in the past Central Asia also worked as a security buffer for Russia, which will not be the case in the future since there will be growing Chinese presence in the area. At some point the growing economic cooperation between China and the countries of Central Asia will also develop to a military cooperation. And maybe Russia and China are currently allies, but nobody knows what will happen in the next decades, or even in the next years. In any case it is a sure thing that Russia is not glad to see China dominating a region that was traditionally influenced by Russia, and which is located under the oil and natural gas fields of West Siberia.

During the 20th century the countries of Central Asia were members of the Soviet Union, and they were under Russian influence. In a sense these

countries, together with the countries of Eastern Europe were Russian colonies. These countries were for Russia what the African countries were for the Europeans. But when the Soviet Union collapsed, the other three players i.e. China, Turkey and Iran, increased their influence over Central Asia. Each country has its advantages in this battle for influence.

Russia still has strong political and military ties with the region, and most of the countries are run by communist dictators who are ex members of the Soviet communist party. It is true of course that old friendships can not always prove to be as strong as economic interests. That's the reason Vladimir Putin said in 2014 that there was never a country called Kazakhstan, and that this region has always been under Russian influence, and that's how things should stay in the future, as you can read at the following Guardian article, titled "Kazakhstan is latest Russian neighbour to feel Putin's chilly nationalist rhetoric", September 2014. Putin wanted to remind to the President of Kazakhstan that he should be very careful with his relations with NATO and the West.

Russia has strong political and military power over Central Asia, but China has the economic power, because China is the largest investor in Central Asia, and it is the country that buys most of the regions oil and gas.

Iran would like to see the oil and gas of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan passing through Iran before reaching Europe and the Indian Ocean. For Iran these countries are natural competitors, but if their oil and gas was to pass through Iran before reaching the West and the South, Iran would obtain leverage over these countries. Moreover Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan

would stop pushing for solutions like the Trans-Caspian Pipeline and the TAPI Pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), which would bypass Iran, reducing the Iranian geopolitical and economic influence. See map 4.

Picture 4



As I said Russia has military and political influence over Central Asia, China has economic influence, but Turkey has cultural influence over the region, and it can also prove to be an alternative for these countries. Religion was almost banned as long as these countries were members of the Soviet Union, but things changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now Turkey can use Islam to increase her influence over Central Asia, and she can also employ Islamist fighters in order to increase her influence.

As you can read at the following Foreign Policy article, titled “IMU Members Pledge Support to ISIS”, March 2015, the Sunni Islamists of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) declared their support for ISIS i.e. the Islamic State, which is influenced by Turkey. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan wants to overthrow the communist dictator Islam Karimov, who is an ex member of the Soviet communist party, and has been Uzbekistan’s president since the country’s independence in 1991.

If you take a look at the map, you will see that it is Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan that have a motive to cooperate with Turkey, in order to avoid their competitors Iran and Russia, and in order to reduce their economic dependence on China. Uzbekistan on the other hand is poor in energy reserves country, and it wants the oil and natural gas of the region to move eastwards, in order to pass through Uzbekistan, generating transit fees and investments for Uzbekistan.

That’s the reason relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan have been problematic as you can read at the following Hurriyet article, titled “Turkish FM in Uzbekistan to reignite relations”, July 2014. On the contrary Turkey’s relations with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been great, as you can read at the following article of Daily Sabah, titled “Turkey and Kazakhstan: A relationship to cherish”, April 2015, and at Today’s Zaman article titled “Turkey, Turkmenistan seal new energy deals”, March 2015. Daily Sabah and Today’s Zaman are the English editions of the Sabah and the Zaman, two of the largest Turkish newspapers.

Turkey wants to play a dominant role in Central Asia, a region where the Muslim and Turkic element is dominant, and that's why Turkey and China have problems over the Chinese province of Xinjiang in East China, which borders Kazakhstan. In Xinjiang the Muslim element is dominant, and the Islamist organization "East Turkestan Islamic Movement" is very active. For the conflict between Turkey and China over Xinjiang also see also "Turkey VS China" at the following link.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/07/21/turkey-vs-china/>

Picture 5



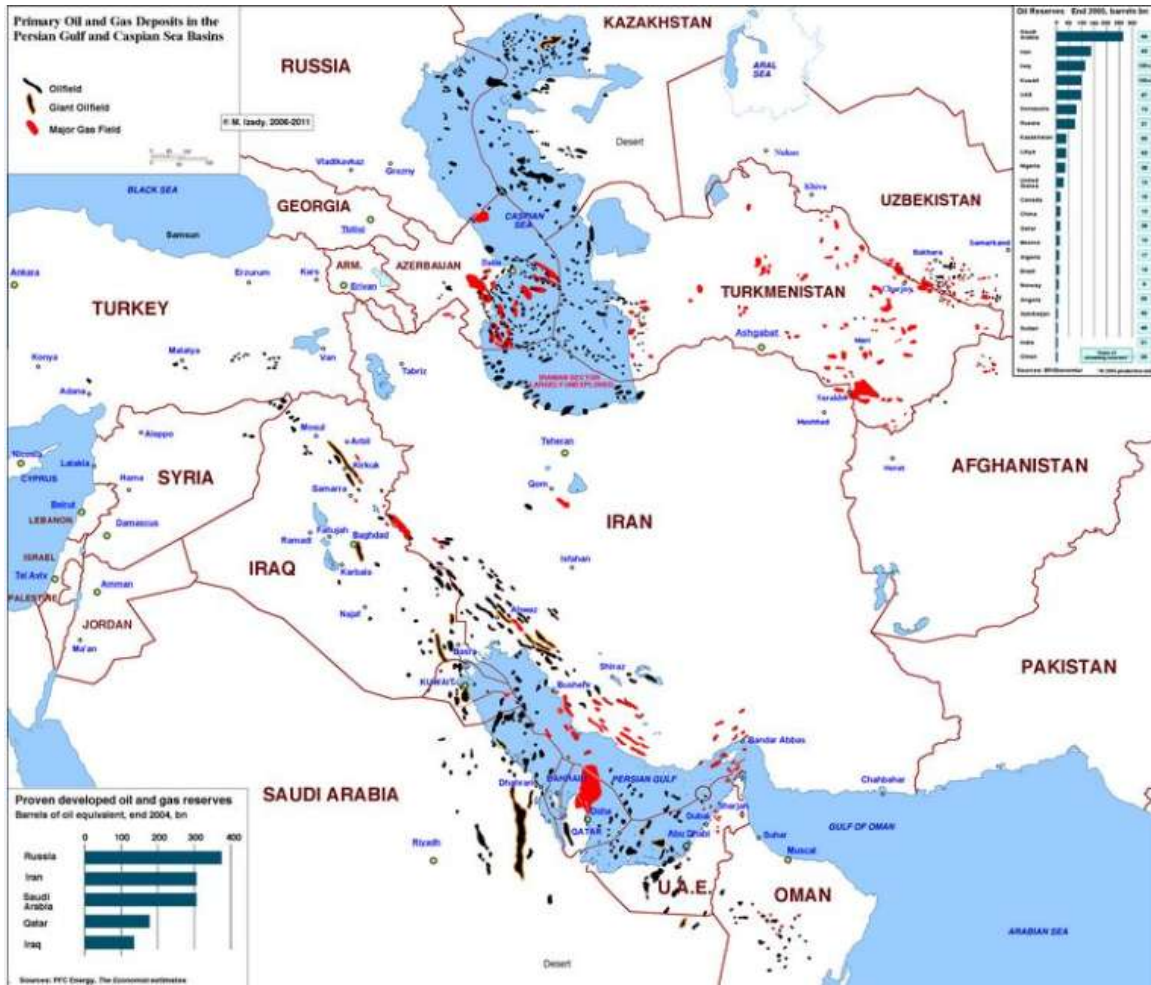
I must also say that the United States, together with India, support the TAPI pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), because they do not want the countries of Central Asia to be dependent only on China for their exports, and they do not want India to depend on Iran for energy supplies. Moreover if the Turkmen natural gas, and later maybe the Kazakh oil, were

to reach the Indian Ocean, they could be an alternative for the oil and natural gas of the Persian Gulf. The TAPI pipeline is not a problem for Russia, but it is a great problem for the Arabs and the Iranians, who count on Asia for their oil and natural gas exports. Therefore the Arabs and the Iranians try to block TAPI in Afghanistan. For more details for the war in Afghanistan see “Pakistan VS Taliban”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/07/23/pakistan-vs-taliban/>

For the oil and natural gas fields of the region see the following map from Columbia University.

Picture 6



http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Oil_and_Oil_Facilities_lg.jpg

Relevant Articles

For the first Wikipedia article see

“List of Turkic dynasties and countries”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Turkic_dynasties_and_countries

For the second Wikipedia article see

“Turkic Council”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkic_Council

For the Guardian article see

“Kazakhstan is latest Russian neighbour to feel Putin's chilly nationalist rhetoric”, September 2014

6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Paragraphs

But it is in the south, not in the north-west, that the chilly blast of Putin's rhetoric is being felt, far away from Europe and from Nato.

In little-noticed remarks last week, he called into question the legitimacy of the post-Soviet state of Kazakhstan while ordering the Kazakhs to be on their best behaviour when it came to serving Russian interests.

The remarks, to an audience of young people in Russia on Friday, sent shock waves through the central Asian republic, which also hosts a large ethnic Russian minority centred in the north on the Russian border.

Putin said there had never been a country called Kazakhstan, that the republic was purely the product of the current president, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/kazakhstan-russian-neighbour-putin-chilly-nationalist-rhetoric>

For the Foreign Policy article see

“IMU Members Pledge Support to ISIS”, March 2015

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/31/imu-members-pledge-support-to-isis-pakistani-delegation-heads-to-saudi-arabia-gujarat-passes-contentious-anti-terror-bill/>

For the Hurriyet article see

“Turkish FM in Uzbekistan to reignite relations”, July 2014

3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Paragraphs

Turkey was the first country to recognize Uzbekistan's independence in 1991. But relations with Uzbekistan began to deteriorate when Uzbek troops killed hundreds of demonstrators in the town of Andijan on 13 May, 2005, provoking an international outcry.

Turkey backed a U.N. resolution condemning Uzbekistan over its human rights violations in Andijan, provoking the ire of strongman Uzbek President Islam Karimov. "We are all upset that relations have not been at the desired level in recent years. We hope the current political environment will pave the way for us to enhance our relationship,"

Davutoğlu *said.*

Prior to his visit, Davutoğlu referred to the halt in Turkish and Uzbek relations since 2006 as a "misunderstanding."

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-fm-in-uzbekistan-to-reignite-relations.aspx?pageID=238&nID=68947&NewsCatID=510>

For the Daily Sabah article see

“Turkey and Kazakhstan: A relationship to cherish”, April 2015

1st and 2nd Paragraph

t year, Kazakhstan will celebrate the 25th year of its independence. With a population of over 17 million and a large landmass, it is one of the pivotal states of Central Asia. It is also strategically situated between two major powers: Russia and China. Kazakhstan has extensive economic and political relations with Europe and the U.S. This makes Kazakhstan a country of 'balance-politics,' where the Kazakh leadership seeks a foreign policy based on regional cooperation and global engagement. President Erdogan visited Kazakhstan on April 16-17 to hold the second meeting of the High Level Strategic Council between the two countries. Turkey was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence in 1991. Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's President, still recounts with gratitude how Turgut Ozal, President of Turkey at the time, called him only two hours after Kazakhstan declared independence. Since then, the two countries developed close relations at political, economic and cultural levels. Turkish

companies have completed projects worth \$20 billion. The 2014 trade volume was over \$3 billion. The goal is to reach \$10 billion over the next five years.

6th Paragraph

Many elements unite Turkey and Kazakhstan. Economic relations, as mentioned before, are gaining strength, although there is more work to be done to reach the \$10 billion trade goal. The two countries see each other as political allies, and they cooperate on numerous regional and global issues from the group of Central Asian Turkish republics to the U.N.

<http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ibrahim-kalin/2015/04/18/turkey-and-kazakhstan-a-relationship-to-cherish>

For the Today's Zaman article see

“Turkey, Turkmenistan seal new energy deals”, March 2015

1st Paragraph

Following a meeting with Turkmen President Gurbanguli Berdimuhamedov in Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has announced that Turkey, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan will establish a trilateral mechanism on energy issues, with the first leaders' meeting to take place in Turkmenistan.

6th Paragraph

In November last year, Turkmenistan and Turkey came to a framework agreement according to which Turkmenistan will supply gas for a new pipeline project -- called the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) -- that could help Europe reduce its dependence on Russian gas imports. When Erdoğan visited Ashgabat in November he underscored that Turkey attaches great importance to the delivery of Turkmenistan's natural gas to Europe via Turkey. “Europe's energy security is important for us,” Erdoğan said at the time.

http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkey-turkmenistan-seal-new-energy-deals_374197.html

A great article for the antagonism between Turkey, Russia and China in Central Asia is Stratfor's "Turkey's Growing Involvement in Central Asia", April 2012.

<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/turkeys-growing-involvement-central-asia>

ISIS VS Al-Qaeda Part 1

A very nice article by the Business Insider, titled “We're getting to know just how different ISIS is from al Qaeda”, March 2015, about the differences between ISIS and Al Qaeda. In the third paragraph the article says that Al Qaeda did not care much about the creation of an Islamic Chaliphate, while this is one of ISIS's main concerns.

That makes sense, if we take into account that the major influence in Al Qaeda is the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, who do not want a Chaliphate, because a Chaliphate would mean that they would have to share their oil and natural gas with other countries. On the contrary, the main influence in ISIS is Turkey, and Erdogan would love to be some kind of Sultan in a Chaliphate i.e. some form of union with the Persian Gulf, which would also imply many economic benefits for Turkey. Turkey wants to somehow regain the influence it had in the Middle East until the First World War (1914-1918). The Turkish soldiers that were sent to Qatar in 2015, one hundred years after their withdrawal from the region, was a step towards this end.

In the 9th paragraph the article says that the great enemy of Al Qaeda is the United States, while the great enemy of ISIS is the Shites of Syria and Iraq, and the Assad regime of Syria. That makes sense too, because Al Qaeda wanted to fight the Americans who wanted to bring the oil of Kazakhstan and the natural gas of Turkmenistan to India and the Indian Ocean i.e. TAPI pipeline etc. After all the base of Osama bin Laden was for many years in Afghanistan.

Map 1



Moreover some parts of the Saudi elites might have been angry with the US, due to the American pressures for larger oil production and lower oil prices. Finally some Arabs might believe that the alliance between US and Saudi Arabia was a constraint towards closer economic relations with China, which is now the big customer in the Middle East. The Americans have reduced their imports from the Gulf. China has much closer relations with Iran due to the Saudi alliance with the US. But Al Qaeda should not be seen as the same thing with the Saudi leadership, because Al Qaeda was the first one to call the Saudi King an apostate, and asked for a jihad against him.

As far as Turkey is concerned, the US and the TAPI pipeline is not a problem. The problems for ISIS are the Arabs of Syria and Iraq, who refused the construction of the Arab-Turkish Pipelines i.e. Qatar-Turkey pipeline, and agreed with the Russian state-owned Gazprom to the construction of the

Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline. It is true of course that some problems arose between Turkey and the US too, because the US supports the Syrian Kurds in Northern Syria, which is a big problem for Turkey. Moreover the Americans have also improved significantly their relations with Iran, which is another problem for Turkey and ISIS. But it is unlikely that the US will become the main target of ISIS, because Turkey and the US need each other a lot, no matter what problems they encounter in their relationship. However there is always the possibility of regional clashes between the US and ISIS, something that has already happened in Syria.

Another interesting article for the clash between Al Qaeda and ISIS, and ISIS's dominance over Al Qaeda, is the Guardian's "How Isis crippled al-Qaida", June 2015. I must say that the main reason that ISIS became stronger than Al Qaeda, which was the leader of all terrorist organizations, is the support from Turkey. The Turkish military machine is much stronger than the Saudi one. In addition the Americans were not putting many restrictions on the supply of arms to Turkey and Israel, which was not the case with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was not seen by the Americans as reliable as Turkey and Israel, not only because of China, but also because at some point an anti-American leadership could come to power. Moreover Al Qaeda does not have the support of all the Saudi elite, because it is an enemy of the Saudi King.

Another reason that Al Qaeda is weaker than ISIS is that the United States attacks Al Qaeda wherever they can, because Al Qaeda is for the US a deadly enemy. On the contrary attacking ISIS creates problems in the

relationship between the US and Turkey, and therefore the Americans have to show a lot more restraint when they attack ISIS.

For the Business Insider article see

“We're getting to know just how different ISIS is from al Qaeda”, March 2015

3rd Paragraph

Unlike the self-proclaimed Islamic State, al Qaeda — led by bin Laden until his death in 2011 — was never overly concerned with the immediate formation of an Islamic caliphate.

9th Paragraph

Whereas al Qaeda's primary enemy has always been the United States, ISIS targets are much closer to home: Namely, apostate Shi'ite regimes such as Bashar Assad's government in Syria and Haider al-Abadi's in Iraq that impede the creation of a "pure", radically sectarian Islamic state.

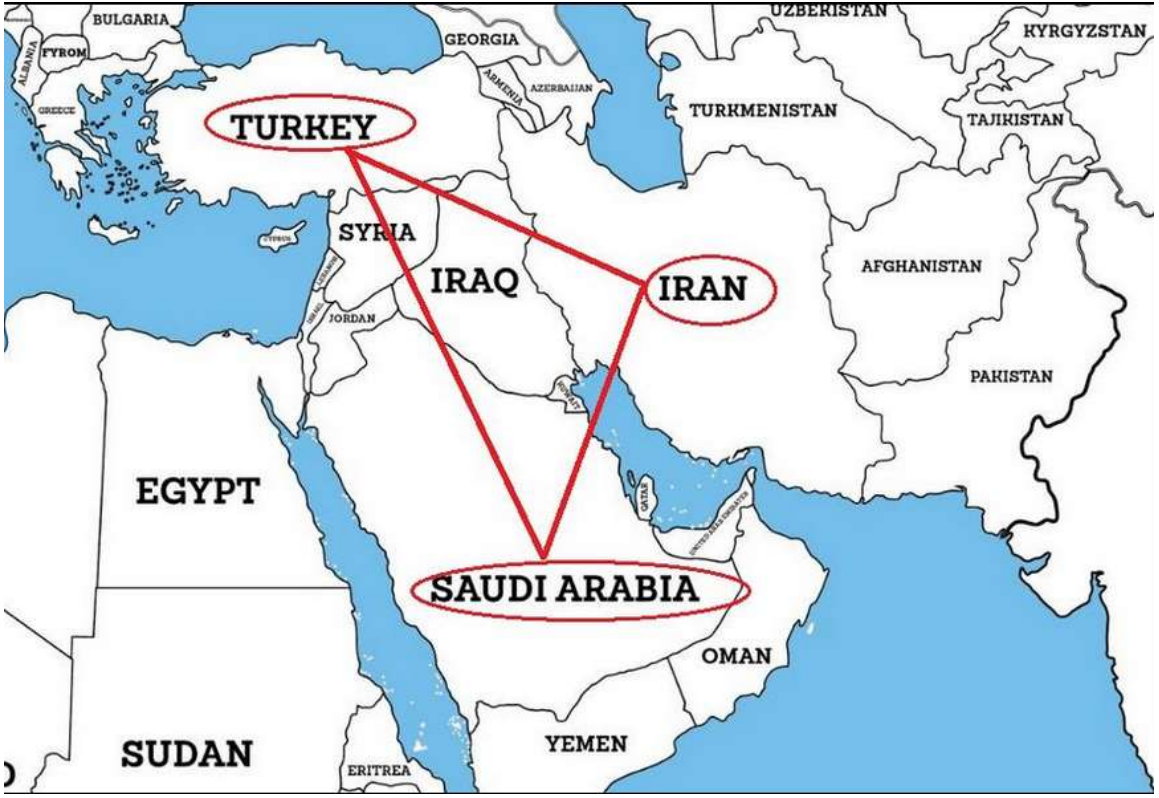
<http://www.businessinsider.com/difference-between-isis-and-al-qaeda-2015-5>

For the Guardian article see

“How Isis crippled al-Qaida”, June 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/10/how-isis-crippled-al-qaida>

Map 2



ISIS VS Al-Qaeda Part 2

A very nice article from the Wall Street Journal, titled “Paris Attacks Suggest Shift in Islamic State’s Strategy”, November 2015. According to the article the Paris terrorist attacks of November 2015 might signal a turn of ISIS strategy. Until now ISIS was not targeting the West, but the Paris attacks might show that this is no longer the case. According to the Wall Street Journal there were some attacks on the West from ISIS sympathizers, but none of them was believed to be orchestrated directly by ISIS. However the Paris attacks were very sophisticated. See “Paris Attacks Suggest Shift in Islamic State’s Strategy”, November 2015.

http://www.wsj.com/articles/paris-attacks-reflect-new-dangers-for-the-west-1447517428?mod=fox_australian

I had already uploaded a document about ISIS and Al Qaeda, on August 2015. See “ISIS VS Al Qaeda”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/08/27/isis-vs-al-qaeda/>

I was saying that Al Qaeda is mainly financed by Saudis, and it is not only anti-Shiite, but also anti-American and anti-Western. On the other hand, ISIS, at least until very recently, was only targeting Shiite Muslims and not the West. The main explanation is that ISIS is mainly supported by Turkey, while Al Qaeda is mainly supported from some parts of the Saudi elite. The Saudis, actually the Iranians too, are hurt by the American efforts to bring the oil and natural gas of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan) to the Indian Ocean i.e. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline etc.

The Turks are not hurt by such efforts. They would of course prefer to see the oil and gas of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to flow to Turkey, and to Europe through Turkey, but they are not hurt to the degree that the Arabs and the Iranians are hurt. The Arabs and the Iranians sell their oil and gas mainly to Asia.

Turkey on the other hand is hurt by the Iranian and Russian efforts to block the Sunni Pipelines i.e. Turkish-Arab pipelines like the Qatar-Turkey one, and by the Iranian efforts to promote the Shiite pipelines i.e. Iran-Iraq-Syria.

Map Sunni-Shiite Pipelines



For the United States, Syria is much less important than she is to the Russians, the Iranians, the Arabs and the Turks. That's why Donald Trump,

a candidate for the Republican Party's presidency, was saying that the US should not interfere in Syria and should let Russia bomb ISIS. See for example CNN's "Trump: Let Putin fight ISIS in Syria", September 2015.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/27/politics/donald-trump-isis-syria-russia-60-minutes/>

For the US, Iraq and Afghanistan are a lot more important than Syria. The American military operations took place in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and not in Syria. In Afghanistan the Sunni Islamists Taliban were blocking the oil and gas of Central Asia to flow to the Indian Ocean. They were of course training many terrorists against the US.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein, a socialist Sunni Arab, was suppressing the Iraqi Shiite majority, and the Kurds of Northern Iraq, who are very rich in oil and natural gas, and they are natural American allies. Moreover, Saddam Hussein was funding many socialist terrorist organizations which were targeting the US, and he was as anti-American as it comes. Saddam Hussein did not want elections in Iraq, because elections would bring to power the Shiite Iraqi majority. Saddam was using socialism to downgrade religion and offset the advantage of the Shiite majority over the Sunni minority of Iraq. Under Saddam the Sunni minority was running the country, something that changed when he was gone.

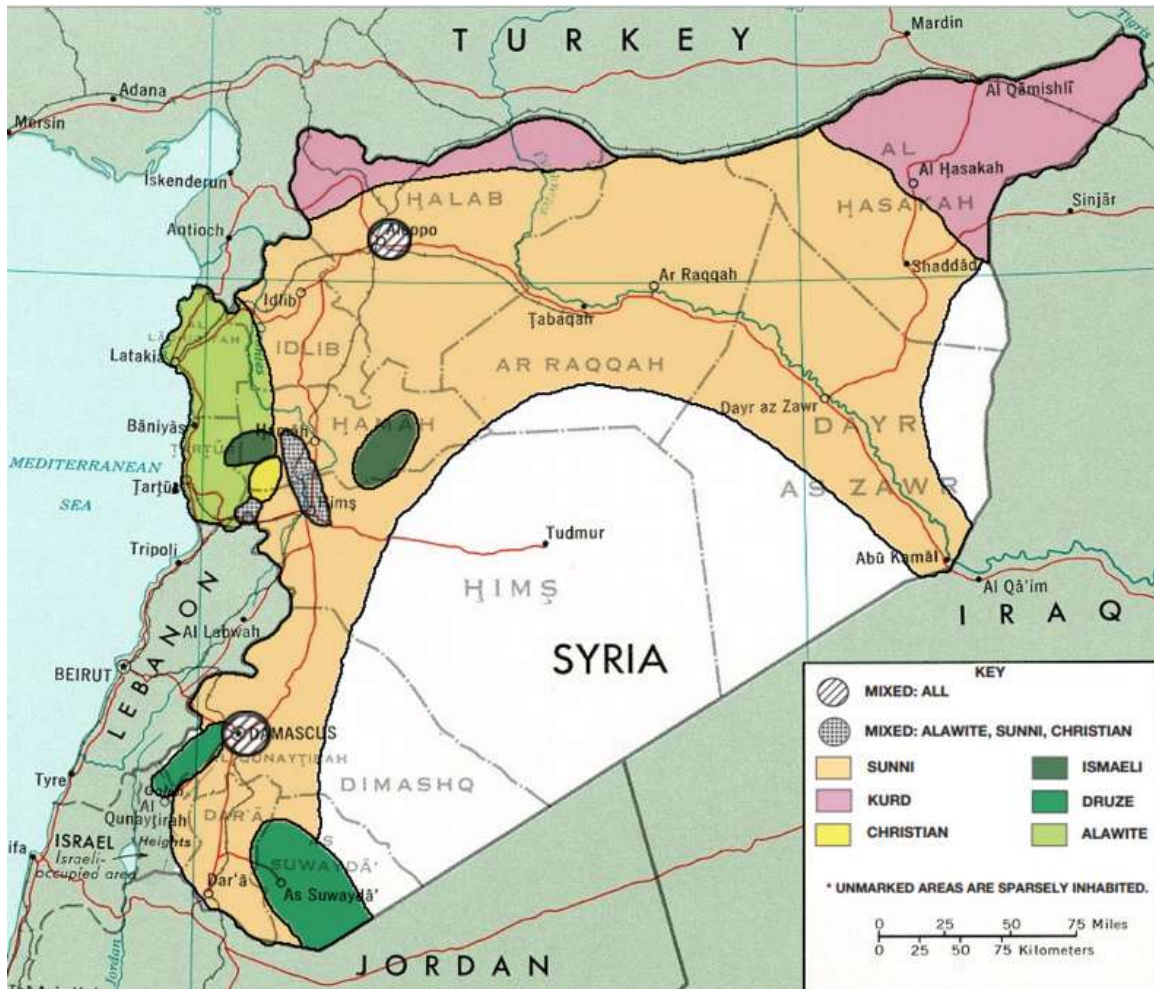
The West could not buy Iraqi oil, and could not allow the big western companies to invest in Iraq, because Saddam would use the revenues to finance his army and support terrorist organizations. This problem was gone after Saddam was removed from power. Now the Iraqi oil flows to the

international markets, putting downward pressure on oil prices. Donald Trump said that United States should not interfere with Syria, and let the Russians fight ISIS, but he said that the American army should stay in Iraq and fight ISIS in Iraq.

Therefore, for the Turks, until recently, the West was not a main problem. Actually the Turks were expecting their NATO allies to help them overturn Bashar al Assad in Syria and ask for elections. The majority of the Syrian population are Sunni Muslims and therefore the Turks and the Arabs would gain control in the case of free elections. There is of course the thorn of the Syrian Kurds in American-Turkish relations, because the Americans support the Kurds of Syria while the Turks are fighting them. But on the issue of Assad the Turks were expecting a lot more support than they finally got from their NATO allies.

I guess that the minimum that Russia will go for in Syria will be to keep the Syrian coasts under Allawite control. Allawite Muslims are Russian allies and are the majority at the Syrian coasts, as you can see at the following Wikipedia map. With light green you can see the region with Allawite majority at the Syrian coasts, and with salmon you can see the regions with Sunni majority. The map is for Syria in 1976, but the situation has not changed much.

Map 1 Syria-Allawites



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/Syria_Ethno-religious_composition..jpg

Therefore the Russians would not accept a solution with elections, without a prior agreement about how the country would be run, because they know that this would bring Syria under Sunni control, and would put their Allawite allies on the side. Therefore if an agreement cannot be reached, the Russians would prefer the partition of Syria, in order for the Allawites to stay in power at the coasts of Syria. That way the Russians will control the exit of oil and gas to the Mediterranean Sea.

Therefore, at least initially, the Turks were not worrying about the West. On the contrary, Assad was a very close Russian and Iranian ally, and therefore the Americans, who are a strong Turkish ally, and the French, who are a strong Saudi ally, were asking for Assad to step down in order for free elections to take place in Syria. Therefore for ISIS the West was useful, while for Al Qaeda it was an enemy.

For Al Qaeda the West was a problem. The Americans were trying to bring the oil and gas of Central Asia to the Indian Ocean. In addition, after Saddam Hussein's attack to Kuwait in 1991, the Americans established American military bases in Saudi Arabia, and that infuriated some parts of the Saudi elite. The problem was becoming more intense, because the Americans were reducing their oil imports from the Persian Gulf, and with their military presence they were turning China towards Iran. But China is the client that both the Iranians and the Saudis are counting on for the future.

Moreover, the American military presence in Saudi Arabia was giving a great advantage to Iran, Saudi Arabia's main rival. The Iranians could accuse the Saudis for being an ally of the "infidel" i.e. the unfaithful. Iranian officials call the United States "the Great Satan", and the Saudis were collaborating with the "Great Satan". Moreover, the Arab socialists i.e. Iraq, Syria, Libya etc could also accuse the Saudis for treason due to their alliance with the Americans.

These problems led to a series of terrorist attacks against the United States, with the attack on the Twin Towers in September 2001 being the deadliest and more important one. After the 9/11 attack, in 2002, the United States

moved their military bases from Saudi Arabia to Qatar. Qatar was more than happy to accommodate the American bases, because these bases were enhancing Qatar's security. Qatar is located between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and it feels pressure from both these countries. Qatar does not claim the leadership of the Islamist World, and can deal with disadvantages in the Qatari public opinion, because it is the country with the highest GDP per capita, and has only 2 million very happy citizens. The rest of the people in Qatar are foreigners who simply work there. For the attack on the Twin Towers and the American military bases see "USA, Russia & China in the Middle East : Alliances & Conflicts".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/usa-russia-china-in-the-middle-east-alliances-conflicts/>

Therefore you can see how different the interests of ISIS and Al Qaeda are. Moreover there is the issue of oil, because ISIS sends cheap oil to Turkey, from the oilfields that have come under ISIS control in Syria and Iraq. Some of this oil is exported through Turkey's port of Ceyhan in the Mediterranean Sea. I guess that the Saudis are not happy with that. See "The Oilfields of the Islamic State".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/10/19/the-oil-fields-of-the-islamic-state/>

In addition the Saudis do not accept Turkey as the leader of the Islamic World. As long as Turkey was under the control of the nationalist socialist supporters of Kemal Ataturk, they did not want religion to play a major role in Turkey's politics. But that changed after the Islamists came to power in 2003. Turkey's Islamists started trying to become the leader of the Islamic world, and Saudi Arabia was the leader until then. Becoming the leader

would give Turkey a greater role in the oil and gas of the Middle East and North Africa. We saw that contrary to what happened with Saudi Arabia, Qatar was very happy to accept Erdogan as the Sultan of the Chaliphate. But Saudi Arabia is a much more important country than Qatar.

Turkey is also the country with the strongest army in the Muslim world. According to Business Insider Turkey has the 8th strongest country in the world. See “The 35 Most Powerful Militaries In The World”, July 2014.

Picture The Strongest Armies in the World

BUSINESS INSIDER		MILITARY & DEFENSE						
COUNTRY	OVERALL RANKING	ACTIVE PERSONNEL	TANKS	AIRCRAFT	NUCLEAR WARHEADS	AIRCRAFT CARRIERS	SUBMARINES	BUDGET
UNITED STATES	1	1,430,000	8,325	13,683	7,506	10	72	612,500,000,000
RUSSIA	2	766,000	15,000	3,082	8,484	1	63	76,600,000,000
CHINA	3	2,285,000	9,150	2,788	250	1	69	126,000,000,000
INDIA	4	1,325,000	3,569	1,785	80 - 100	2	17	46,000,000,000
UNITED KINGDOM	5	205,330	407	908	225	1	11	53,600,000,000
FRANCE	6	228,656	423	1,203	300	1	10	43,000,000,000
GERMANY	7	183,000	408	710	0	0	4	45,000,000,000
TURKEY	8	410,500	3,657	989	0	0	14	18,185,000,000
SOUTH KOREA	9	640,000	2,346	1,393	0	0	14	33,700,000,000
JAPAN	10	247,746	767	1,595	0	1	16	49,100,000,000
ISRAEL	11	176,500	3,870	680	80 - 200	0	14	15,000,000,000
ITALY	12	320,000	600	795	0	2	6	34,000,000,000

<http://www.businessinsider.com/35-most-powerful-militaries-in-the-world-2014-7>

However it seems that gradually the West is becoming a headache for Turkey. There is the issue of oil and gas, but on top of that, Erdogan is transforming Turkey to fascist country, and both the EU and the US are very disappointed with him. Erdogan is closing media that criticize his party, and puts a lot of pressure on the political opposition. Of course Erdogan says that he does that because they are corrupted.

Therefore it seems that the West is constraining Turkey instead of helping her, and as a result ISIS gradually turns against the West. I guess that's what the Wall Street Journal is trying to say with this article, even though she does not mention the oil and gas interests. However I must say that it is not only the Turks and the Qataris who support ISIS. In all Muslim countries there are ISIS supporters. For example in Nigeria, a country 50% Christian and 50% Muslim, the Sunni terrorist organization Boko Haram aligned itself with the Islamic State, and even changed its name to ISWAP (Islamic State of West African Province). Obviously the members of Boko Haram are not Turks or Qataris. They are Nigerians. But I mainly refer to Turkey, because she is the strongest Muslim country, and Qatar, because Qatar has plenty of liquidity and finances Islamist militants on the battlefields and European socialists in European parliaments.

The Qataris, and all the Arabs, are financing the European left, in order to send Muslim immigrants to Europe. This will give the Muslim world great leverage over European politics. If the Europeans do not buy their oil and gas, and if they dare to bomb their Islamist militants, they will have to suffer attacks like the one suffered by France on Friday 13th November 2015. It is no coincidence that ISIS attacked Stade de France too, where there was a

game between France and Germany. The Jihadists wanted to send a message to Germany too. It is through Germany that the Russian gas enters Europe (Nord Stream 1).

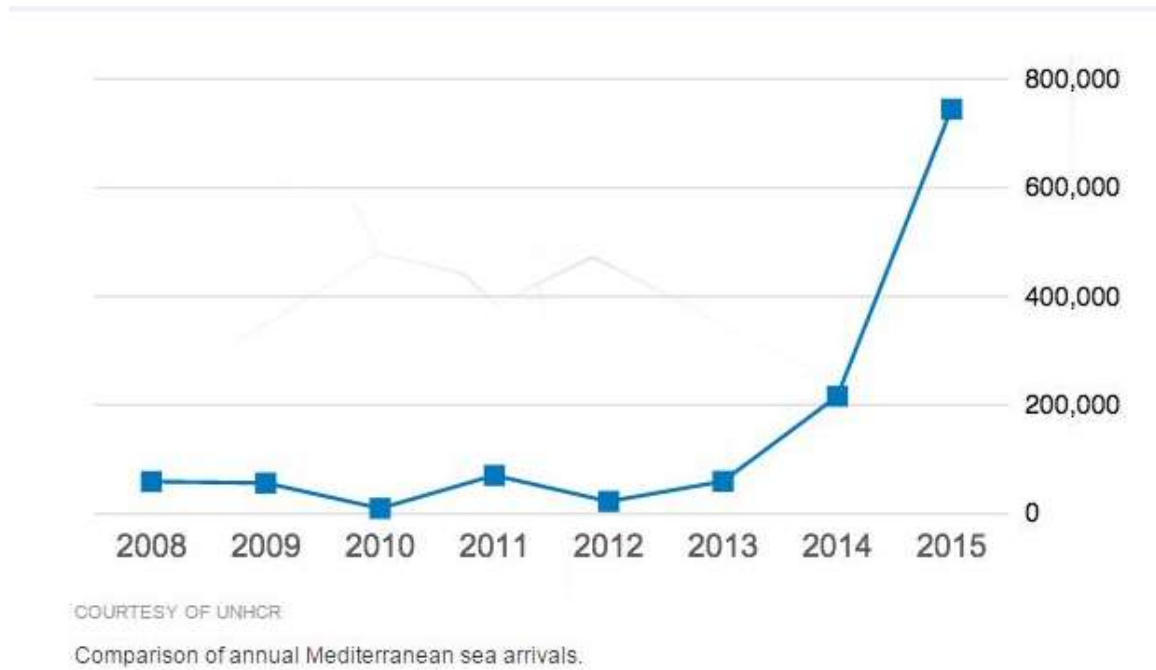
Now, with the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that Russia and Germany are promoting, they will double the Russian natural gas that enters Europe through Germany, from 55 to 110 billion cubic meters per year. Erdogan, together with the communist Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras are sending to Germany hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants.

At the following two tables from the United Nations you can see how the influx of illegal immigrants was affected by the rise to power of the communist party of SYRIZA in Greece. SYRIZA won the Greek elections in January 25th 2015. Three are the dates that really matter for the European immigration crisis. The first one is 2011, when the energy wars (Arab Spring) begin in North Africa and the Middle East. The second one is February 2014, when the leftist Matteo Renzi wins the Italian elections, and opens the Italian borders to illegal immigrants. The third and most important date is January 2015, when the communist Alexis Tsipras wins the Greek elections.

Tsipras, a communist and Islamist ally, completely reversed the immigration policies of Antonis Samaras, who was a patriot, and the influx of illegal immigrants that entered Greece jumped from 75.000 in 2014 to over 600.000 in 2015. And that was at the end of October 2015 and not at year end.. At the end of the year the figures will be even higher. All the problems that the European Union is experiencing with illegal immigration, which have

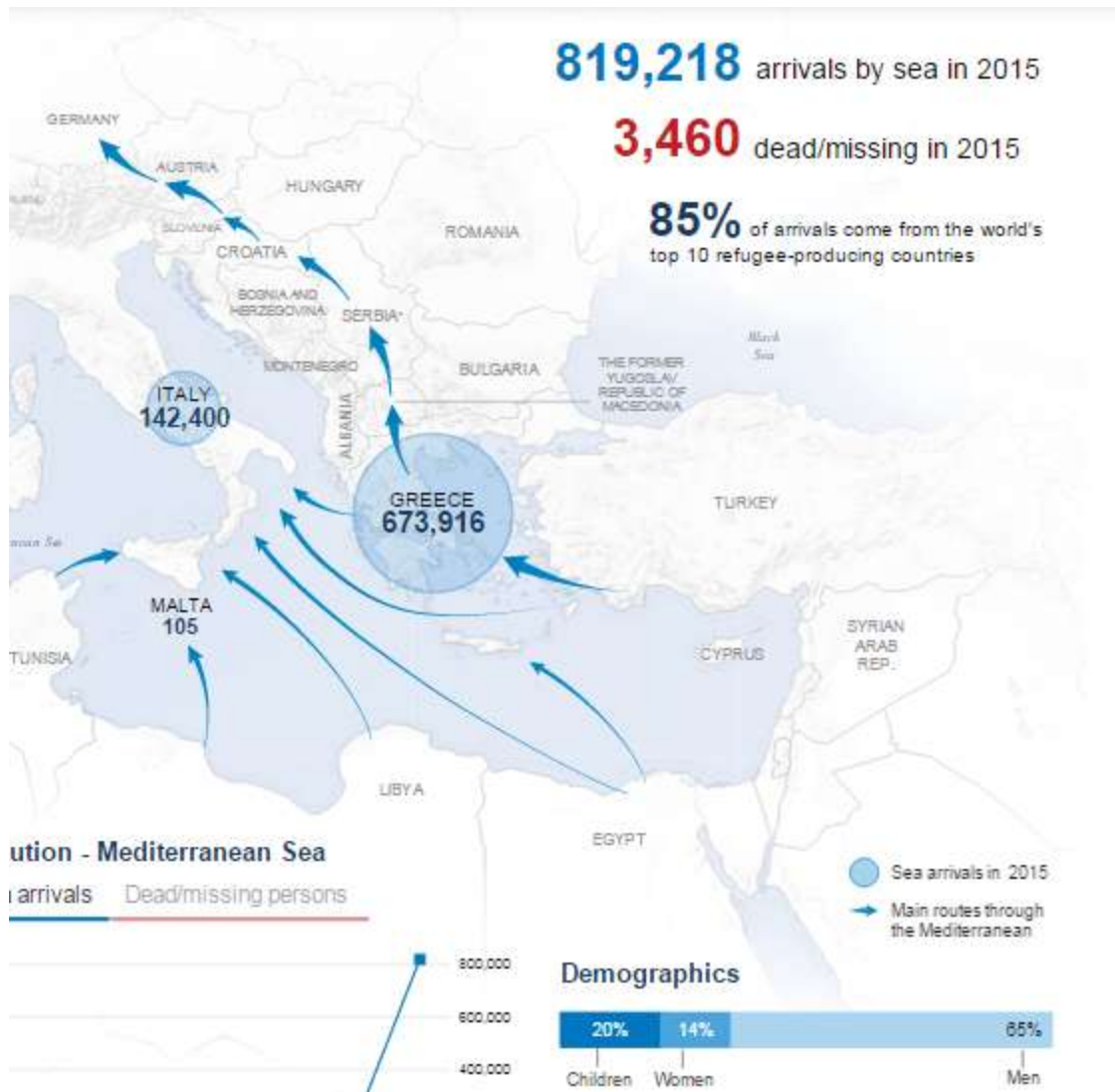
almost led to closed European borders, are caused by the Greek Communists and Erdogan.

Picture 1



<http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

Picture 2



<http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php>

I must also say one more thing about France. France and Germany are famous for having problematic relations with Turkey. But France does not only have a problem with Jihadists in the Middle East. France did indeed bomb ISIS oil facilities a few days before the Paris attacks, and that definitely played a role. See for example Yahoo “French strike hits IS oil facility in Syria”, November 2015.

<http://news.yahoo.com/french-strike-hits-oil-facility-syria-143954467.html>

However North Africa is more important than the Middle East for France. France is getting her raw materials mainly from Africa i.e. Algeria, Libya, Niger, Nigeria etc. The French do want to support their Saudi allies in Syria and Iraq, but North Africa is more important for France. France has to fight against ISIS in Northern Africa too. France is fighting both Sunni and Shiite Jihadists in Africa. France has many problems with Iran too. But now I am talking about France and Turkey, and I mainly refer to Turkey because Turkey is the largest Sunni Islamist country. It is difficult for me to imagine that some ISIS members would have slaughtered the French if they knew that Turkey would really disapprove. Therefore what I am saying is not that Erdogan gave the order for the attack. I am only saying that the Paris attacks gives more leverage to Erdogan over Europe.

Who is Responsible for the War and the Immigrants?

Who is responsible for the war in Iraq and Syria, and for the hundreds of dead, wounded and dislocated people? The socialist propaganda says that it is the Americans who have caused these wars. But this is a terrible lie. It is true that the United States attacked Saddam Hussein in 2003. Saddam Hussein was a Russian ally and the socialist dictator of Iraq. The Americans could have overturned Saddam in 1991, when they again attacked Iraq, when Saddam invaded Kuwait and set its oilfields on fire. They did not do it at the time, even though they destroyed his army and reached Baghdad.

However they did overturn him in 2003. Was that something wrong? Saddam Hussein was oppressing the Iraqi Kurds, and he was a Sunni Muslim, who was governing a country with a majority of Shiite Muslims. The Sunni minority of Saddam Hussein was not only oppressing the Iraqi Kurds, but it was also oppressing the majority of the Iraqi Shiite Muslims. After Saddam's overturn in 2003, the Iraqi Shiites, who were the majority, took control of the country, and the Iraqi Kurds could finally leave without fear.

It was not the overturn of Saddam Hussein that caused the war of 2011, which in turn caused thousands of immigrants. It was something very different. In 2009 Turkey and Qatar asked the Arabs of Syria to agree on the construction of the Qatar-Turkey Pipeline (red line), which would send Arab natural gas to Turkey and Europe. The Syrians refused, even though this pipeline would be to Syria's interest too, because this pipeline would harm

the economic interests of Gazprom in Europe, and Russia is a Syrian ally. Then, the Russians proposed to construct the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline (green line), in order to block for good the Qatar-Turkey pipeline.

Picture 1



The Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline would still compete with Gazprom in Europe, but it would be harmless when compared to a Turkish-Arab pipeline that would run through Turkey. Moreover the Iran-Syria pipeline would be controlled by Gazprom. The Iraqis and the Syrians agreed to the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline, and that infuriated the Turks and the Arabs, who attacked Syria and Iraq. That's the cause of the war. What could have the Americans done? Ask the Syrians to allow the Qatar-Turkey pipeline? Or ask the Russians not to push the Iran-Syria pipeline in order not to infuriate the Turks and the Arabs? What could they have done?

Gazprom did not need the natural gas of the region. Russia is the richest country in the world in terms of natural gas reserves. The only reason the Russians decided to promote the Iran-Syria pipeline was to block the Qatar-Turkey one. For the Americans it would be better if both the Qatar-Turkey and the Iran-Syria pipeline were constructed, because that would mean lower prices. The war in Syria and Iraq was very good for Russia but very bad for the Americans.

Moreover, the Russians supply with arms the Kurds of the PKK in Eastern Turkey (purple X), in order to prevent the construction of the Southern Energy Corridor (TANAP-TAP pipelines), which will transfer natural gas from the Caspian Sea and the Middle East to Europe through Turkey, hurting Gazprom. How can the Americans stop the Kurds of the PKK from attacking the Turks? The war between the PKK and Turkey is good only for Russia. The Americans want peace in Eastern Turkey in order for the Southern Energy Corridor to go ahead.

Moreover, is it a US fault that the Saudis and the Iranians are two of the richest in oil countries in the world, and they kill each other over their oil exports? What can the Americans do about that? The war is not good for the Americans. The Americans are oil importers and they want low prices. The oil wars lead to higher oil prices. This is good for Russians who are oil exporters. It is not the Americans who are responsible for the war in Syria and Iraq and for all these immigrants.

For more details see

“USA, Russia & China in the Middle East”

England VS Argentina

The Falkland Islands belong to England since her glorious days. Argentina considers the Islands part of her territory, and the two countries went to a war in 1982 for these islands. England won the war and managed to keep the Islands under British control.



<http://www.operationworld.org/files/ow/maps/lginset/falk-LMAP-md.png>

Picture 2



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falklands_War#/media/File:Falklands_Campaign_\(Distances_to_bases\)_1982.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falklands_War#/media/File:Falklands_Campaign_(Distances_to_bases)_1982.jpg)

As usual, Argentina and England fight for the control of the Islands because their seabed are supposed to be rich in oil. As you can read at the following Telegraph article, titled “New Falklands oil discovery could stir trouble with Argentina”, May 2015, a field with 1 billion barrel of oil was recently

discovered near the Falklands, and this discovery increased the tension between England and Argentina. One billion barrels of oil is not much when compared to Venezuela's 300 billion barrels, but in absolute terms it is a very large quantity. And these waters are difficult to explore, so there is a possibility of further discoveries.

After the Argentinean attack of 1982, the English have enhanced the Island's defense capabilities. The British aircrafts that are stationed on the Islands are much more advanced than the Argentinean counterparts. Argentina announced that the companies that will explore the oil reserves of the Falklands will not have the right to participate in the development of the Argentinean fields. Argentina is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of shale oil and shale gas, as you can see at the following Energy Information Table.

Picture 3

Table 2. Top 10 countries with technically recoverable shale oil resources

Rank	Country	Shale oil (billion barrels)	
1	Russia	75	
2	U.S. ¹	58	(48)
3	China	32	
4	Argentina	27	
5	Libya	26	
6	Australia	18	
7	Venezuela	13	
8	Mexico	13	
9	Pakistan	9	
10	Canada	9	
World Total		345	(335)

¹ EIA estimates used for ranking order. ARI estimates in parentheses.

Table 3. Top 10 countries with technically recoverable shale gas resources

Rank	Country	Shale gas (trillion cubic feet)	
1	China	1,115	
2	Argentina	802	
3	Algeria	707	
4	U.S. ¹	665	(1,161)
5	Canada	573	
6	Mexico	545	
7	Australia	437	
8	South Africa	390	
9	Russia	285	
10	Brazil	245	
World Total		7,299	(7,795)

¹ EIA estimates used for ranking order. ARI estimates in parentheses.

<http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=14431>

I must also mention that the Falklands are important for England because they give her access to the South Ocean and the South Pole i.e. the region of Antarctica, as you can see at the following map.

Picture 4



http://www.worldatlas.com/img/areamap/continent/antarctica_map.gif

See also “Shale Oil and Shale Gas Reserves”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/08/05/shale-oil-and-shale-gas-reserves/>

For the Telegraph article see “New Falklands oil discovery could stir trouble with Argentina”, May 2015

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/oilandgas/11635627/New-Falklands-oil-discovery-could-stir-trouble-with-Argentina.html>

Gazprom VS ENI : A New War In East Mediterranean Sea?

As you can read at the following BBC article, titled “Italy's Eni discovers huge gas field off Egyptian coast”, August 2015, ENI, the Italian energy giant discovered a huge natural gas field in the Egyptian waters in August 2015.

“Italy's Eni discovers huge gas field off Egyptian coast”, August 2015.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34102656>

The Italian public is ENI's largest shareholder, and the Russians had given ENI a 20% stake in the South Stream pipeline. Therefore the Russians had the Italian support against the EU anti-monopolistic regulation which threatens Russian interests in Europe. After the cancellation of the South Stream and the agreement for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline it seems that Italy and Russia will go separate ways. See “The Clouds Over the Russian-Italian Relations”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/the-clouds-over-the-russian-italian-relations/>

In September 2015 Russia decided to significantly increase her military presence in Syria. See for example the following Time article, titled “Russia Has Added Dozens of Aircraft to Its Growing Military Presence in Syria”, September 2015.

<http://time.com/4043955/russia-syria-latakia-28-aircraft-assad-isis/>

Syria is very important for Russia because an Arab-Turkish pipeline could be constructed in order to send natural gas from the Persian Gulf to Europe through Turkey and Syria. However after the war broke out the construction of such a pipeline network was not possible, and therefore it is strange that Russia suddenly decided to increase her military presence in Syria in such a massive scale. The Russian reinforcements are more strange if it is taken into account that the Americans do not seem very interested in the removal from power of the Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad, who is also an Iranian and Russian ally. See for example “Kerry's remarks on Syria trouble Turkey”, September 2015

“Kerry's remarks on Syria trouble Turkey”, September 2015

http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/turkey-usa-syria-ankara-angered-kerry-remarks.html?utm_source=Al-Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm_campaign=891335b2d9-September_23_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_28264b27a0-891335b2d9-102393785

As you can read at the Al Monitor article, many members of parliament in the United States wonder whether Assad's removal should be a priority for the United States, given that the Islamic State (ISIS) is causing so much trouble. Turkey's influence over the Islamic State is not a secret. But why would the Americans want the Turks to have Syria under their control, given how aggressive Turkey has become in her energy policy? It would be much better for the Americans if there were two energy corridors instead of one i.e. the Caspian Sea-Turkey-Europe corridor and the Iran-Iraq-Syria-Mediterranean Sea-Europe one. If Turkey were to control Syria she would

be able to blackmail the Americans and the European. See the following map.

Map 1



The more pipelines there are connecting the Middle East and the Caspian Sea to Europe the better it is for the Americans and the Europeans. Turkey is no longer the loyal American ally she used to be.

Therefore given that the Americans are not very interested in Assad fall, and there is no possibility, at least for the moment, of an Arab-Turkish pipeline, it is strange that Russia decide to increase her military presence in Syria in such a dramatic way. As you can read at the following Stratfor article, titled “Russia Uses Syria to Influence Other Powers”, Russia increases her military presence in Syria in order to put pressure on Israel and Turkey, and not to protect Assad.

<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/russia-uses-syria-influence-other-powers>

I mentioned ENI's recent discovery in Egypt. In addition to this discovery the Israelis agreed to sell natural gas to the Italian ENI and the Spanish Repsol from Tamar, which is their second largest gas field, holding more than 300 billion cubic meters of natural gas. See "Israel's Agreement with the Italian ENI and the Spanish Repsol".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/09/22/israels-agreement-with-the-italian-eni-and-the-spanish-repsol/>

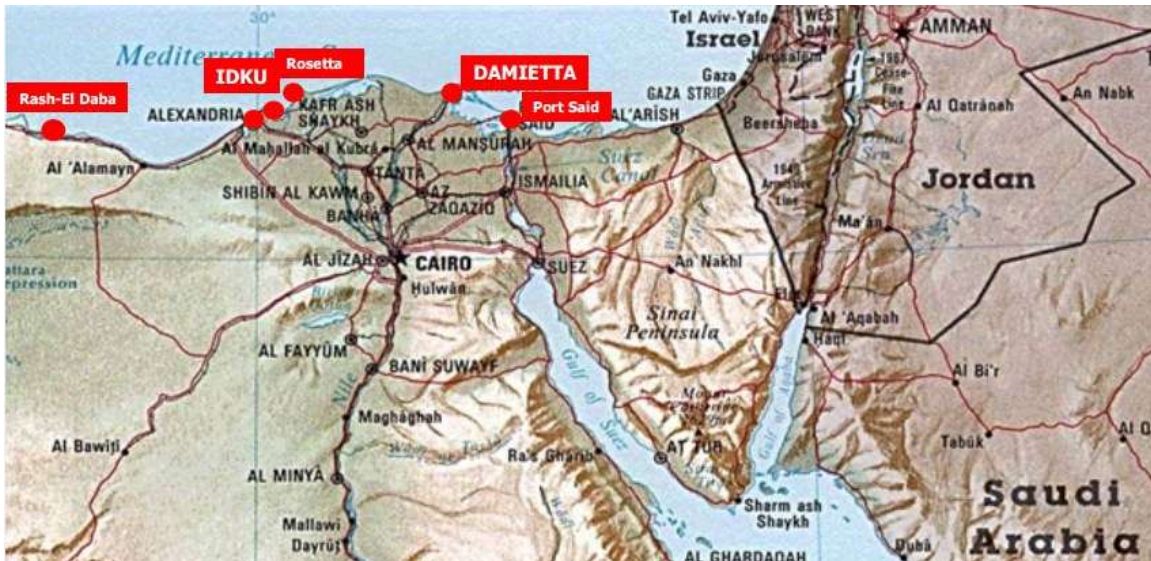
Map 2 Israeli Gas Fields : Leviathan and Tamar



<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/cyprus/2013-03-20/trouble-eastern-mediterranean-sea>

As you can see at the following map, Egypt's LNG facilities are located at the Nile Delta.

Map 3



https://www.eni.com/it_IT/attachments/investor-relations/presentazioni/2004/Damietta_PDFok.pdf

As you can read at the following Reuters article, titled “Damietta LNG plant files complaint against Egypt's EGAS –source”, April 2014, 80% of the LNG facility at the Egyptian port of Damietta belongs to ENI and Union Fenosa Gas (Repsol+La Caixa), and the rest 20% belongs to the Egyptian state-owned companies EGAS and EGPC.

2nd Paragraph

The Damietta LNG plant is 80 percent-owned by Union Fenosa Gas (UFG), a joint venture between Spain's Gas Natural and Italy's Eni. The remaining 20 percent is split evenly between state-owned companies EGAS and EGPC.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/24/egypt-gas-idUSL6N0DB30820130424>

For the shareholder structure of Union Fenosa Gas see “Israel’s Agreement with the Italian ENI and the Spanish Repsol”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/09/22/israels-agreement-with-the-italian-eni-and-the-spanish-repsol/>

For the Nile Delta see the following map.

Map 4



<http://www.tageo.com/index-e-eg-v-00-d-m467239.htm>

For Egypt's LNG facilities see also Wikipedia

“Overview of Infrastructure in Egypt”

In Egypt there are two liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities, Egyptian LNG and SEGAS, both of which are under the control of a consortium of national and international oil companies. The Egyptian LNG plant consists of two operating facilities located in Idku on the Mediterranean coastline, with a 3.6 million ton per year capacity each.[5] With the capability to accommodate the largest LNG vessels up to 160,000 cubic meters, the LNG port at Idku is the largest specialized LNG export facility in Egypt.[6] The SEGAS plant has a capacity of 5 million tons per year and is located in Damietta, further east of Idku and also on the Mediterranean.[7] There are plans to expand both terminals in the near future, depending on export policy changes.[8]

According the EIA country profile, around 70 percent of Egypt's natural gas is exported in the form of LNG, which amounted approximately 12.7 billion cubic meters in 2009. The In the same year, the United States was the largest recipient of Egyptian LNG, representing 35 percent of Egyptian LNG exports for the year and also 35 percent of U.S. LNG imports. Egyptian LNG export also went to Spain (32 percent) and France (13 percent) with smaller volumes travelling to Canada, Mexico, Asia and other European countries.[9]

http://wiki.openoil.net/index.php?title=Overview_of_Infrastructure_in_Egypt#LNG_Facilities

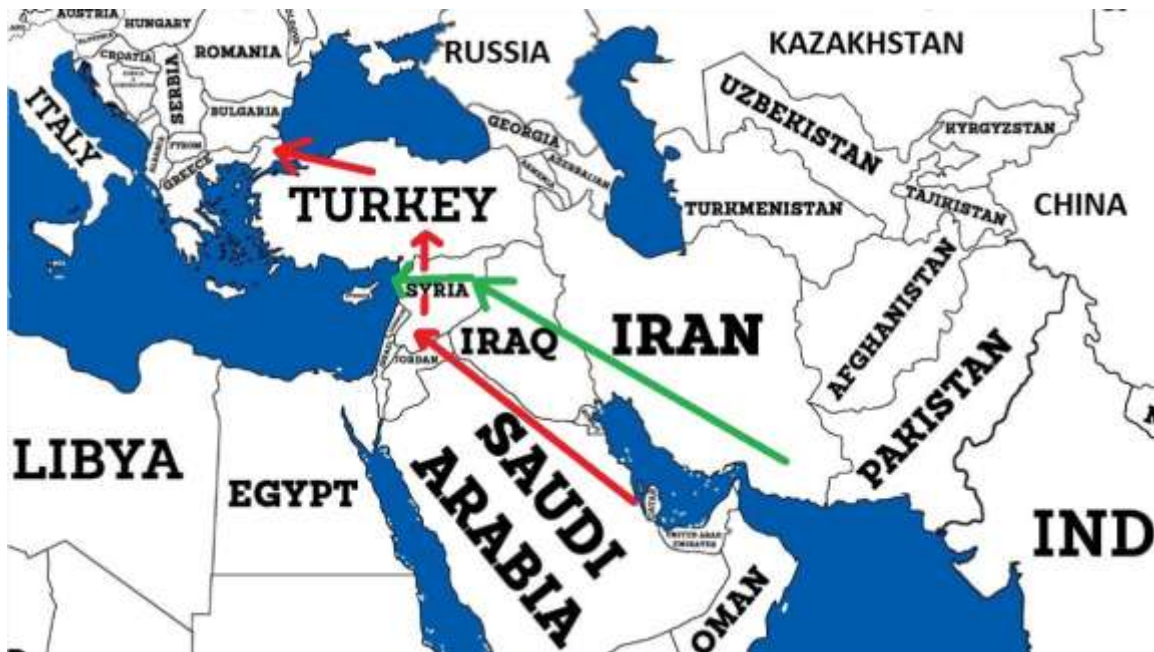
The Nile Delta with its LNG facilities is a threat for Turkey, Qatar and Iran, and it is vulnerable to terrorist attacks. See for example the following Breitbart article, titled “11 wounded in explosion in Egypt's Nile Delta”, October 2014.

<http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2014/10/17/11-wounded-in-explosion-in-egypt-s-nile-delta/>

ENI's growing presence in the East Mediterranean Sea is a big problem for Russia too. Russia is always trying to cause wars in the regions that threaten her energy policy. That's what Russia did in Syria. In 2009 Russia asked the

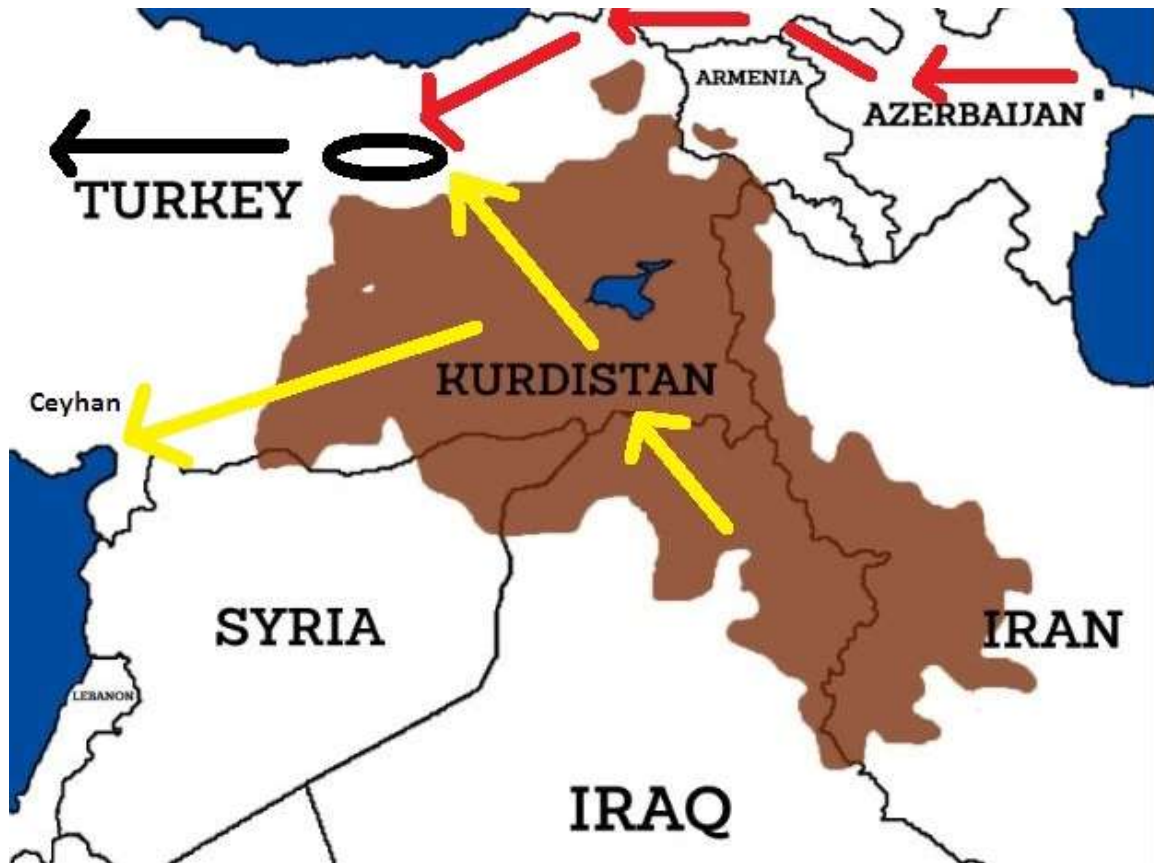
Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad to block the Qatar-Turkey-Europe pipeline, which was promoted by Turkey and Qatar, and in return Gazprom offered to construct the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline, and Syria agreed. The Turks and the Arabs of the Gulf were infuriated and attacked Syria. War was the best outcome for Russia. For Russia the Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline was not as bad as the Qatar-Syria one, but it was still pretty bad. It would still be competition for Russia in Europe. War was the optimal outcome for Russia.

Map 5 Iran-Iraq-Syria and Qatar-Turkey Pipelines



Russia used the same approach in the Turkish Kurdistan. Russia generously supported the Kurds of the PKK in Turkey, and a war between Turkey and the Kurds has almost broken out, which can block the Southern Energy Corridor.

Map 6 Kurdistan and Southern Energy Corridor



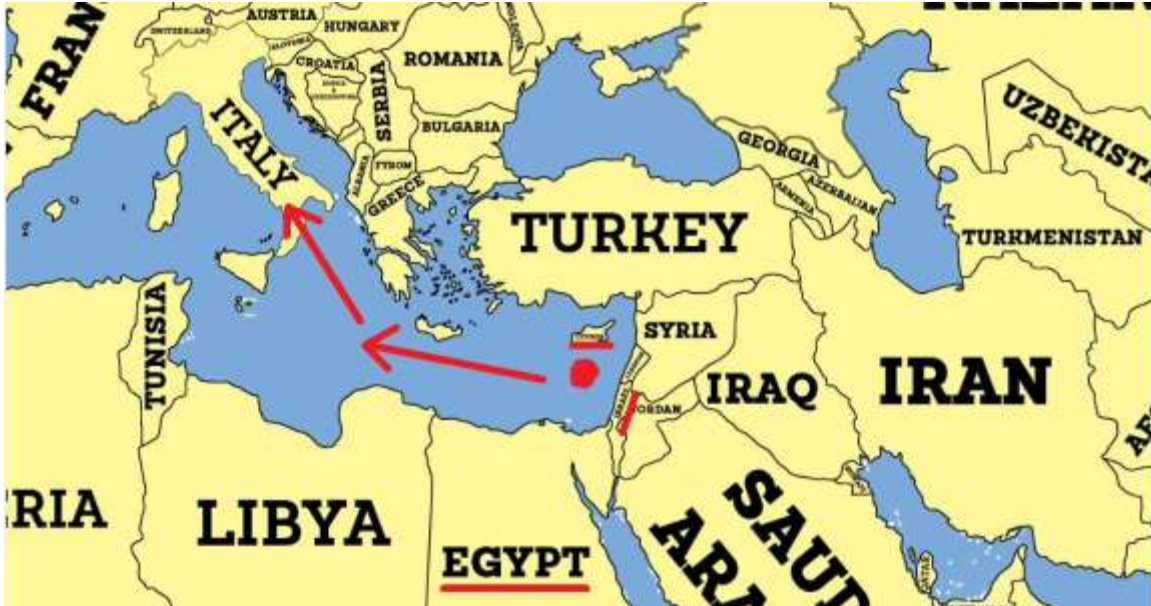
There is also a problem between the rich in oil and gas Kurds of Iraq and the poor Kurds of Turkey, because the Kurds of Iraq need Turkey in order to export their oil and gas. See also “Who is Responsible for the War”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/08/21/who-is-responsible-for-the-war-and-the-immigrants/>

Russia’s main export market is Europe, and the Russian energy policy is mainly about how to protect her oil and gas sales to Europe. Since Russia’s strategy is to cause war in the regions that threaten her energy policy i.e. her sales to Europe, we should assume that she will try to do exactly the same in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, a region posing a threat for Russian exports.

Russia has three options in order to destabilize the region. The first one is Egypt, the second one is Cyprus, and the third one is Israel.

Map 7



Cyprus is a member of the European Union, but a traditional Russian ally. Egypt was an ally of the Soviet Union until the mid 70s, when it became an American ally. Recently Egypt has moved towards Russia again, because the United States accepted the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Turkey was behind the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the Americans need Turkey a lot more than they need Egypt. The Russians know that the Americans need Turkey a lot more than they need Egypt, and therefore Egypt will need Russia. Therefore the Russians do not want to cause problems in the Egyptian-Russian relations. After all there is already a lot of turmoil in Egypt, because Turkey, Qatar and Iran are supporting many terrorist attacks against Egypt from Libya and the Gaza Strip.

Israel on the other hand depends on the US for its survival. Israel and Russia have significantly improved their relations due to their cooperation against the Islamist militants supported by Turkey and Qatar. Israel also gave Gazprom exclusive rights over a part of its second largest gas field Tamar. See Wall Street Journal “Gazprom Signs Deal to Market Israel's Tamar LNG Project”, February 2013.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887324338604578328231939157040>

However the Russians know that Israel is dependent on US for its survival, and if Israel has to choose between Russia and the United States it would have to go for the United States. Therefore Israel might be the ideal geographical location for Russia to start a war. At the following Stratfor article, titled “Russia Uses Syria to Influence Other Powers”, September 2015, you can read that the reason Russia is increasing her military presence in Syria is because she wants to put pressure on Israel and Turkey.

<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/russia-uses-syria-influence-other-powers>

At the following Business Insider article, titled “Hezbollah is joining a formal alliance with Russia, Iran, and the Syrian regime”, September 2015, you can read that Russia is forming an official alliance with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

http://www.businessinsider.com/hezbollah-is-joining-a-formal-alliance-with-russia-iran-and-the-syrian-regime-2015-9?nr_email_referer=1&utm_content=emailshare&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Tri

ggermail&utm_campaign=BI%20Select%20%28Wednesday%20Friday%29%202015-09-23&utm_term=Business%20Insider%20Select

Hezbollah is Israel's number one rival in Southern Lebanon, and it is a Shiite Muslim organization supported by Iran. If Hezbollah is supported by Russia she will be a lot more confident and a lot more aggressive towards Israel. Until now, if Syria and Lebanon attempted to bring weapons of mass destruction near Israel, Israel would destroy them. But now the Russians will have advanced radars, anti-aircraft missiles and aircrafts in Syria, and if they support Hezbollah they will make life much harder for Israel, because there will be a high probability of a clash between Russian and Israeli forces.

What I am trying to say with all the above is that Israel might be the best location which can be used by Russia to destabilize the region, and also punish Israel for its agreement with ENI and Repsol.

Israel and ENI are not the only "lucky" ones to worry about the rising Russian presence in Syria. Turkey is another player the Russians are aiming at. In August 2015 Russia signed an agreement for Nord Stream 2, which will double the capacity of the Russo-German network from 55 to 110 billion cubic meters per year. Turkey wants to send natural gas to Europe in order to earn transit fees and receive discounts on energy prices, but also to increase her geopolitical importance. If the Russians are flooding Europe with Russian gas through Germany, that goal becomes much harder for Turkey. After the Russians made the Nord Stream 2 agreement the Turks announced they would freeze discussion over the Turk Stream pipeline. The Turk Stream pipeline is a Russo-Turkish pipeline which will send Russian

natural gas to Europe through Turkey. Turkey of course prefers the Southern Energy Corridor (TANAP-TAP) which will provide Europe with an alternative for the Russian gas. The Turks have always made it clear that they are interested in the Turk Stream project as long as it does not pose a threat to the Southern Energy Corridor, and that's something that really annoys the Russians.

In August and September 2015 some major events took place. The Kurds of the PKK, which are mainly supported by Russia, attacked the South Caucasus Pipeline (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey). The Islamic State (ISIS) carried out its first attack in the Russian province of Dagestan. The Russians signed the agreement for the Nord Stream 2. The Turks announced they are freezing discussions for the Turk Steam Pipeline. The Russians increased their military presence in Syria. Therefore the increased Russian presence in Syria has three targets i.e. ENI, Israel and Turkey.

Everything I say is a simple discussion of what is happening today, and it does not mean that any of it will come true. Russia might sort things out with ENI, Israel or Turkey. I do not know what I will happen tomorrow. I am only discussing what is happening today.