

# The Geopolitics of Energy & Terrorism

## Part 5

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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 break 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.*

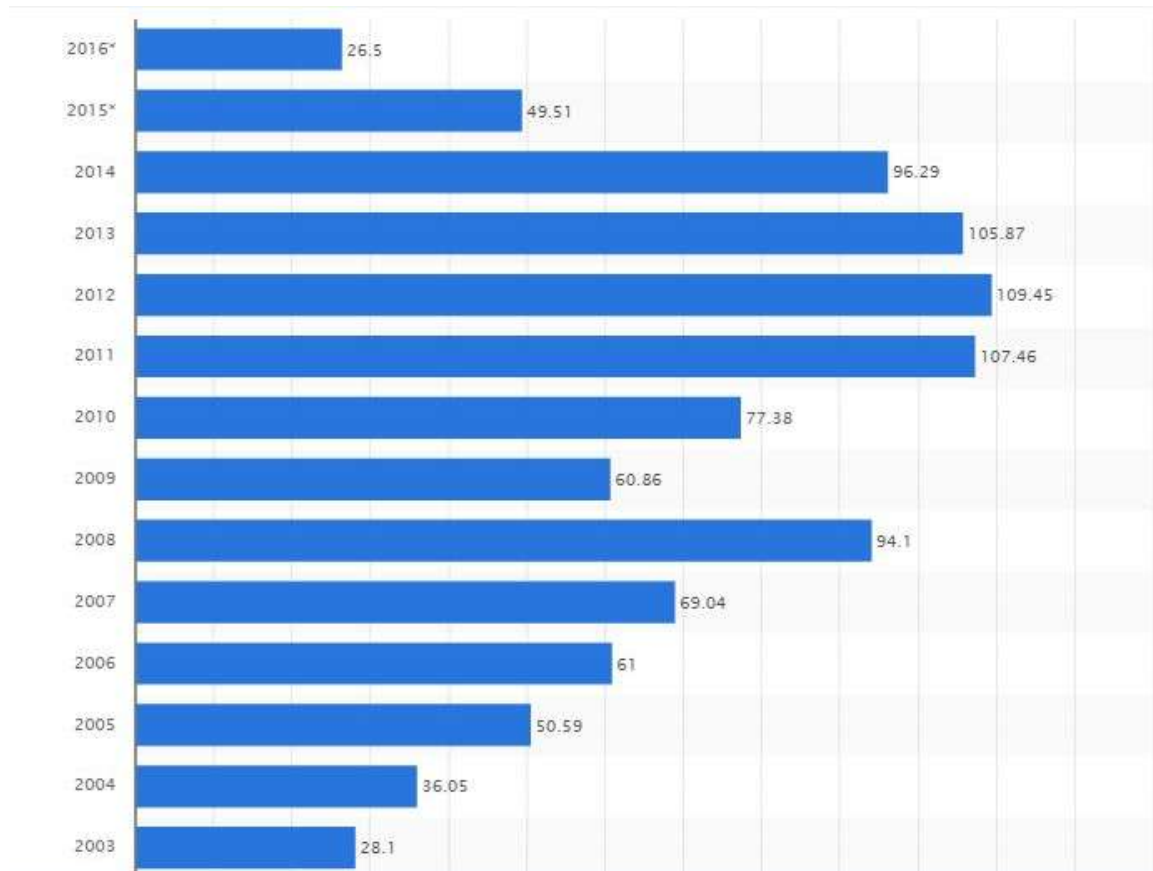
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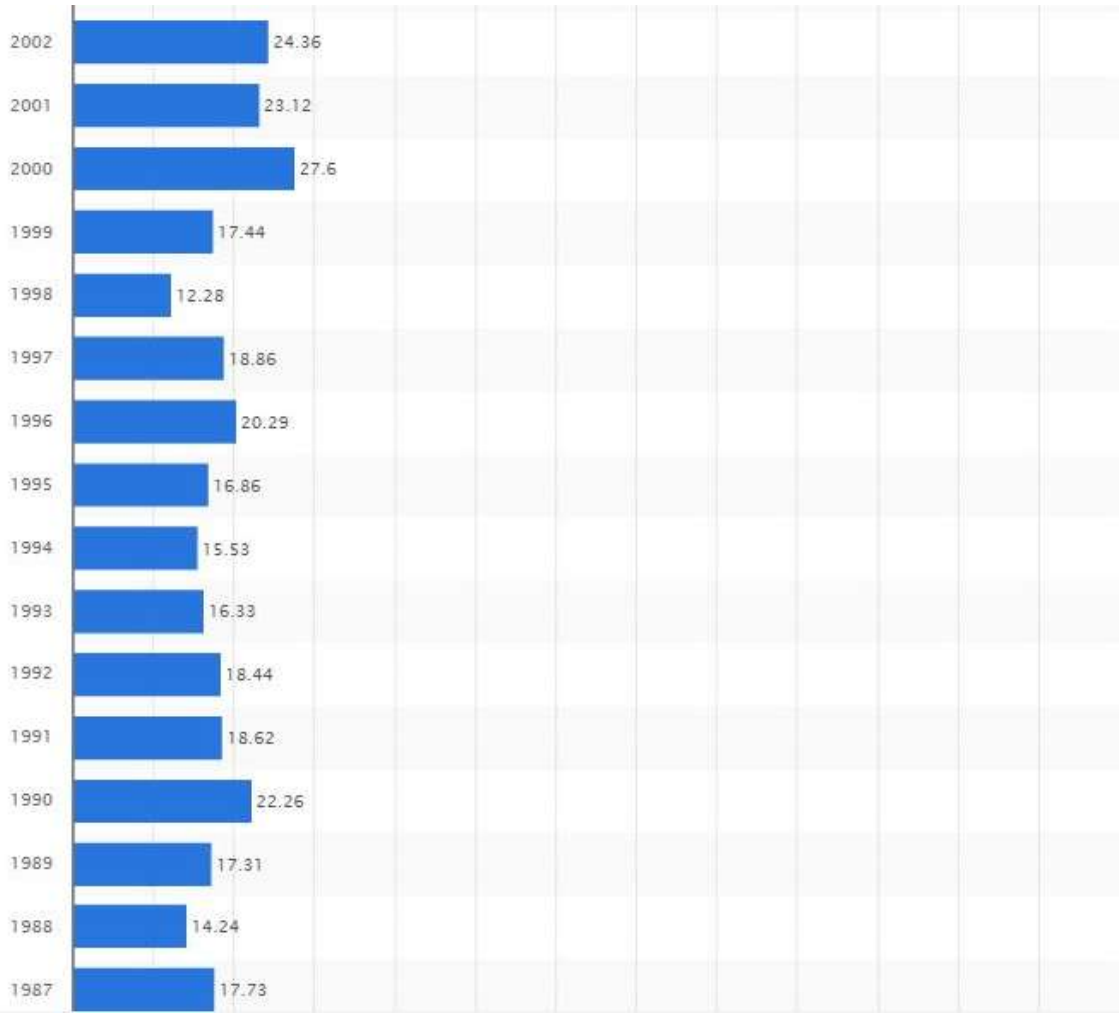
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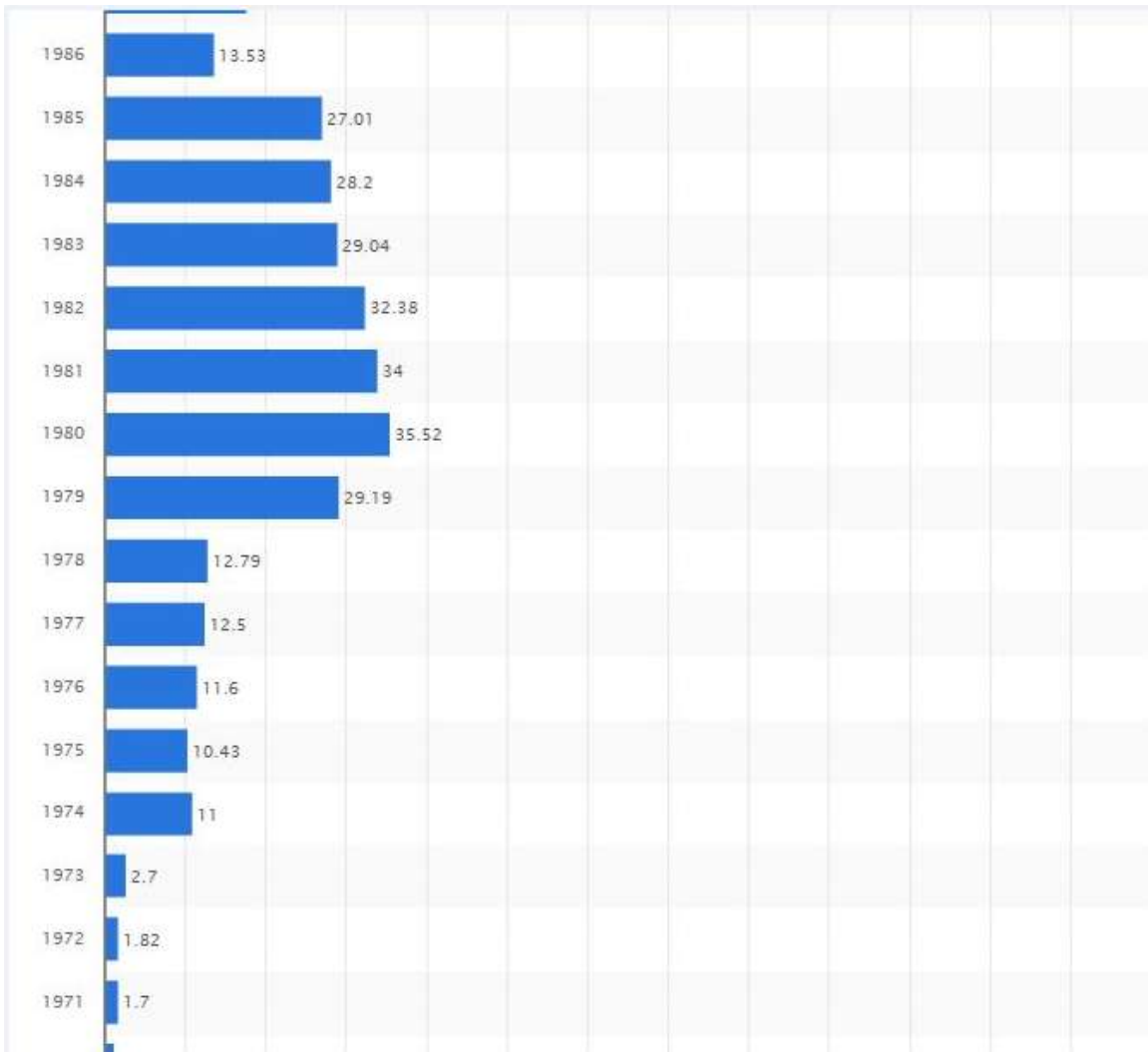
# Why it is Difficult for the Russians and the Saudis to Increase Oil Prices

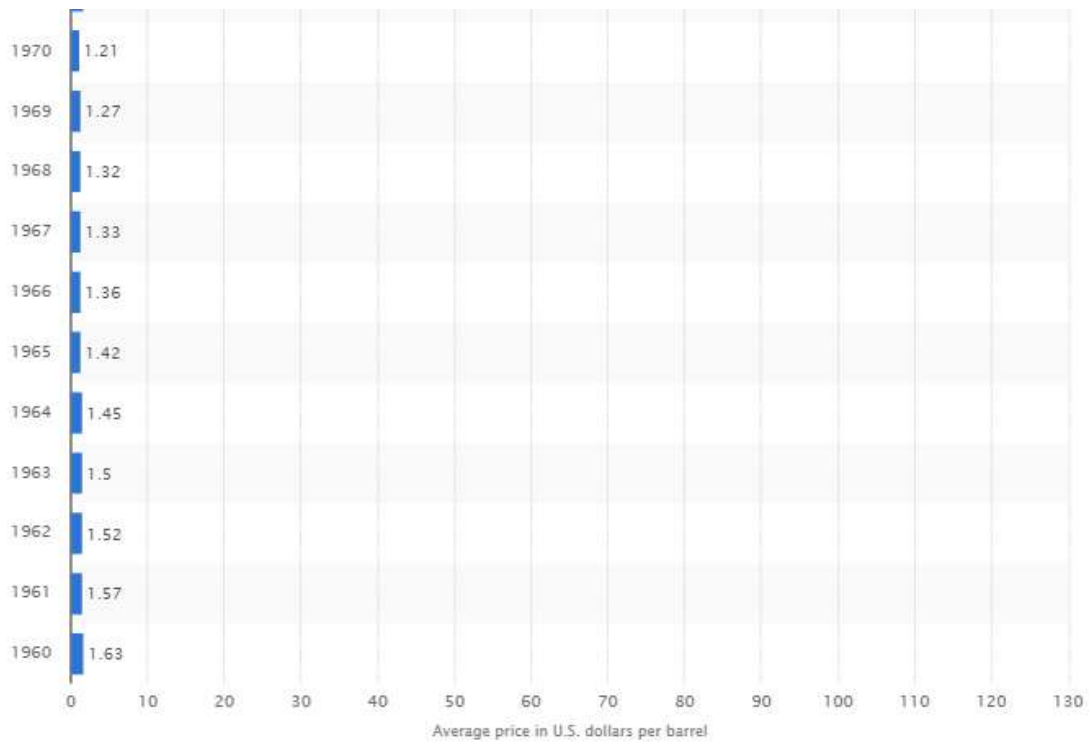
A very nice article from Forbes, that explains why it is currently very difficult for the international oil cartel to increase oil prices. The price of oil has collapsed below 30 dollars per barrel in 2016. The following tables from Statista depict average oil prices from 1960 to February 2016.

Average Oil Price 1960 – February 2016 Statista









<http://www.statista.com/statistics/262858/change-in-opec-crude-oil-prices-since-1960/>

Forbes refers to the agreement between Russian and Saudi Arabia. The two countries agreed to freeze their oil productions in order to boost prices. Russia and Saudi Arabia are the two largest exporters of oil. Qatar, and Venezuela have already accepted the deal. The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Oman have also said they will respect any deal reached by the major players. However the article says that for a number of reasons it is difficult for the agreement between Russia and Saudi Arabia to be effective i.e. increase oil prices.

First of all, at the moment the Russia and Saudi Arabia produce huge quantities, and freezing their production means they will keep producing



huge quantities, since the agreement does not involve reductions in oil productions.

Moreover, according to Forbes there is a credibility issue, and each party worries that the other parties will not respect the agreement in practice, and it also gives Russia as an example. In 2001 and 2008 Russia agreed to reduce her production but did not actually do so. According to Forbes Qatar is willing to monitor the deal in practise.

An even greater problem is that Iran refuses to freeze its production, because by December 2015 Iran was only producing 2.7 million barrels of oil per day, while Saudi Arabia is producing approximately 10 million barrels per day. Now that economic sanctions against Iran have been lifted, Iran wants to bring its production to a level of 5.7 million barrels per day by 2018.

Iraq is the other problem. Iraq is currently producing 4.35 barrels of oil per day, and it is planning to increase its production to 6 million barrels per day by 2020.

Finally there is the problem of the American energy companies that produce oil from shale rock. These are private companies and are not part of the international oil cartel. They will keep producing oil as long as they find a buyer for their oil, and as long as the price per barrel exceeds its cost of production. To fight the American companies the international oil cartel is hoping that Bernie Sanders will rise to power in United States, in order to heavily tax the American energy companies. By doing so Sanders will increase the price of oil in the United States, which in turn will make the oil

of the international oil cartel more competitive, and they will manage to gain a part of the share currently held by the American companies. See “American Politics in the Age of Oil : The Bernie Sanders Phenomenon”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/21/american-politics-in-the-age-of-oil-the-bernie-sanders-phenomenon/>

I must also say that after the American companies invented new production techniques which allowed the production of oil and gas from shale rock, the United States became the largest oil and gas producer in the world and they are a big problem for the international oil cartel, which is placing its hopes to people like Bernie Sanders and his likes.. It is true of course that due the huge volume of the American economy, the United States remain the largest importer of oil. See Bloomberg “U.S. Ousts Russia as Top World Oil, Gas Producer in BP Data”, June 2015

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-10/u-s-ousts-russia-as-world-s-top-oil-gas-producer-in-bp-report>

## **Articles**

“Despite Stillborn Deal, Saudi-Russian Petrodiplomacy Could Reshape The Future Of Oil”, February 2016

[http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2016/02/18/despite-stillborn-deal-saudi-russian-petrodiplomacy-could-reshape-the-future-of-oil/?utm\\_source=followingweekly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=20160222#274b81c749ae](http://www.forbes.com/sites/christopherhelman/2016/02/18/despite-stillborn-deal-saudi-russian-petrodiplomacy-could-reshape-the-future-of-oil/?utm_source=followingweekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20160222#274b81c749ae)

“Average annual OPEC crude oil price from 1960 to 2016 (in U.S. dollars per barrel)”, February 2016

<http://www.statista.com/statistics/262858/change-in-opec-crude-oil-prices-since-1960/>

## **France and the Arabs**

France decided to start bombing ISIS in Syria, something that will anger Turkey, and at the same time France decided to bring at the United Nations the issue of war crimes against the Assad regime, which is angering Russia and Iran. However with these moves France is pleasing a lot her allies in the Persian Gulf. There are many Franco-Arab projects in the energy sector, and France is also selling arms to the Arabs of the Gulf in multi-billion dollar agreements. France's last success was the sale of the two French Mistral warships to Egypt.

Each Mistral can carry 16 helicopters, 50 armored vehicles, and 700 men. The two Mistral warships were initially built for Russia, after an agreement between Sarkozy and Putin, but Francois Holland canceled the deal after the crisis in Ukraine.

Map 1



Saudi Arabia will finance a significant part of the new Egyptian toys. Saudi Arabia wants to create an Arab Force in order to look Turkey and Iran in the eye. Saudi Arabia and Egypt will be at the core of this Arab force. Egypt is the largest Arab country, and her great importance makes Egypt a very expensive ally. Saudi Arabia is watching a rising Turkish influence over Qatar, and rising Iranian influence over Oman and other small Arab countries, and she desperately needs a strong Arab coalition with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Egypt also bought from France 24 Rafale aircrafts in a 6 billion dollar deal. I guess that Saudi Arabia must have covered a part of this deal too. Qatar bought another 24 Rafale aircrafts, and the United Arab Emirates are discussing with France the purchase of some more. Therefore, no one should be surprised by seeing the French supporting the Arabs against Syria and Iran, but also against Turkey. The French bombing of ISIS is a move that is

more important for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, given Qatar's alliance with Turkey, and Turkey's influence over ISIS. Besides their alliance with the Arabs, the French have problematic relations with Turkey and Iran, with whom they are fighting for the uranium and other resources of Africa. France was the great power that mostly objected the agreement about Iran's nuclear program, and I do not think her alliance with the Arabs was the only reason. France is also fighting with Iran and China for the uranium of Niger, and if Iran expands its nuclear program, this struggle will become more intense.

The funny thing is that France's relations with the Arabs were very problematic until the 1960s, because Algeria was a French colony, and there was a war between France and the Arabs. There was also the issue with the socialist dictator of Egypt, Gamal Nasser, who was a Russian ally and who wanted to close the Suez Canal. As a result, France had many problems with the Arabs, and she was very close to Israel. France was Israel's main arms supplier until the special relation developed between Israel and the United States in the 60s under President Kennedy. Once France lost her colonies, and the United States became the dominant power of the Middle East, France normalized her relations with the Arabs. France wanted to cooperate with the Arabs in the energy sector and also in order to sell arms to them.

However until recently the Islamist Arab dictators of the Persian Gulf were mainly buying arms from the United States, and the socialist Arab dictators were buying arms from the Russians. But after the Arab-Chinese rapprochement and the American-Iranian rapprochement, the Islamist Arabs of the Gulf started feeling less comfortably about by purchasing arms only

from the United States. After all, they know that the Americans will have to adopt a more neutral stance between the Arabs and their new friends the Iranians. To make things worse, they cannot go only for Chinese or Russian arms because China and Russia have much stronger ties with Iran than they have with Saudi Arabia. Russia is also Saudi Arabia's main competitor in the oil markets.

Map 2



With the French on the other hand, the Arabs do not have such a problem. The French are fighting with the Iranians and the Chinese for the raw materials of North and Central Africa, and the Arabs know that the French will not be neutral between the Arabs and the Iranians. That's what it is meant by the following Time article, titled "The Real Reason Egypt Is Buying Fighter Jets From France",

February 2015. According to the Time, the real reason the Egyptians want to buy French weapons is because they want to diversify their supplies. That is also true for the Arabs of the Gulf as I already said. Especially now that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt want to form an Arab Force, which will be able to withstand the Turks and the Iranians. They need to buy weapons from a source a bit hostile towards the Iranians to have support in case of a potential crisis.

I must also say that the further strengthening of the Franco-Arab relations should generate a strengthening of the German-Iranian relations. It is true that there is the issue of Israel which is a thorn in the German-Iranian relations. Iran is openly asking for the extermination of Israel while Germany has been protecting Israel after World War 2. Germany has asked Iran to cool its position on Israel if Iran wants to bring the German-Iranian relations where they were in the past. For the last 60 years, the Germans have put Israel above their economic interests, and they have backed Israel both financially and diplomatically.

But can the Germans afford to keep protecting Israel in a period of deep economic crisis, with so many opportunities in Iran? The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, said that Germany will never be neutral towards Israel, as you can read at the following Jerusalem Post article, titled “Merkel: Germany will never be neutral on Israel”, September 2013. Only time will tell.

Relevant Articles



“France makes first air strikes against Isis in Syria”, September 2015

<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/09/27/financial-times-france-makes-first-air-strikes-against-isis-in-syria.html>

“France 'opens war crimes inquiry against Assad regime' in Syria: UN debate”, September 2015

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/11895857/Vladimir-Putin-and-Barack-Obama-speak-at-UN-General-Assembly-live.html>

“Egypt to buy Mistral-class warships France originally built for Russia”, September 2015

<http://www.worldtribune.com/egypt-to-buy-mistral-class-warships-france-originally-built-for-russia/>

“Qatar agrees to buy 24 Rafale fighter jets from France”, May 2015

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/05/qatar-agrees-buy-24-rafale-fighter-jets-france-150504100952250.html>

“UAE Restarts Rafale Talks With France”, May 2015

<http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/04/19/uae-restarts-rafale-talks-with-france/25870693/>

“The Real Reason Egypt Is Buying Fighter Jets From France”,  
February 2015

<http://time.com/3710118/egypt-rafale-fighter-jet-france/>

“Merkel: Germany will never be neutral on Israel”, September 2013

<http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Merkel-Germany-will-never-be-neutral-on-Israel-322579>

“The Iran deal puts Germany between a rock and a hard place”,  
July 2015

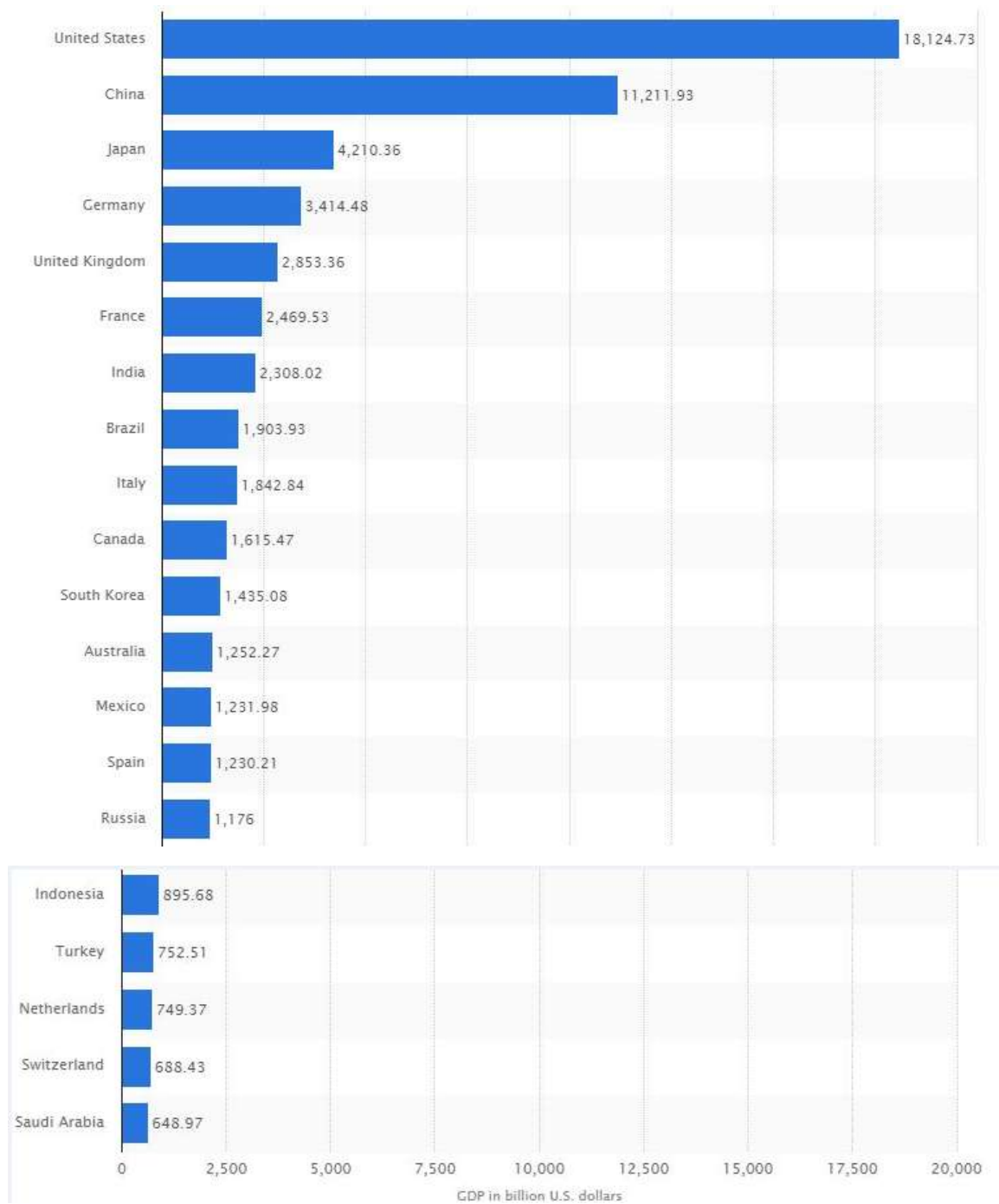
[http://www.businessinsider.com/iran-deal-germany-2015-7?nr\\_email\\_referer=1&utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=Business%20Insider%20Select&utm\\_campaign=BI%20Select%20%28Tuesday%20Thursday%29%202015-07-23&utm\\_content=BISelect](http://www.businessinsider.com/iran-deal-germany-2015-7?nr_email_referer=1&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Business%20Insider%20Select&utm_campaign=BI%20Select%20%28Tuesday%20Thursday%29%202015-07-23&utm_content=BISelect)

“France's Relentless Hostility to the Jewish State”, February 2016

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/7442/france-hostility-israel>



Picture 2 Countries Ranked According to GDP



<http://www.statista.com/statistics/268173/countries-with-the-largest-gross-domestic-product-gdp/>

Japan had difficult relations with both North and South Korea, because from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the Second World War, the Korean peninsula was a Japanese colony. Japan left the Korean peninsula after she was defeated in WW2 (1945). For 20 years South Korea was not willing to establish diplomatic relations with Japan, something that was finally done in 1965. North Korea never established official diplomatic relations with Japan.

I must also say that during the Korean War of 1950-1953, the Soviets and the Chinese supported the Communists of Korea, and the Americans supported the nationalist socialists. Finally the Korean peninsula was divided, with the Communists taking the Northern and the national socialists taking the Southern part of the country. What happened in Vietnam did not happen in Korea. In Vietnam the Soviet and the Chinese supported the communists at the north of the country, and the Americans supported the nationalist socialists at the south. In the end the Vietnamese communists won the whole country. That's not what happened in Korea.

The Korean national socialists, due to their alliance with the West, gradually introduced a liberal economic model, and they made South Korea the economic power that she is today. Korea is a very good example of what happens to countries that are willing to follow liberal policies, and what happens to countries that follow socialist policies. Look at South Korea and North Korea today, and that's all it takes to realize the difference between the liberal and the socialist worlds. Even though I have to admit that South Korea is not at the top of the list with the most liberal countries, as you can

see at the following table. South Korea is 28<sup>th</sup> in the list. Actually that's not that bad. The figures were taken on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015.

Picture 3 List of Countries According to How Liberal they Are

FREE (100-80)							
RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE
1	Hong Kong	89.6	-0.5 ▼	4	Australia	81.4	-0.6 ▼
2	Singapore	89.4	0.0 ▬	5	Switzerland	80.5	-1.1 ▼
3	New Zealand	82.1	+0.9 ▲				
MOSTLY FREE (79.9-70)							
RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE
6	Canada	79.1	-1.1 ▼	21	Luxembourg	73.2	-1.0 ▼
7	Chile	78.5	-0.2 ▼	22	Georgia	73.0	+0.4 ▲
8	Estonia	76.8	+0.9 ▲	23	Sweden	72.7	-0.4 ▼
9	Ireland	76.6	+0.4 ▲	24	Czech Republic	72.5	+0.3 ▲
10	Mauritius	76.4	-0.1 ▼	25	United Arab Emirates	72.4	+1.0 ▲
11	Denmark	76.3	+0.2 ▲	26	Iceland	72.0	-0.4 ▼
12	United States	76.2	+0.7 ▲	27	Norway	71.8	+0.9 ▲
13	United Kingdom	75.8	+0.9 ▲	28	Colombia	71.7	+1.0 ▲
14	Taiwan	75.1	+1.2 ▲	29	South Korea	71.5	+0.3 ▲
15	Lithuania	74.7	+1.7 ▲	30	Austria	71.2	-1.2 ▼

<http://www.heritage.org/index/ranking>

The Japanese were very tough conquerors for the Koreans. For example they were forcing the women of Korea to work in the brothels of the Japanese army, something that the Koreans never forgot. The South Koreans believe that the Japanese have not compensated them enough for what they had

suffered under the Japanese occupation. However the Japanese and the South Koreans are on the same side, and even though there is still a lot of suspicion between the two, they became very strong trading partners. They even had to cooperate on defense issues because they face China and North Korea as common enemies. As you can read at the following World Tribune article the leaders of the two countries agreed to further cooperate on the issue of the nuclear program of North Korea.

What is also very important for the two countries is that they have territorial disputes, because they have not agreed on their exclusive economic zones. There are disputed islets i.e. the Liancourt Rocs. Obviously both countries hope to find in the future significant offshore oil and gas reserves.

Picture 4 Liancourt Rocks



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Location-of-Liancourt-rocks-en.png>

For the article see:

“Japan, S. Korea break the ice, agree to address unresolved ‘comfort women’ issue”, November 2015

<http://www.worldtribune.com/japan-s-korea-break-the-ice-agree-to-address-unresolved-comfort-women-issue/>



## **EU, Russia and the American Oil Exports**

After the war of October 1973 between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other, the Arab countries reduced their oil productions in order to protest for the NATO support to Israel. The NATO allies i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, followed the embargo imposed on the West by the Russian allies i.e. Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Egypt and Syria, in an effort to demonstrate some Arab unity. Actually reduced production meant higher prices and it was good for all oil producers. The embargo lasted for approximately 5 months and led to a 300% increase in oil prices. This sharp increase in oil prices severely affected the global economy.

As a response to the Arab oil embargo of October 1973, the addicted to oil imports United States passed the Energy Policy and Conservation Act in 1975, which forbade exports of American oil and gas, in order to enhance the energy autonomy of the American economy. It is the private sector which produces oil and natural gas in United States, i.e. ExxonMobil, Chevron, ConocoPhillips etc, but nonetheless they do not have the right to export the oil and gas they produce in the United States, unless they obtain special oil export permissions, which are very hard to get.

Most of the exceptions refer to practical or geopolitical issues. For example the United States produce a lot of oil from Alaska at the Arctic Ocean, and it is more cost efficient to export it to Canada, and exchange it for Canadian oil. Canada is the United State's largest oil supplier, and it produces most of its oil from its southern province Alberta. The same is true for Mexico,

which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest supplier of oil for the US, because the US produces a lot of oil from the Gulf of Mexico. See the following table and map.

Picture 1

Country	Imports	% of Total in 2013	% Change since 2003
1. Canada	2.57	33.3%	65.8%
2. Saudi Arabia	1.33	17.2%	-23.2%
3. Mexico	0.85	11.0%	-45.8%
4. Venezuela	0.76	9.8%	-36.2%
5. Colombia	0.37	4.8%	121.1%
6. Iraq	0.34	4.4%	-29.1%
7. Kuwait	0.33	4.2%	56.7%
8. Nigeria	0.24	3.1%	-71.3%
9. Ecuador	0.23	3.0%	64.0%
10. Angola	0.20	2.6%	-44.4%

Data from Energy Information Administration

© Robert Rapier

*Top 10 Sources of US Crude Oil Imports in 2013 (million barrels per day).*

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Where-The-US-Got-Its-Oil-in-2013.html>

Picture 2



But what the United States does with Mexico and Canada is not really oil exporting, since they import a lot than they export from these two countries. It is really an exchange of oil and gas in order to reduce energy prices.

Due to its struggle with Russia in recent years, the European Union is putting pressure on the US, and asks for a lift on the ban of oil and gas exports, because the EU is heavily dependent on Russian oil and gas. Russia is the largest oil and gas supplier of the European Union, and the American oil and gas would give the EU an extra bargaining chip against Russia. However the American regulations only allow oil and gas exports to

countries that have formed with the US free trade zones, as it is the case with Canada and Mexico. For this reason the European Union is promoting the Trans-Atlantic Investment Partnership TTIP, which will create a free trade zone between the European Union and the US. That means there will be no customs and tariffs in the trade between USA and the EU. However the free trade zone is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one, in order for the US authorities to allow American oil and gas exports. Export licenses would still have to be obtained for American oil and gas to be exported to Europe. Therefore the European Union is pressing the US to include energy in the Trans-Atlantic Investment Partnership, as you can read at the following Wall Street Journal article, titled “EU Wants U.S. to Lift Ban on Oil Exports”, May 2015.

“EU Wants U.S. to Lift Ban on Oil Exports”, του Μαΐου 2015

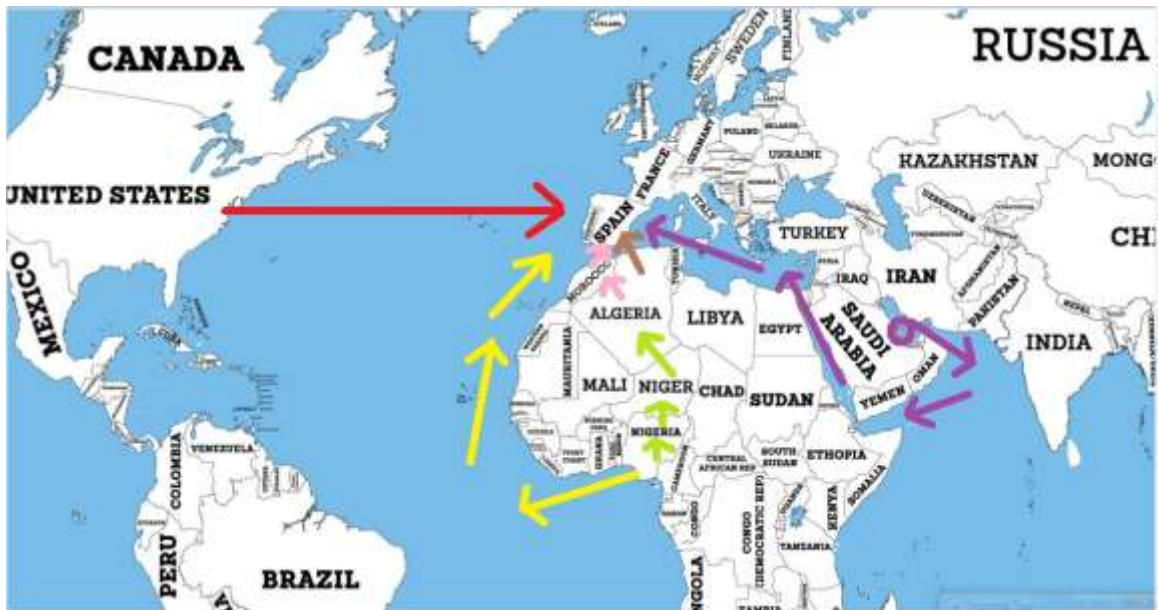
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-wants-u-s-to-lift-ban-on-oil-exports-1431885401>

In the United States there are those who believe that the US should make an exception for the European Union, in order to help the European Commission in its struggle with Russia. There are also those who believe that the United States should stay focused on its goal for energy independence. What is for sure is that the American oil and gas cannot be a substitute for the Russian oil and gas, because due to her geographical advantage Russia is Europe’s natural oil and gas supplier, together with Northern Africa of course. However even the possibility of the American oil and gas would put extra pressure on Russia. Especially in case of a war,

when prices would not be the major consideration, the American oil and gas would be a game changer.

Spain is hopping to provide Europe with an alternative to the Russian oil and gas. See the following map.

Picture 3



Spain is connected to Algeria through the Mahgreb Pipeline (Algeria-Morocco-Spain) and the Medgaz Pipeline (Algeria-Spain), and can also receive the natural gas of Nigeria, if the Trans-Saharan Pipeline (Nigeria-Niger-Algeria) manages to pass the terrorist Islamist organization of Boko Haram. Spain can also receive American, Nigerian and Qatar liquefied natural gas from the sea. The sea is safer because there are not jihadists in the sea.

At the following Financial Times article, titled “Spain positions itself as alternative to Russian energy supply”, March 2014, you will read that Spain

buys all of her natural gas from non-Russian sources, and she hopes to provide Europe with an alternative to the Russian gas. The article says that Spain has the largest LNG facilities in Europe, and that 6 out of the 21 LNG European facilities are Spanish, and that the Spaniards are preparing a 7<sup>th</sup> one.

“Spain positions itself as alternative to Russian energy supply”, του Μαρτίου 2014

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/9363e834-b5c4-11e3-81cb-00144feabdc0.html>

For the moment Spain receives most of her LNG from Qatar, and this is one of the reasons that Spain is so aggressive towards Israel.

For the American oil exports see also the following articles.

“Why The U.S. Bans Crude Oil Exports: A Brief History”, March 2014

<http://www.ibtimes.com/why-us-bans-crude-oil-exports-brief-history-1562689>

“Oil Export Myths”, January 2015

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-export-myths-1421451968>

“The U.S. is not opening the tap on crude oil exports”, August 2012

<http://fortune.com/2015/08/17/oil-export-ban/>

## **Netanyahu, Hitler and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem**

Recently there was too much fuss, when Netanyahu said that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was trying to persuade Hitler to kill European Jews instead of deporting them. The Arab Haj Amin al-Husseini was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem during the Second World War. The Grand Mufti is the highest religious position that a Sunni Muslim can hold.

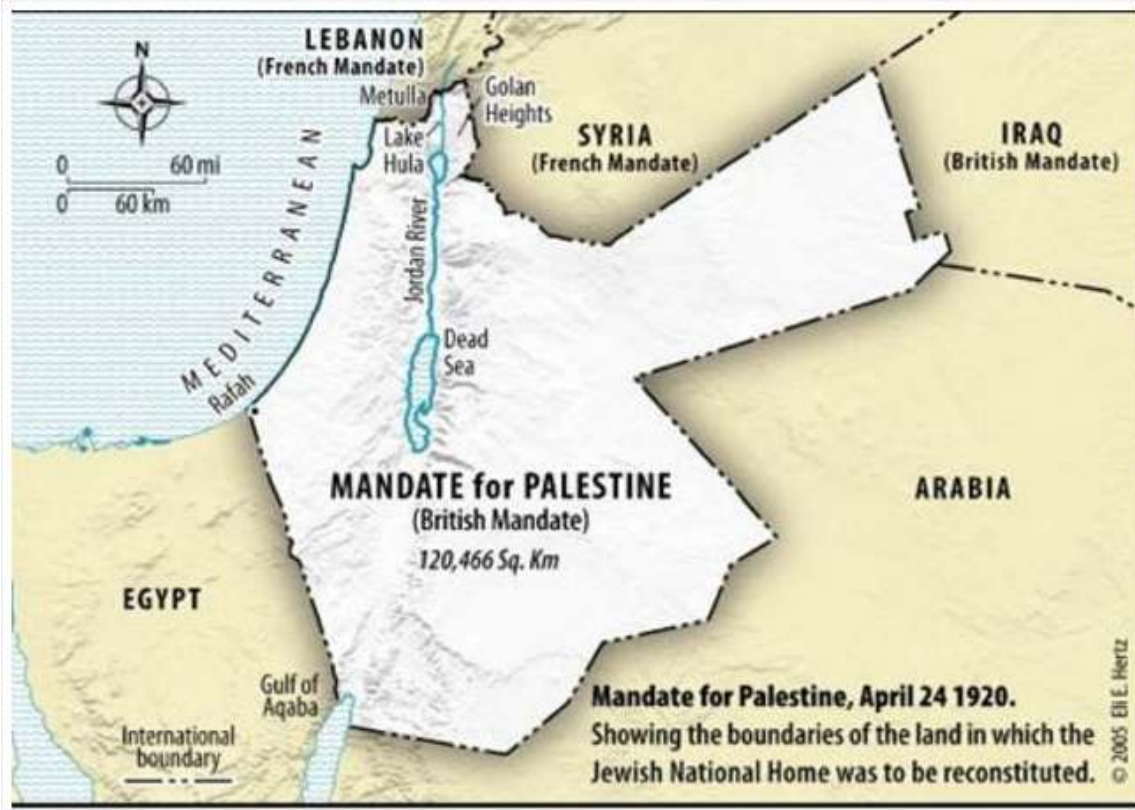
What Netanyahu said was true and I am surprised that there was so much fuss about it. And I want to explain why this is so, but unfortunately I need to say very few things about the background of the meeting between Adolf Hitler and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in November 1941.

Before World War 1 the Ottomans controlled most of the Middle East, and most specifically the regions which today are Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, and a large part of Saudi Arabia too. The Ottomans were allies of Germany, and therefore the British allied with the Arabs against the Ottomans. The British promised the Arabs that if the Ottomans were defeated they would help them establish Arab states in the areas of the Middle East that were controlled by the Ottomans.

In exactly the same way the British asked the Jews for help, with the promise that they would help them establish a Jewish state in Palestine (Israel+Jordan). That was made with a formal declaration of Great Britain i.e. the Balfur Declaration. At the time Palestine (Israel+Jordan) was an

underdeveloped region with less than 1 million inhabitants. For Palestine see the following map.

Map 1 Palestine

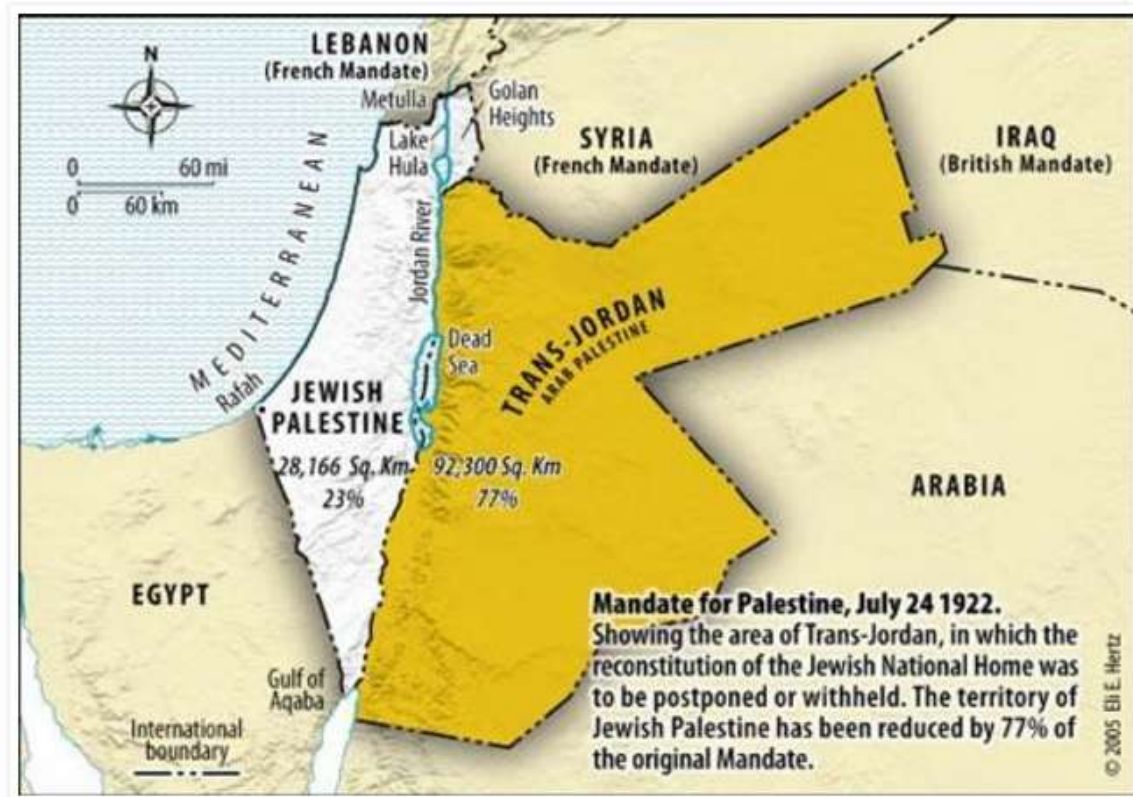


[http://www.mythsandfacts.org/replyonlineedition/images/maps/1920-mandate\\_for\\_palestine.jpg](http://www.mythsandfacts.org/replyonlineedition/images/maps/1920-mandate_for_palestine.jpg)

However after World War 1, the British established the Arab states of Iraq and Syria, but under Arab pressure they failed to do the same thing for the Jews and Palestine. To make things worse, the British gave the largest part of Palestine (Jordan) to their Arab allies, keeping what remained (Israel) under their control. That was the smallest part of Palestine, and almost all of its southern part was desert.



## Map 2 The Partition of Palestine



[http://www.mythsandfacts.org/media/user/images/1922-mandate\\_for\\_palestine.jpg](http://www.mythsandfacts.org/media/user/images/1922-mandate_for_palestine.jpg)

As a result the Arabs and the Jews started killing each other, while at the same time they were both attacking the British with terrorist attacks. The word “Palestinian” does not refer to Arabs. It refers to Palestinian Arabs, to Palestinian Jews, to Palestinian Christians etc. Unfortunately with their immense strength in media and politics the Arabs have managed to keep the word “Palestinian” only for them. Unfortunately oil can buy almost anything.

But let me continue with what Netanyahu said about Hitler and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Because of the situation I just described, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem at the time, found in Hitler an ideal ally. What Netanyahu said is absolutely true. In the beginning, during the 1930's and before the outbreak of World War II, Hitler preferred to deport the Jews of Germany rather than killing them. Hitler was afraid of the international outcry that would follow the mass killings of millions of people. And that is proved by Hitler's policies. Hitler was stealing their money and then he was deporting the German Jews. He was not killing them.

At the time a Holocaust would be much more convenient for the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Arabs of Palestine than for Hitler himself. Many of the Jews that would be deported by Hitler would end up in Palestine fighting the Arabs. And that's exactly what the Grand Mufti asked from Hitler. He asked Hitler to kill instead of deporting the Jews during their meeting in November 1941.

But of course that does not mean that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem had the power to carry out the Holocaust if Hitler did not agree with him. But It DOES mean that the Grand Mufti was a more enthusiastic supporter of the Holocaust than Hitler himself. In January 1942 Hitler decided to go ahead with the Final Solution and the extermination of the European Jews. Note that the meeting of the Grand Mufti with Hitler in November 1941 was very close to Hitler's decision for the Final Solution in January 1942. Hitler was conquering the whole of Europe, and he was finding again and again the Jews that he had been deporting. Moreover Hitler was himself afraid that if he was to keep deporting the Jews they would have no where else to go than

Palestine, and Hitler would have to fight them during his war for the oil of the Middle East.

Therefore what Netanyahu says is a fact. The reason that historians have objections is because the Grand Mufti did not have the power to carry out the Holocaust. But Netanyahu did not say that he did. He simply said that the Grand Mufti was asking for the Holocaust before Hitler had taken his final decisions.

As far as Merkel is concerned, what could have she said? She could have not possibly agreed with Netanyahu, because that would cause Germany a great deal of troubles with the Muslims. She already has many problems with the Muslims. I do not think she needs anymore of it. She knows that what Netanyahu says is absolutely true, and she knows that the historical responsibility for the Holocaust belongs to Germany. That is not going to change because the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was a more enthusiastic supporter of the Holocaust than Hitler himself.

I also want to say one more thing. Most people do not know that there was never an Arab state called Palestine. Palestine was part of various empires. I am saying that because the Islamist and socialist propaganda circulate a fake map of Palestine, which implies that Israel used to be an Arab Palestinian state, which was later stolen by the Jews.

Ma 3 The Fake Map of Palestine

## DISAPPEARING PALESTINE



As I said at the time Palestine was an underdeveloped region with less than 1 million people leaving there i.e. in Israel and Jordan. Gradually the Arabs and the Jews started sending people to Palestine in a race to gain control. Moreover Israel's southern part is mainly a desert which had no inhabitants at all at the time. You can read about the propaganda about the map at the following Economist article, titled "This map is not the territories", March 2010.

I must also say that after WWII the English did not keep their promises to the Jews, and after giving the largest part of Palestine (Jordan) to their Arab allies, they gave the best part of what remained (Israel) to the Arabs too. Actually it was not only the English who did that. It was the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947. After the partition the Jews started celebrating like

crazy for their new state, while the Arabs launched a war against them, during which the Jews gained more territories.

Map 4 The Un Partition Plan of 1947



The truth is that the Arabs do not accept a Jewish state, and that's why they never recognized Israel. All the rest is Islamist and socialist propaganda in

Europe and the United States. The Islamist Arabs are more honest because they admit they want to kill all the Jews. The socialist Arabs are foxier, and even though they have exactly the same plans with the Islamists, they use various pretexts, in order to convince the public opinion in Europe and America. In that respect I consider the Islamist Arabs as less dangerous, because it is easier for European and American citizens to understand what the real problem is.

For the Economist article and the false map of Palestine see

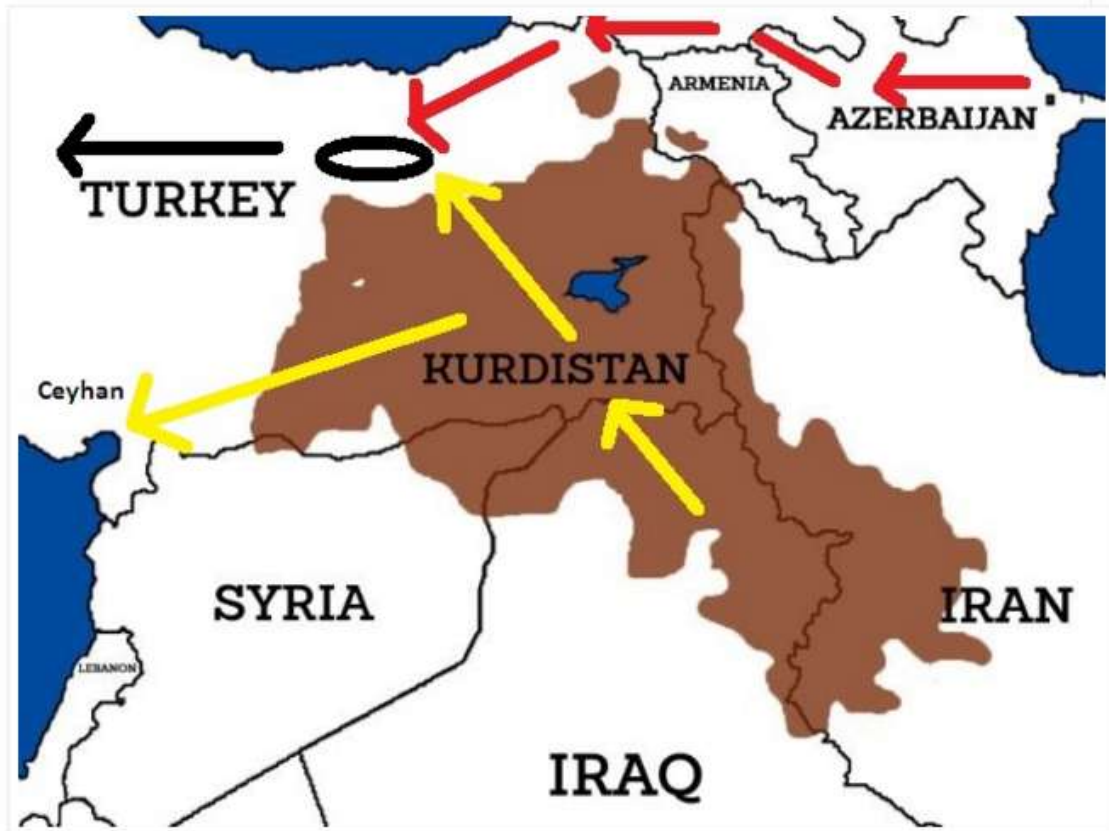
“This map is not the territories”, March 2010

[http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2010/03/israel\\_and\\_palestine\\_0](http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2010/03/israel_and_palestine_0)

## The PKK Opposes Iraq-Turkey Pipeline

As you can read at the following article from Rudaw, the PKK does not accept the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Northern Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan) to Turkey. Such a pipeline would necessarily have to pass from the Turkish Kurdistan too (see the map). The PKK is a Kurdish organization in Turkey, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by the US and Turkey, it is supported by Russia, and it has indeed carried out many terrorist attacks in Turkey. Rudaw is a Kurdish site from the Iraqi Kurdistan.

Map 1 Kurdistan



Many times I have referred to the Kurds, and their separation between the Kurds of Syria, Turkey and Iran, who are poor in oil and gas, and the Kurds of Iraq, who are very rich in oil and gas, and who need Turkey in order to export their oil and gas. The PKK is the big obstacle for the construction of a pipeline from Iraqi Kurdistan to Turkey, and that's the reason there is now a war in East Turkey, between the Turkish government and the Kurds of Turkey (PKK).

“PKK official says group opposes KRG-Turkey natural gas agreement”,  
February 2016

<http://rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/180220161>

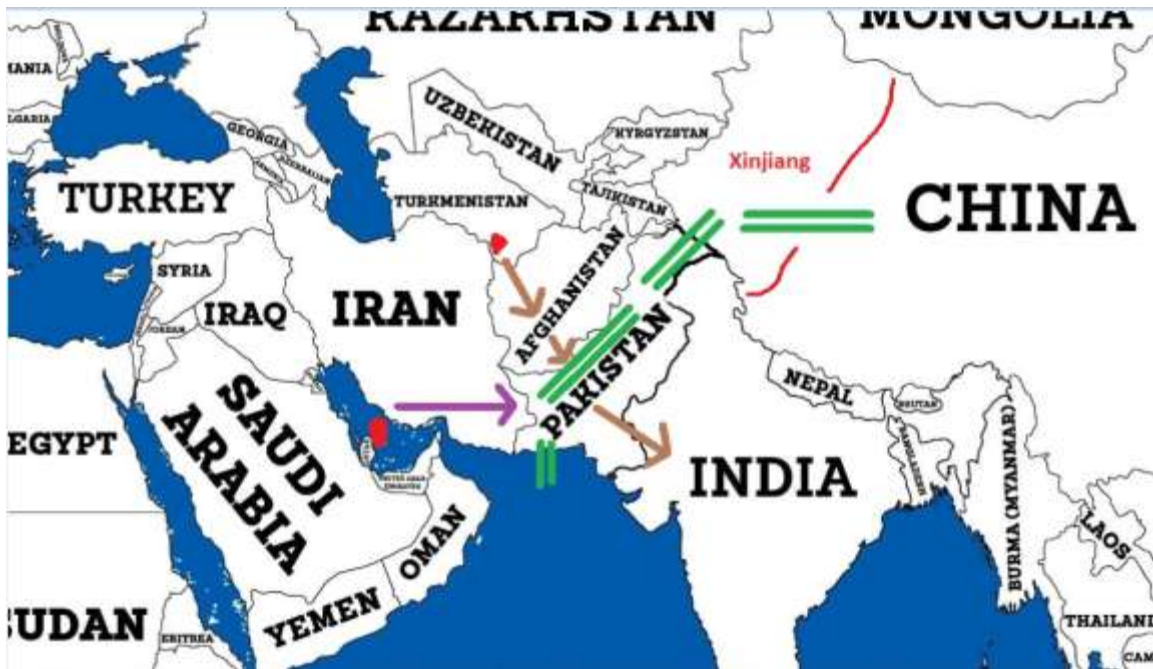
“Turkey, Kurds in duel over energy”, February 2016

[http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/turkey-and-the-kurds-energy-security-28260?utm\\_content=buffer4ef0b&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/turkey-and-the-kurds-energy-security-28260?utm_content=buffer4ef0b&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)



## Pakistan VS the Taliban

A very nice article by the National Interest, titled “The Taliban Comes to the Table: Could the Afghan War Finally Wind Down?”, July 2015. The article refers to Pakistan’s effort to bring peace in Afghanistan.

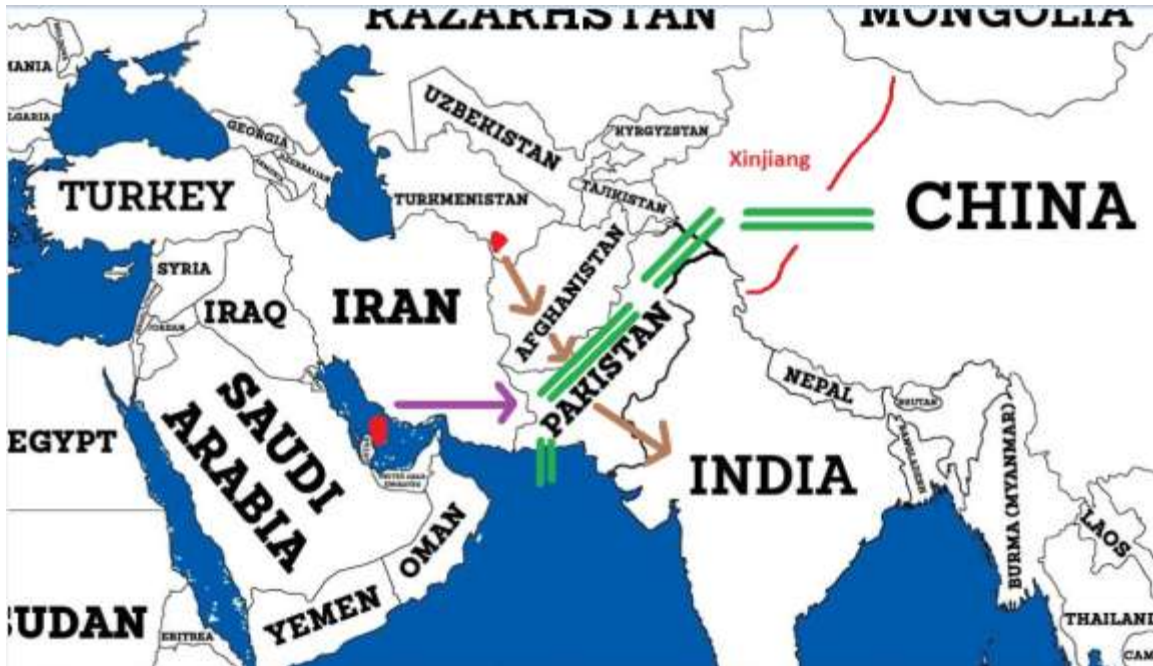


Before referring to the article I have to describe the geopolitical landscape of Pakistan. There are three main economic factors that shape the Pakistani geopolitical landscape. The first one is the red blot in the Persian Gulf, which represents the largest natural gas field in the world, the South Pars/North Field, which is jointly owned by Iran and Qatar, and which holds approximately 50 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Iran wants to send that gas to Pakistan, through the Iran-Pakistan natural gas, and from there to

China. Iran could do that together with Qatar, if the two countries manage to work things out.

The second economic factor is the red blot in East Turkmenistan, which represents the second largest natural gas field in the world, the Galkynysh, which holds approximately 20 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Turkmenistan, Pakistan and India, supported by the US, want to send this natural gas to India and the Indian Ocean through the TAPI pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India). For the time being Turkmenistan is totally dependent on China, because only China can buy the Turkmen gas. Iran and Russia block the Trans-Caspian pipeline which could send the Turkmen natural gas to Europe through Turkey.

The third economic factor that shapes the Pakistani geopolitical landscape is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which is promoted by China, and it is part of the New Silk Roads which are promoted by China, and it involves investments of over 40 billion dollars. The New Silk Roads refer to a network of highways, railways, ports and pipelines which are promoted by China. China wants to use this network in order to receive raw materials from other countries, and in order to export her products to the rest of the world too.



Pakistan is at the epicenter of these three mega-projects. These projects can really change Pakistan, since Pakistan is the only country that is involved in all three of them. The problem is that these projects require political stability, something that Pakistan cannot offer. Pakistan is supported by the US and China in its effort to bring political stability in a very volatile region, in order to promote the Pakistani economic interests too.

In Afghanistan terrorism is a daily routine. The same is true in Pakistan that had over 3.300 victims from terrorist attacks only in 2009. Besides terrorism, there is a lot of hostility between Pakistan and India, two traditional rivals. India is very suspicious about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, because it will make China a country of two oceans, Pacific and Indian Oceans, and it will allow China to encircle India. Pakistan and India have been for many years cooperating against India and this can only become worse after China will develop the Pakistani port of Gwadar.

India says that the new economic corridor should wait until the Kashmir issue is resolved first. Kashmir is the region between China, Pakistan and India, and the three countries have territorial disputes over this region. That's why some maps show Kashmir as a separate region. However the parts of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan and China unite Pakistan and China geographically.

I must also say a few words about Pakistan's old and new alliances. During the 80s, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Pakistan was fighting the Soviets on the side of the US, the Arabs and the Turks. During the civil war in the 90s the Pakistanis, together with the Arabs, supported the Taliban. When the Taliban took Kabul in 1996 and declared their own government in Afghanistan, Pakistan was one of the three countries in the world, together with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, that recognized the Taliban government.

In the past, Pakistan's alliance with the Arabs made Pakistan an enemy of Iran. However things are different today. Due to the economic cooperation between Pakistan, Iran and China, Pakistan wants to adopt a more neutral stance towards the Arabs and the Iranians. That was clearly demonstrated by Pakistan's refusal to take part in war that broke out recently between Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen. Moreover Pakistan had traditionally good relations with the Americans, with whom Pakistan cooperated against the Soviets, and Pakistan had also very good relations with the Chinese, with whom Pakistan cooperated against India.

The above are a summary of Pakistan's geopolitical landscape, and of Pakistan's old and new alliances. Today Pakistan is acting exactly as one would expect, moving within this geopolitical framework. The Pakistanis, contrary to the Arabs and the Iranians, want peace in Afghanistan, because they want the TAPI pipeline to be constructed. Moreover, contrary to the Turks, who support the Islamists of Xinjiang, Pakistan wants peace in Xinjiang in order for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to proceed smoothly.

Note that Xinjiang is a Chinese province (see map), where the Muslim Uyghurs constitute almost 50% of the population. The East Turkestan Islamist Movement operates in Xinjiang by the Uyghurs, and it is supported by Turkey, but it is combated by China and Pakistan. See also "Anti-China sentiment is suddenly sweeping over Turkey", July 2015

[http://www.businessinsider.com/china-turkey-uyghurs-2015-7?nr\\_email\\_referer=1&utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=Business%20Insider%20Select&utm\\_campaign=BI%20Select%20%28Tuesday%20Thursday%29%202015-07-21&utm\\_content=BISelect](http://www.businessinsider.com/china-turkey-uyghurs-2015-7?nr_email_referer=1&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Business%20Insider%20Select&utm_campaign=BI%20Select%20%28Tuesday%20Thursday%29%202015-07-21&utm_content=BISelect)

For Xinjiang see following map.



Xinjiang is a very important region because the pipelines that carry the Turkmen gas and the Kazakh oil to China have to cross Xinjiang. Moreover one of the two pipelines that were agreed between the Chinese and the Russians, the Altai Pipeline, has to pass through Xinjiang too.

Therefore today Pakistan has its own separate geopolitical agenda, and in order to promote its own economic interests Pakistan has to work with the US and China in order to promote political stability. Therefore Pakistan is trying to bring the Taliban to the table of negotiations, and it is also cooperating with China on the issue of Xinjiang. But that brings Pakistan on the other side of the Arabic, Iranian and Turkish interests. At the National Interest article that I mentioned in the beginning, you can read about the Pakistani efforts to force Taliban to make peace with the Afghan government. As expected this causes tensions withing the Taliban teams,

and there are some members leaving the Taliban for ISIS, there are Taliban teams that are separated etc.

All these are very normal, since one would expect the Arabs, the Iranians and the Turks to push the Islamists to keep fighting in Afghanistan and Xinjiang. One must also take into account the following. If the Turkmen gas manages to find its way to the India Ocean, the Kazakh oil could follow. Therefore this is not only a natural gas war. It is also an oil war. Anyway, if you read the article you can see that each player is moving exactly as expected. And one should not be surprised to hear that there is so much terrorism within Pakistan. For the National Interest article see:

“The Taliban Comes to the Table: Could the Afghan War Finally Wind Down?”, του Ιουλίου 2015

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-taliban-comes-the-table-could-the-afghan-war-finally-13379>

## Iran VS Turkmenistan

The Turkmen announced the beginning of the TAPI Pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), in order to send Turkmen gas to India, and in the same week the Iranians announced that they resume their negotiations with the Indians in order to construct the underwater Iran-Oman-India Pipeline, in order to send Iranian gas to India, which also offers India the additional advantage of avoiding Pakistan, which is India's greatest enemy. Two competing pipelines means there will be some serious shootings in the neighborhood...



“Iran-India energy cooperation opens new horizons”, January 2015

[http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/01/iran-india-oman-gas-pipeline-meidp-vs-tapi.html?utm\\_source=Al-](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/01/iran-india-oman-gas-pipeline-meidp-vs-tapi.html?utm_source=Al-)

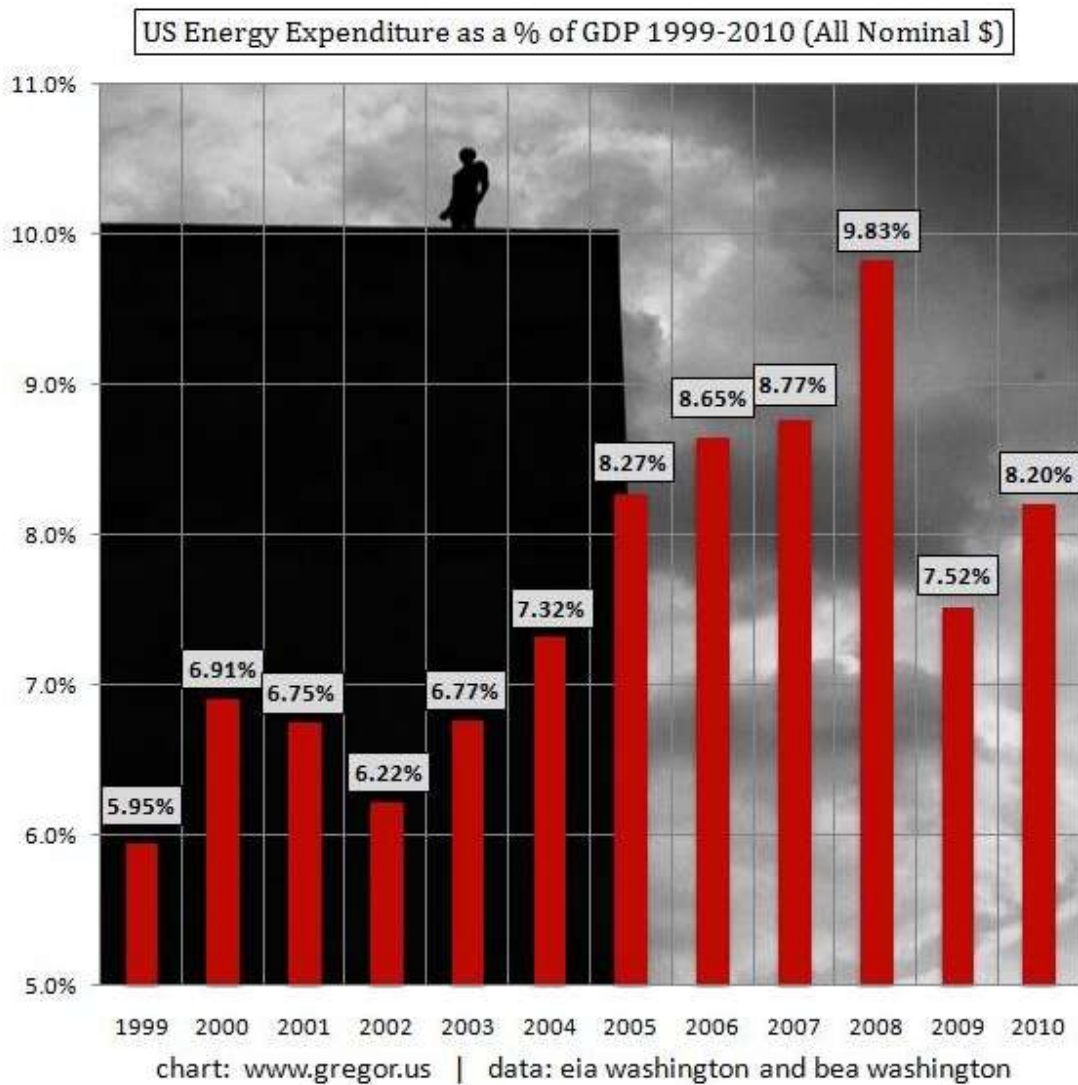


[Monitor+Newsletter+%5BEnglish%5D&utm\\_campaign=0c6c2057df-January\\_15\\_2016&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_28264b27a0-0c6c2057df-102393785](#)

# The Energy Needs of United States

The following map from the Business Insider shows the energy expenditure of the United States as a percentage of the American GDP (Gross Domestic Product). See “Here's What Happens When US Energy Spending Passes 9% Of GDP”, June 2011.

Picture 1



<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-energy-limit-model-2011-6>

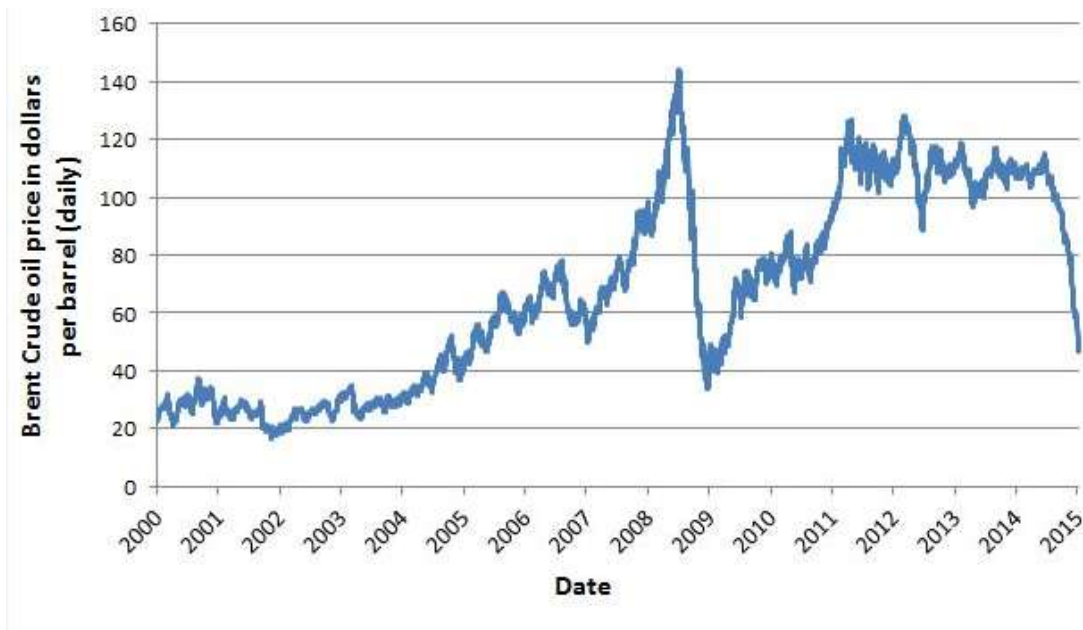
By “energy expenditure” the article refers to all forms of energy i.e. oil, natural gas, nuclear energy, coal etc. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) refers to the total added value produced by a country.

Think about GDP in the following way. Man A cut a tree and sells it to man B for 10 dollars. Man B makes a table with this tree and sells it for 30 dollars to man C. Assume that this is the only economic activity in the country during the year. Therefore the total added value produced in the economy was the 10 dollars that man A made by cutting the tree, and the 20 dollars that man B made by converting this tree to a table and selling it for 30 dollars.

Therefore the GDP can be seen as the profit of man A (10) and the profit of man B (20), or the total profit of the economy. That’s not the definition of GDP, and the calculation of the GDP is a very complicated procedure in a real and complex economy, but the above example with the tree and the table is all you need to know to understand what the GDP is about.

From picture 1 you can see that the energy expenditure of the United States was approximately 10% of the GDP in 2008, and 7.5% in 2009. I guess that the main reason for the large percentage of 2008 was the very high oil prices of that year, as you can see at the following table from the London School of Economics. Actually I am only guessing here, but there must be a relationship between the two, since the American economy is addicted to oil.

Picture 2



<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/euoppblog/2015/01/21/falling-oil-prices-should-help-europes-ailing-economies-but-the-wider-implications-of-the-price-drop-remain-to-be-seen/>

If we take the American GDP to be approximately 17 trillion, a 10% energy expenditure amounts to 1.7 trillion dollars per year. Therefore we can assume that in 2008 the American public, the American citizens and the American companies paid approximately 1.7 trillion dollars for oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear energy etc. That's a huge amount.

The following map from Wikipedia shows the various sectors of the American economy as a percentage of the American GDP (2011).

Picture 3

## GDP by industry [ edit ]

Industries by GDP value added 2011.<sup>[109]</sup>

Industry	GDP value added \$ billions 2011	% of total GDP
Real estate, renting, leasing	1,898	13%
State and Local Government	1,336	9%
Finance and insurance	1,159	8%
Health/social care	1,136	8%
Durable manufacturing	910	6%
Retail trade	905	6%
Wholesale trade	845	6%
Non-durable manufacturing	821	6%
Federal Government	658	5%
Information	646	4%
Arts, entertainment	591	4%
Construction	529	4%
Waste services	448	3%
Other services	447	3%
Utilities	297	2%
Mining	290	2%
Corporate management	284	2%
Education services	174	1%
Agriculture	173	1%
Total	15,075	100%

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_the_United_States)

You can see that retail sales in the US accounted for 6% of the American GDP. That means that the valued added produced by the process of retail sales was less than the energy expenditure of the United States. What I am trying to show energy's great importance for the large industrial economies

i.e. USA, China, Japan and Germany, which are the four largest economies in the world. Think about the United States as a company with an annual profit of 17 trillion dollars. This company has to pay 1.7 trillion dollars every year for energy i.e. electricity, oil, natural gas, gasoline etc, in order to heat its buildings, to move its vehicles, to produce its goods etc. That's a huge amount, and you can imagine what would mean for this company (country) if oil prices were to increase from 20 to 140 dollars, as was the case for the period 2000-2008.

The higher the energy prices the more a company has to charge for its products, and the less competitive the economy becomes. If a country can get lower energy prices than a competing country, she will have a lower production cost and a more competitive economy (*ceteris paribus*). That's a great problem for a country, and it can lead to wars on its own. But there is a more important problem i.e. the issue of national security. All countries want to make sure that in case of war they will have access to energy sources.

Finally the energy sources are not unlimited. For example for the last decades the French state-owned Areva, which is a major producer of nuclear energy, has been counting on Niger's uranium reserves. Now that the Chinese and the Iranians are giving France a hard time in Niger, because they need Niger's uranium for their own nuclear programs, France might lose some of Niger's uranium fields. But even if France does not lose this uranium fields, she might have to pay higher prices to Niger due to more competition and higher demand. That would mean higher energy prices and higher production costs for France, and a lower competitiveness in the international markets for the French products.

Finally I have to say that more than 2/3 of the oil and natural gas reserves of the planet are located in the zone Persian Gulf- Caspian Sea – West Siberia. See following map.

Picture 4



For the Business Insider article see:

“Here's What Happens When US Energy Spending Passes 9% Of GDP”,  
June 2011

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-energy-limit-model-2011-6>

## **Is Turkey the New Patron of Saudi Arabia?**

I was saying that it seems Turkey is supporting Saudi Arabia in the new Saudi-Iranian. I will copy what I said before moving on. On Monday the spokesman of the Turkish government said that Turkey cannot support Saudi Arabia (Reuters), but on Wednesday Erdogan said that many countries have the death penalty, and that most of the citizens who were executed were Sunnis and not Shia Muslims. Therefore Erdogan said that the executions are an internal issue of Saudi Arabia (Today's Zaman). Erdogan also criticized Iran for failing to protect the embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tehran, which was burned.

And I was also saying that I do not know what caused this change. Is it one of the usual Saudi gifts? It might be. The Saudis always have to pay for their friends. No one is willing to give his friendship to Saudi Arabia for free. Note that the Shiite cleric that was executed in Turkey played a major role in the Shia uprising of Saudi Arabia in 2011, when the wars of the Arab Spring started breaking out (BBC). The answer to whether Saudi Arabia is going to finally face the Arab Spring has a lot to do with what Turkey's position will be towards Saudi Arabia. If Turkey aligns herself with Iran against Saudi Arabia, within Saudi Arabia, this scenario will have greater chances.

However I do not think that Erdogan's support for Saudi Arabia yesterday guarantees that Turkey will always go against an Arab Spring in Saudi Arabia. Maybe yesterday Turkey simply got a gift. But that does not necessarily mean that the gift was so big to guarantee Turkish support for



ever. That does not guarantee that the gift was big enough to turn the Saudis and the Turks from rivals to strategic partners, as has been the case between Turkey and Qatar.

The gift might have even been the lower oil prices for Europe that Saudi Arabia announced on Tuesday (see Wall Street Journal). On Monday Turkey criticized Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday Saudi Arabia announced price cuts to Europe, and on Wednesday Erdogan supported Saudi Arabia. I am not sure that this is the reason for the change in Turkey's foreign policy, or whether this is the only reason. But oil prices have a huge impact on economies that are addicted to oil imports. Therefore oil prices affect how popular governments are, and that holds even more for the fragile Turkish economy which is a bubble. Even if the reduced oil prices are not the explanation for the changing Turkish behavior, Turkey was definitely happy with this decision.

On the contrary Saudi Arabia did not reduce prices in the United States (see Wall Street Journal), and we know that the United States supported the Iranians, even though in a discreet way (see Bloomberg). By contrast Saudi Arabia increased oil prices in Asia (Wall Street Journal), and China is in Asia, and China is a main Iranian ally. Saudi Arabia is trying to compete with Iran for the friendship of China, because China is the main customer these days. However China and Iran have traditional ties, mainly due to Saudi Arabia's alliance with the United States.

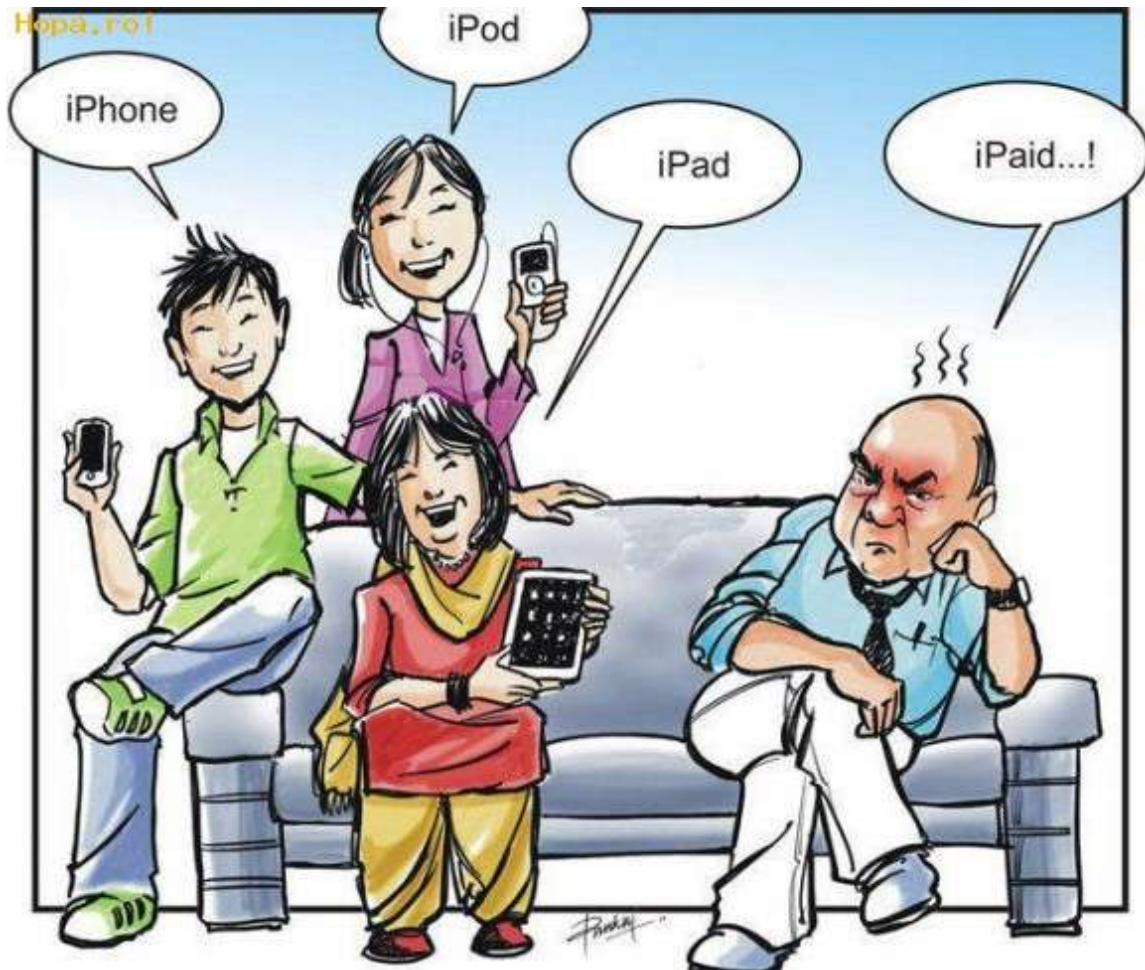
The United States are struggling to steal Iran from China, and Saudi Arabia is struggling to steal China from Iran.

The traditional alliance between China and Iran is the main reason the Saudis cannot completely break their ties with the United States. If the Saudis were to break all ties with the Americans, they would need a new patron. But Russia is their main rival in the oil markets, and China, who is a customer, has stronger ties with Iran. The Saudis are buying arms from the French to cure this problem, but they might have to turn to Turkey after all.

The problem is that Turkey wants to be the leader of the Sunni world. But at the end of the day everything boils down to money. If the Saudis are willing to pay Turkey they will get Turkey's protection. Qatar is doing it, and Turkey is protecting Qatar from Saudi Arabia and Iran. Turkey is the strongest military power of the Muslim World. Note that some analysts say that the American-Saudi ties are reaching a breaking point (see Politico).

The problem for the Saudis is that they do not know who to pay first. They have to pay huge amounts to Egypt, they have to pay Sudan, they have to pay Pakistan, they have to pay Turkey, and the list is endless, at a time of low oil prices and lower revenues for the Saudis. It is true that Saudi Arabia is not the only one paying. The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, they all contribute. But the Saudis are the "rich daddy". See following photo.

Image 1



## Articles

“Erdoğan says Saudi executions 'domestic issue,' criticizes Iran for embassy attack”, January 2016

[http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy\\_erdogan-says-saudi-executions-domestic-issue-criticizes-iran-for-embassy-attack\\_408960.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_erdogan-says-saudi-executions-domestic-issue-criticizes-iran-for-embassy-attack_408960.html)

“Turkey says cannot support Saudi execution of Shiite cleric”, January 2016

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-iran-turkey-idUSKBN0UI1TD20160104>

“Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr: Saudi Arabia executes top Shia cleric”, January 2016

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35213244>

“Saudi Arabia Cuts European Oil Prices as Middle East Tensions Grow”,  
January 2016

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-cuts-european-oil-prices-as-middle-east-tensions-grow-1452005611>

“Obama’s Middle East Balancing Act Tilts Toward Iran”, January 2016

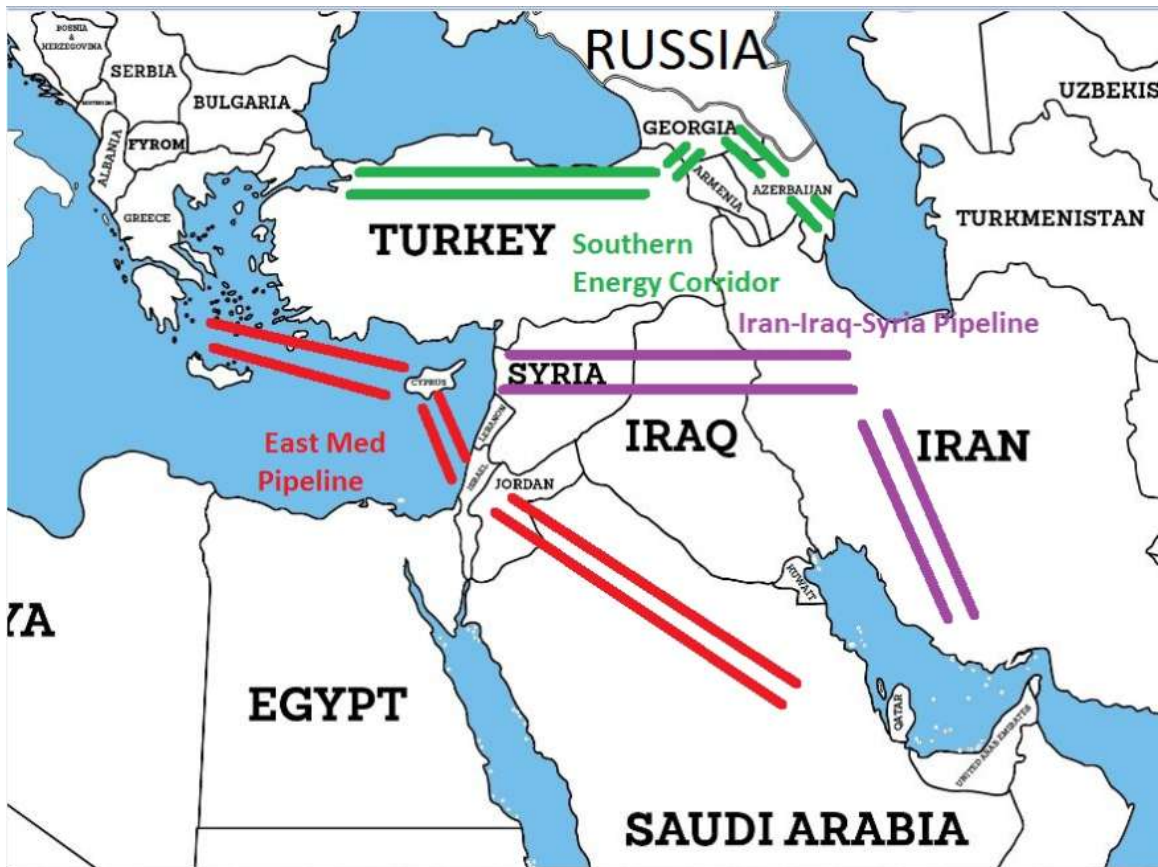
<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2016-01-05/obama-s-middle-east-balancing-act-tilts-toward-iran>

“Obama's royal pain”, January 2016

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/01/obama-saudi-arabia-iran-royal-family-217385#ixzz3wTck7ezA>

## Turkey-Iran

A very nice article by Al Monitor, titled “Fighting ISIS: Kings of Jordan, Saudi Arabia Meeting To Discuss Terrorism, Regional Conflicts”, February 2015. The article examines how Turkey sees the agreement about Iran’s nuclear program, which will allow Iran, after many years of isolation, to reconnect to the Western world.



The article says that Turkey sees the agreement positively, because she expects economic benefits from it. Obviously it will be a great benefit for the Turkish economy if Iran finally sends its natural gas to Europe through

Turkey. I must add that Turkey has helped Iran a great deal during its negotiations with the West for obvious reasons. However the article also mentions that Turkey worries with the possibility of Iran rising to a regional power. A statement made by the Turkish Foreign Minister says it all. After the agreement was reached about the Iranian nuclear program, Melvut Cavusoglu said that Iran must play a constructive role in Iraq and Syria. And the Al Monitor article wonders what will happen if Iran does not care to play a constructive role in Iraq and Syria?

The truth is that Turkey worries about the dramatic improvement in the relations between USA and Iran. Maybe Turkey did not see that coming. Recently the Americans and the Iranians were fighting ISIS together. Taking into account that Turkey exerts a lot of influence on ISIS, this could be seen as an indirect war between the Americans and the Iranians on one hand, and the Turks and some Arabs on the other. That's a total conversion of the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

It is true that Turkey wanted an agreement to be reached between Iran and the West, but she also hoped that in the meantime the Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad would be overturn. Turkey was hoping that Assad would be forced to go to elections and that Turkey and the Arabs would manage to take Syria away from the Iranian influence. Syria's Muslim population is predominantly Sunni, like it is the case with Turkey and most Arab countries, while Assad is an Alawite. Alawites are an offshoot of Shiite Islam, and Shiite Muslims are the overwhelming majority of the Iranian population.

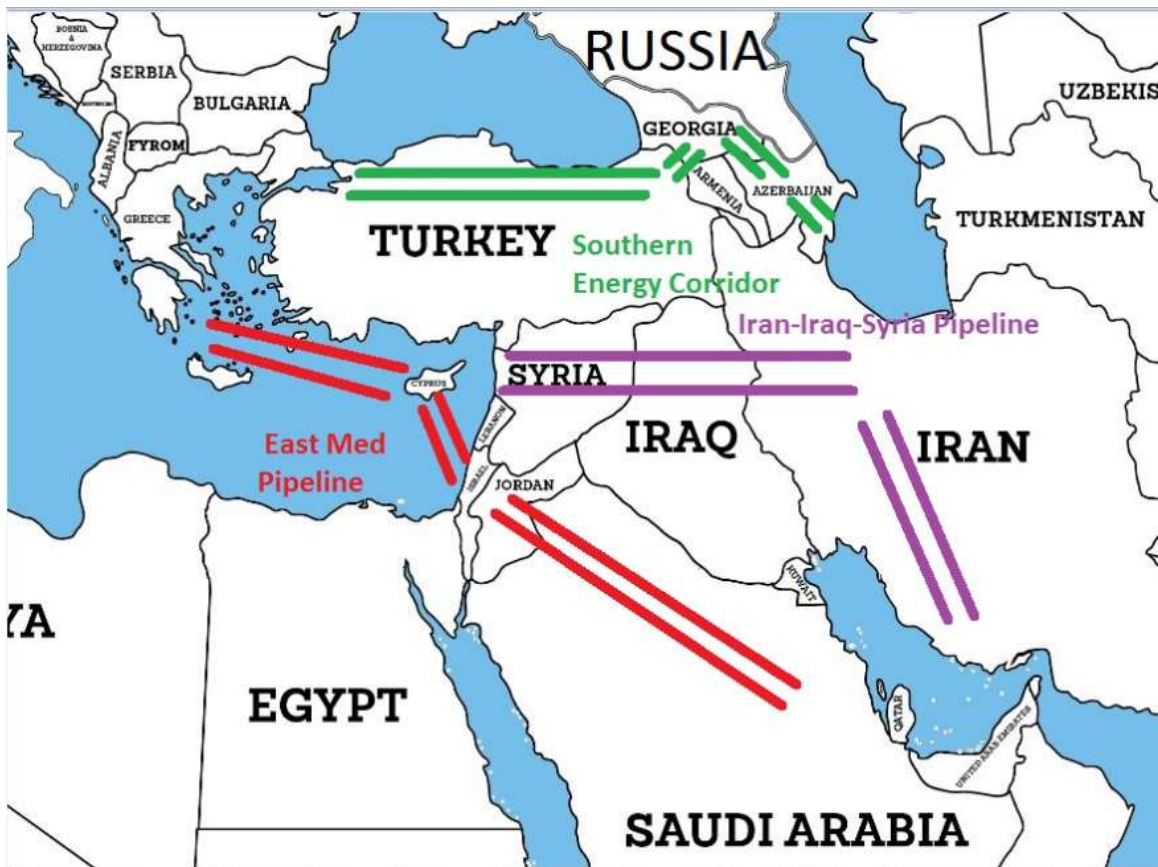
We therefore saw in Syria a very strange thing happening. In the beginning the Americans were pushing for Assad's overturn, and the Russians were helping the Iranians to keep Assad in power. But as the agreement about Iran's nuclear program was approaching, and as the American-Turkish relations were deteriorating, the Americans were becoming less willing to overturn Assad, and the Russians were becoming less willing to support Assad.

For the Russians Assad is useful as long as Iran is a Russian ally, because Syria's main ally is Iran. If Iran becomes an American ally, and starts selling its oil and natural gas to Europe, harming Russian interests, then Assad might even become a problem for Russia. If Iran becomes an American ally, Russia would prefer Syria to be controlled by Turkey. Because no matter how antagonistic the relationship between Russia and Turkey is, Turkey needs Russia, since she buys from Russia most of her natural gas. Note that in Ukraine, which is not important for the Turkish energy policy, Turkey remained silent, even though she is a prominent NATO member. Iran on the other hand, if it starts selling its oil and natural gas to Europe might not need Russia at all. Iran might even see Russia as an opponent.

Therefore one should expect that the more the American-Iranian relations improve, and the more the Turkish-American relations deteriorate, the less Russia will be willing to keep Assad in power. See also Russia Direct "Is Russia finally turning its back on Assad"?, June 2015.

<http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/russia-finally-turning-its-back-assad>

Under the new geopolitical landscape Turkey's geopolitical significance deteriorate, because if Iran is supported by the US, it might be able to hold the Iran-Iraq-Syria line, and export its oil and natural gas to Europe avoiding Turkey. That is if Turkey and Iran do not manage to work things out. It is useful to try to see thing from the point of view of the US. What is for sure is that the optimal solution for the Americans is for Iran to send its oil and natural gas to Europe through Turkey. But let's take the scenario that the Turks and the Iranians do not manage to work things out. There are three other options, as you can see on the following map.



The first one is the Southern Energy Corridor, the green line, the second one is the East Med Pipeline, the red line, and the third one is the Iran-Iraq-Syria



pipeline, the purple line. The Southern Energy Corridor is the only one that can avoid the sea, but it is difficult to supply it with gas and oil without Iran, since Iran and Russia block the Trans-Caspian pipeline which could send Kazakh and Turkmen oil and gas to Turkey and Europe, avoiding Iran and Russia. Moreover Turkey is not for the US the ally that she once was. Finally in the Balkans the Russians have a lot of influence and can cause problems to the Southern Energy Corridor, like they are already doing.

The East Med pipeline i.e. Israel-Cyprus-Greece, has less than two trillion cubic meters of natural gas and almost no oil. Therefore either Saudi Arabia or Qatar would have to join this pipeline. But Qatar is Turkey's closest ally, and together they fight Israel from Gaza. Saudi Arabia on the other hand has an alliance with Israel against the Iranians, and that could be a possibility. Moreover, Jordan, the country that lies between Israel and Saudi Arabia, has good relations with Israel, and she is one of the two Arab countries that have ever signed a peace treaty with Israel, after Israel's creation in 1948. Egypt is the other one that signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Jordan signed the peace treaty in 1994. Even Saudi Arabia, which unofficially cooperates with Israel against Iran and Turkey, does not officially recognize Israel.

However under this scenario, Turkey and Iran would attack Jordan, and it could be very difficult for Israel and Saudi Arabia to protect Jordan. Israel and Saudi Arabia are already trying very hard to prevent ISIS from taking Jordan. If ISIS takes Syria, it will be like Turkey infiltrating between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and the two countries are already facing Turkey in many other places. You can also read International Business Times, "Fighting ISIS: Kings of Jordan, Saudi Arabia Meeting To Discuss Terrorism,

Regional Conflicts”, February 2015, about the Saudi and the Jordanian efforts to keep ISIS away from Jordan and Saudi Arabia.  
<http://www.ibtimes.com/fighting-isis-kings-jordan-saudi-arabia-meeting-discuss-terrorism-regional-conflicts-1827822>

Having said all that, one might argue that maybe for the Americans the best solution is the Iran-Iraq-Syria line. That is of course leaving aside the Iran-Turkey-Europe solution which is without doubt the best one. Under this scenario the Americans and the Iranians would have to fight the Turks, the Arabs and the Russians. But given the rise of the Iranian economy and the Iranian army that will follow Iran’s nuclear agreement, the Iranians, supported by the Americans could clear the Iran-Iraq-Syria corridor. Maybe yes maybe not. I don’t know.

I must say that I am just guessing, because it is very difficult to say with accuracy which option will turn out to be the best one. What can be said for sure is that the option Iran-Turkey-Europe is the best one for the Americans, and that the Americans would be crazy to waste the option Iran-Iraq-Syria, by helping Turkey to take control of Syria, because that would give Turkey the power to blackmail the Americans and the EU, as she has already done in the past.

For the Al Monitor article see

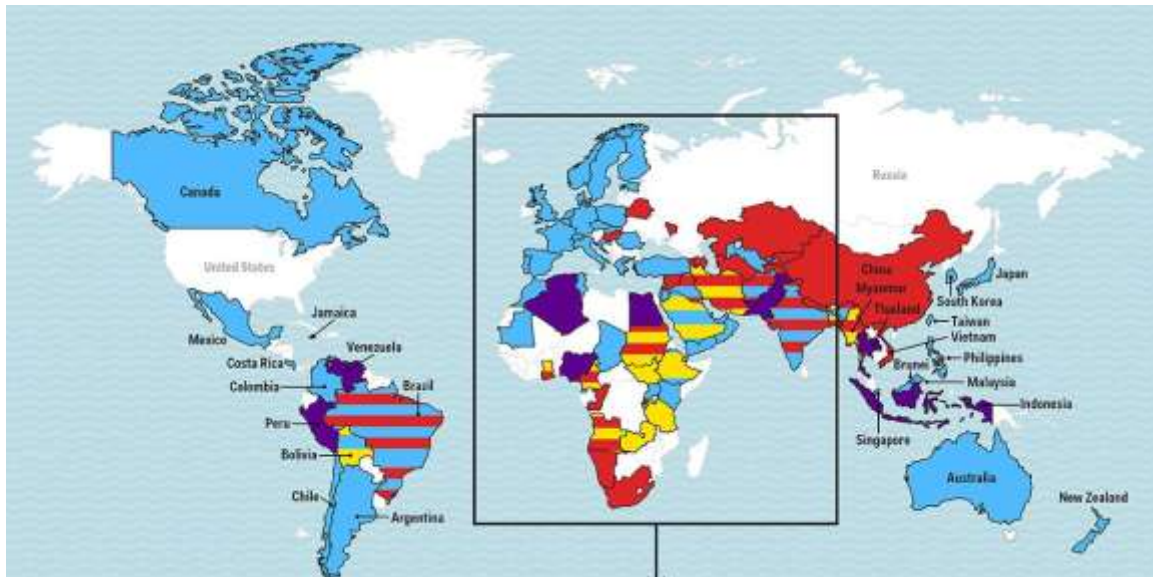
“Fighting ISIS: Kings of Jordan, Saudi Arabia Meeting To Discuss Terrorism, Regional Conflicts”, Φεβρουαρίου 2015.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/fighting-isis-kings-jordan-saudi-arabia-meeting-discuss-terrorism-regional-conflicts-1827822>

# The Map of the Arms Trade

With sky blue you can see the countries that buy their arms from the United States. With red the ones that buy their arms from Russia, and with yellow the ones that buy their arms from China. With dark blue you can see the countries that buy their arms from USA, Russia and China. With sky blue-red you can see the ones that buy arms from USA and Russia, with sky blue-yellow the ones that buy from USA and China, and with red-yellow the ones that buy from Russia and China. See maps 1,2 and 3.

Map 1



Map 2



Map 3



“This map shows where the world's 3 biggest arms exporters are sending their weapons”, March 2015

<http://www.businessinsider.com/where-the-world-buys-its-weapons-2015-3>

## The Agreement Between Putin and Netanyahu

For the last few years the Israelis had an ace in their sleeve. That was their very good relations with Russia. The two countries face as a common enemy i.e. the Islamists supported by Turkey and Qatar. Moreover Israel has given Gazprom exclusive rights for a part of Tamar, which is Israel's second largest gas field.

Map 1 Israeli and Cypriot Gas Fields



Russia was one of the countries that supported the creation of Israel in 1948, together with the United States. The reason Russia did that was because Israel was a socialist country, and also because the Russians believed that the alliance between the British and the Arabs would inevitably bring Israel under Russian influence. At the time the great power of the Middle East was England and not the United States. There was therefore a contradiction in Stalin's policy. Stalin was pursuing anti-Semitic policies within Russia, but he was helping Israel with his foreign policy.

The first guns that the Israelis were using against the Arabs were bought from Czechoslovakia with Stalin's approval of course. Moreover, even though citizens of the Soviet bloc were not allowed to travel abroad, Stalin allowed Eastern European Jews to illegally exit through Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy, in order to go to Israel and fight the Arabs. Therefore Stalin was supplying Israel with both guns and fighters. And that's what Israel needed.

However when socialist dictators took power in some Arab countries, the Russians became their allies, and the Israelis became French allies, because France was almost at war with the Arabs. Algeria was a French colony till 1962, and there was the France-Algerian war. There was also the issue of Gamal Nasser in Egypt, who threatened the French and the English to close the Suez Canal. The French and the English actually invaded Egypt in 1956 i.e. the Suez Crisis, in order to stop Nasser. During this operation Israel was actively on the side of France and England.

When the French and the English lost their colonies, and the Americans became the dominant power in the Middle East, the French and the English did not have much to gain from Israel. Instead they adopted very pro-Arab policies in order to get better deals in the energy and armaments sectors. In the 1960's, under Kennedy, the special relationship between the US and Israel developed. This special relationship would only be tested in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Anyway what is important is that the good relations between the Israelis and the Russians were broken very soon after Israel's creation, and were only revived in 21<sup>st</sup> century under Putin. After the Russians became allies with the socialist dictators of the Arab countries i.e. Qaddafi in Libya, Nasser in Egypt, Assad's father in Syria, and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the short lived Israeli-Russian alliance was ended. Russia became Israel's worst enemy, because it was the Russians who were arming the Arabs, the Arab Palestinians, and later the Iranians too. The Iranians were armed by China too, because China was always promoting the China-Pakistan-Iran axis.

Russia was also very actively promoting Jewish conspiracy theories. Russia had a great tradition in anti-Semitism, and it was mainly the Jews from the Russian Empire who had fled to Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century that were killed by Hitler. It was in Russia that the most famous anti-Semitic book was published in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century i.e. "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion".

Map 2



To make a long story short, the Russians were the major opponent the Israelis had to face in the 20th century, because it was the Russians who were arming their enemies. But all that changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the Israelis and the Russians had a common enemy i.e. the Islamists of Turkey and Qatar, and also when Israel gave Russia exclusive rights for a part of its second largest gas field i.e. Tamar. Putin was the first Russian President who did not spread anti-Semitism in Russia, and the first Russian President to visit Israel too.

Of course that does not mean that Russia abandoned her traditional alliances with Iran and the Arabs, but she became a lot less hostile towards Israel, to the point of course that this change of policy did not hurt Russia's traditional alliances. The Russian help was a great gift for the Israelis. I believe that was one of the reasons the Israelis fought together with the French and the Arabs the agreement for Iran's nuclear program. The Israelis knew that as long as Iran and the United States were enemies, the Russians would not



have to worry about the loyalty of the Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad and of Hezbollah in Lebanon. But as soon as relations between the United States and Iran were restored, Russia would have to antagonize with Iran for influence in Syria and Lebanon, because Iran might not need Gazprom anymore. Once sanctions against Iran are dropped, and the foreign multinationals enter Iran, Iran could decide to reach the Mediterranean Sea without the help of Gazprom. With the huge Russian military presence in Syria, and with Russia's enhanced alliance with Hezbollah in Lebanon, Russia sealed Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, with her increased military presence in Syria, Russia also showed Turkey and Israel that they better take Russia more seriously.

Map 3



Now Iran cannot reach the Mediterranean Sea without Russia's approval. But that's a very big problem for Israel, because Hezbollah will be armed and supported by both Russia and Iran. Russia and Iran might antagonize

about who is going to help more Bashar al Assad and Hezbollah. A very good article about the problems posed to Israel by the enhanced Russian presence in Syria is “Why Israel Should Be Worried About Russia's Role in Syria”, October 2015, by the Washington Institute. The Washington Institute is an American think tank which focuses on Middle East. According to Washington Institute, in the past the Israelis have targeted in Syria Iranian arms shipments to Hezbollah.

Map 4 Iranian Arms to Hezbollah



According to the Washington Institute the Russian-Hezbollah alliance will significantly reduce Israel’s ability to target arms supplies to Hezbollah. The Russians will claim that the arms were not intended to be used against Israel, and Israel will not be able to prove that the opposite is true, because to do so Israel would have to reveal its informers. According to Washington Institute, on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015 the Israelis targeted some Syrian forces very close to their borders, in order to test the Russian reactions. Putin said that he was very worried about Israel’s attacks in Syria, and the article assumes

that the Russians will react a lot more if the Israelis attack a convoy with arms deeper in Syria.

Therefore the huge Russian military presence in Syria complicates things for the Israelis. Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon is much stronger than Hamas in Gaza, because Hamas is surrounded by Egypt and Israel, and the two countries do not allow Turkey, Iran and Qatar to send arms to Hamas. To be more accurate the flow of arms is under control when compared with what happens in Lebanon. Hezbollah can receive supplies from everywhere.

However now Netanyahu agreed to make the Russian state owned giant Gazprom a major party in Leviathan, the largest natural gas field of Israel, as you can read at the following article from the Australian, titled “Putin and Netanyahu to strike deal on Leviathan gas field”, October 2015. The Australian is the largest Australian newspaper. I do not know what Russia plans to do with all this natural gas, because Egypt, which would be an ideal buyer, had recently discovered a gas field even larger than Leviathan i.e. the Zohr. Leviathan holds 500+ billion cubic meters of gas and the Zohr holds 800+ bcm. However I am sure that Putin must have offered some kind of protection to Israel at the side of this deal. I do not know what kind of protection but Putin must have offered something.

The Russian presence would be also good for the American company that operates this fields i.e. Noble Energy, because Noble will be sure that Hezbollah will not dare to attack the gas fields if the Russians are involved. That does not mean of course that for the Israelis the increased Russian military presence is a good thing. It is probably a bad thing. But if this

increased Russian military presence is taken for granted, the new deal is a great success for the Israelis. I hope this deal will not cause problems in the relations between Israel and the United States, because the United States is Israel's main ally, and the only ally that can keep Israel alive. The United States should understand that Israel does not have any other option.

What I want to see is where the Russians plan to sell all this gas. Maybe to Egypt until the Zohr becomes operational? Maybe to Turkey? Maybe to Asia in order to threaten Qatar? Or is this one of the moves that the Russians very often make to confuse their rivals and put pressure on them? What is strange is that the Israeli natural gas is not for Russia as important as it used to be, since ENI discovered the Zohr in Egypt. See “ENI VS Gazprom : A New War in the East Mediterranean Sea”?

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/09/24/gazprom-vs-eni-a-new-war-in-east-mediterranean-sea/>

On the other hand Russia really needs Hezbollah and Assad in Syria to seal the exit to the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore I find it a bit difficult to understand the new deal between Russia and Israel, but it is obvious that I am missing something here, and as I said we will have to wait and see.

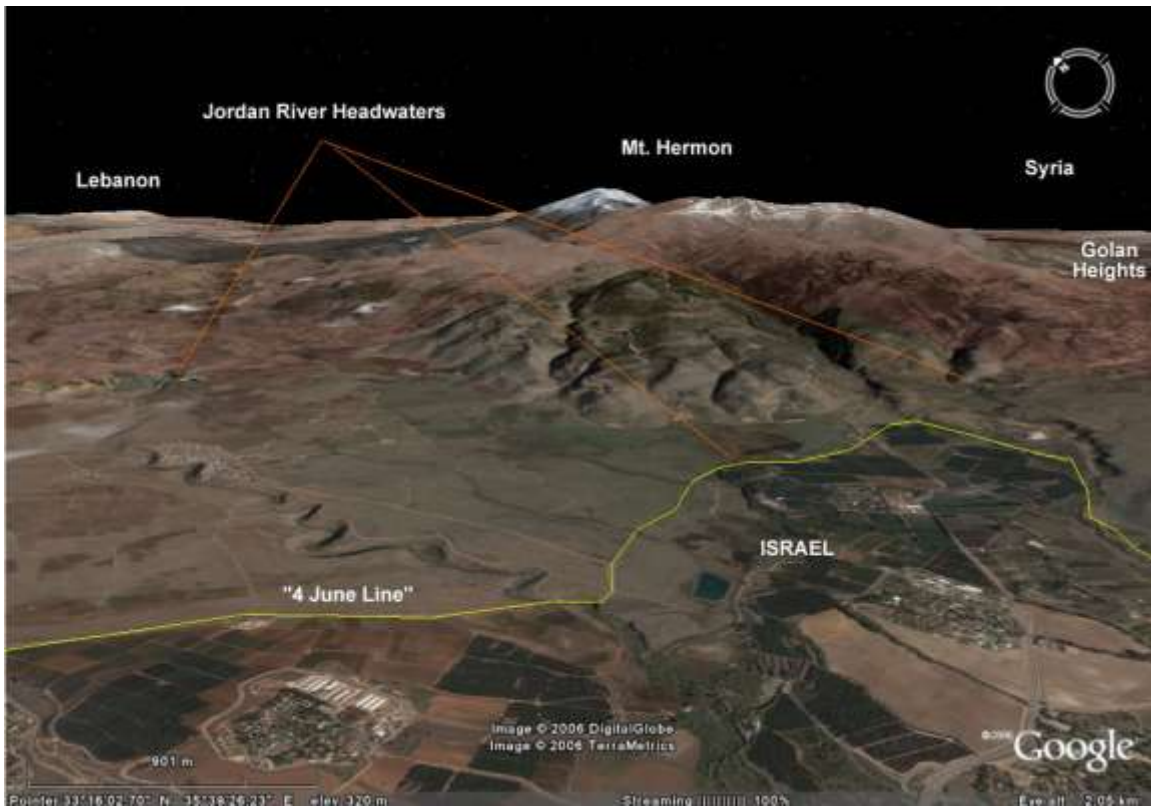
Also keep in mind that very recently there were new oil discoveries in the Golan Heights, as you can read at the following article of the Fox News, titled “Potentially game-changing oil reserves discovered in Israel”, October 2015. The Golan Heights are of great strategic importance and were captured by Israel during the wars of 1967 and 1973. You can see the Golan Heights at the following maps.

Map 5



[http://icchef-1.bbci.co.uk/news/624/media/images/77242000/gif/77242135\\_golan\\_heights\\_v3.gif](http://icchef-1.bbci.co.uk/news/624/media/images/77242000/gif/77242135_golan_heights_v3.gif)

Map 6



[http://defense-update.com/images/golan\\_dispute.jpg](http://defense-update.com/images/golan_dispute.jpg)

Map 7



[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_n7RltmTdk-g/TI30p0unRyI/AAAAAAAAV5w/4pOTUDr-cBA/s1600/Golan+topographical+map.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_n7RltmTdk-g/TI30p0unRyI/AAAAAAAAV5w/4pOTUDr-cBA/s1600/Golan+topographical+map.jpg)

Map 8



<http://www.kidsbiblemaps.com/bethlehem.jpg>

Maybe the new oil discoveries have something to do with the new diplomatic developments. Maybe they have also played a role in the new



violence outbreaks and the stabbings in Israel. Again we will have to wait and see what happens.

Also note that recently Iran increased its influence in West Bank as you can read at the following Jerusalem Post article, titled “Abbas to visit Iran in November for first time since 2012”, August 2015. The West Bank is run by the socialist Arab Palestinian organization of Fatah. Hamas is the Islamist Palestinian Arab organization that runs Gaza, and Fatah is the socialist Palestinian Arab organization that runs the West Bank, with the two having very problematic relations. Until recently Iran had influence mainly in Hamas and Saudi Arabia mainly in Fatah. Therefore most of the tension was coming from Hamas in Gaza. But maybe things are changing, and with the increasing Iranian influence in West Bank tension might come from there too. The Saudis are not as hostile as the Iranians are towards the Israelis, because they both fight Iran.

### Articles

“Why Israel Should Be Worried About Russia's Role in Syria”, October 2015

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/why-israel-should-be-worried-about-russias-role-in-syria>

“Putin and Netanyahu to strike deal on Leviathan gas field”, October 2015

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/putin-and-netanyahu-to-strike-deal-on-leviathan-gas-field/story-e6frg6so-1227574801534>

“Potentially game-changing oil reserves discovered in Israel”, October 2015

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/10/08/potentially-game-changing-oil-reserves-discovered-in-israel/>

“Abbas to visit Iran in November for first time since 2012”, August 2015

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Abbas-to-visit-Iran-in-November-for-first-time-since-2012-411807>

## A New Role for Russia in Syria

A very nice article from the Wall Street Journal, about Russia's new role in Syria, titled "U.S. Eyes Russia-Iran Split in Bid to End Syria Conflict", November 2015. According to the article, after the Paris terrorist attacks of November 2015, there is an increasing pressure on the United States and Europe to cooperate with Russia in Syria against the Islamic State and ISIS. France is very active in diplomatically pushing for a coalition between France, United States and Russia against ISIS in Syria.

Map 1



According to the article, the Americans, the Europeans, the Israelis and the Arabs, would all like to see Russia distancing herself a bit from Iran in

Syria. And indeed, according to WSJ the Russians are distancing themselves a bit from Iran, since they are discussing the possibility of the Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad stepping down, while Iran does not accept this scenario. The article also mentions that during the previous centuries Russia and Iran have been traditional rivals, especially in the region of Caucasus.

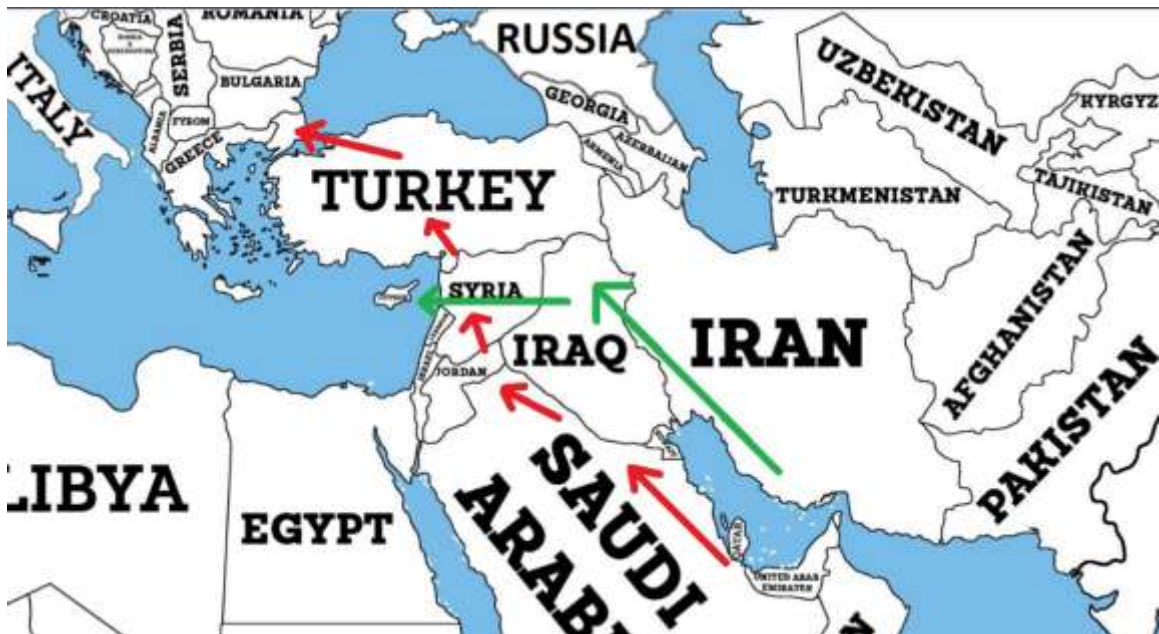
On the other hand, according the WSJ, the Americans and the Europeans are not sure whether the Russians are indeed serious about distancing themselves from Iran, because the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, does not accept any precondition on Assad's removal for an end to be reached on the Syrian conflict. But I believe that's a very reasonable reaction from the Russians, because the Russians would probably be willing to jeopardize their relationship with the Iranians only if they could sort things out with the West, but that has not happened yet. But despite the American and European doubts about the Russian stance over the Assad regime, the WSJ says that there is a growing pressure in the United States and Europe to form an alliance with Russia in Syria.

Map 2



According to WSJ, Putin met with the Saudis and the Israelis, and the Saudis requested from him to let Assad go, and the Israelis requested that Russia prevents the Iranians and the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah from using Lebanon and Syria to attack Israel.

Map 3



Therefore we see that with the large Russian military presence in Syria, an enhanced role for Russia might be a good thing for the Americans, the Europeans, the Israelis and the Arabs. It might even be positive for the Turks. Only the Iranians would be hurt under this scenario.

### The Arabs of the Persian Gulf

For the Arabs of the Gulf, especially for the Saudis, an enhanced Russian influence in Syria will ensure that Syria is not under Iranian control. And the main Saudi rival is Iran and not Russia. If Russia did not exist in Syria, Syria would come under Turkish, or Iranian or Saudi influence. However it is more likely that Syria would come under Turkish or Iranian influence rather than the Saudi one. Therefore Russia might be the best feasible outcome for Saudi Arabia in Syria, given that both the Russians and the Saudis will be hurt if the Iranians and the Iraqis sent their oil and gas to Europe through Syria.

The Saudis also have many problems with the Turks, because from 2003 Turkey became an Islamist country, and started claiming the leadership of the Islamic World, held until then by Saudi Arabia. Becoming the leader of the Caliphate would also give Turkey a greater role over the oil and gas of the Persian Gulf. See “The Intra-Arab War for Oil 1950-1970”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2015/06/09/the-intra-arab-oil-war-1950-1970/>

Of course one could argue that in 2011 the Russians, actually Gazprom, proposed to Iran and Iraq to construct the Shiite (Iran-Iraq-Syria) pipeline, and this pipeline would hurt the Saudis. That’s true, but the only reason that

Russia proposed this pipeline was because she wanted to prevent the Sunni (Qatar-Turkey-Europe) pipeline. See “Who is Responsible for the War and the Immigrants”.

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

In reality the Iranian and Iraqi oil and gas would hurt both the Russian, who provide a large part of the European oil and gas imports, and also the Saudis, who provide a smaller part of these imports. The Russians and the Saudis would prefer that Iranian and Iraqi oil and gas would not reach the Mediterranean Sea through Syria.

### Israel

For the Israelis, under certain conditions, an enhanced Russian role in Syria could be a blessing. I repeat under certain conditions. The Israelis have a much better relationship with the Russians than they have with the Iranians and the Turks. The Israelis are basically at war with the Iranians and the Turks, with the Iranians having as an official policy the annihilation of Israel. This is not an official policy for Turkey, but Erdogan has also said that the Muslims must march to Jerusalem. Therefore, at least for now, it would be much better for the Israelis if the Russian are in charge in Syria, as long as the Russians are a bit distanced from Turkey and Iran. That way Russia could guarantee Israel that the Iranians and Hezbollah would not use Syria to attack Israel, and Russia and Israel could fight ISIS together in Syria. That's of course an ideal scenario because Russia needs Turkey and Iran, but maybe Russia and Israel could meet somewhere in the middle.

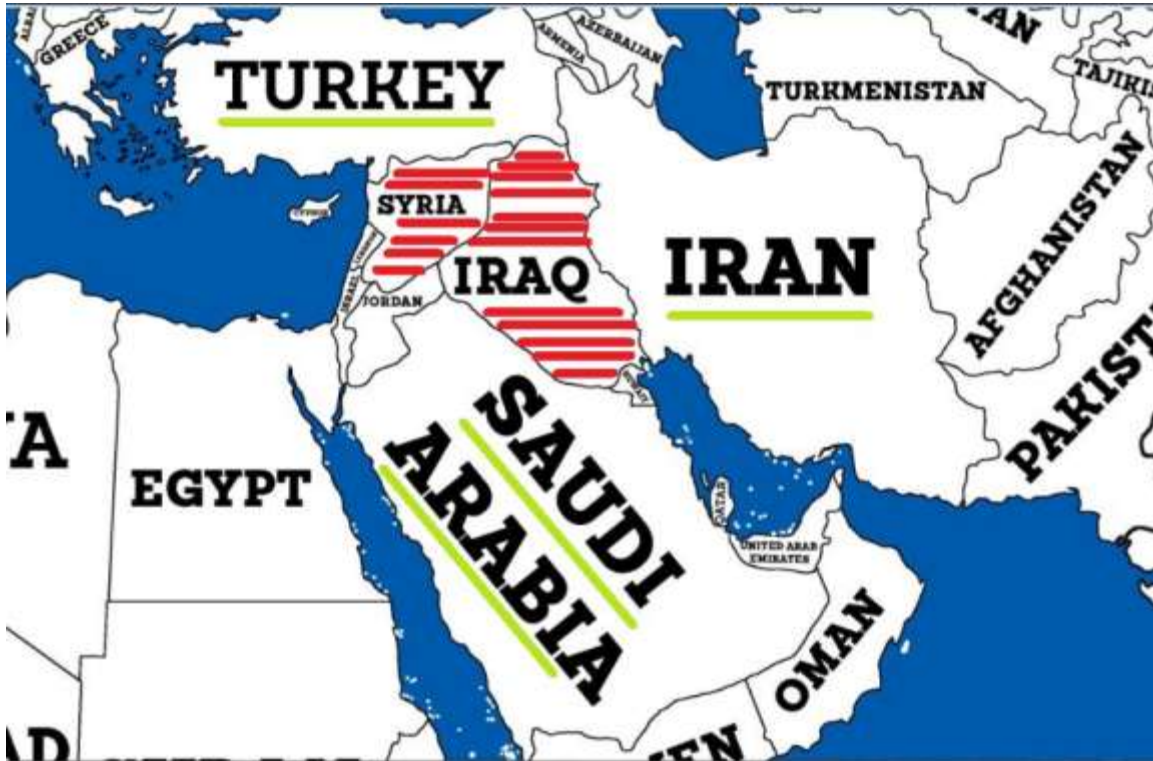
## Turkey

For Turkey Syria is very important because Iran can send oil and gas to Europe through Syria, and that would undermine Turkey's ability to ask from Iran higher discounts, and also cooperation of Iranian and Turkish companies in the Iranian energy projects. It is true that Turkey would prefer to control Syria herself, but at least Turkey knows that Russia would be hurt too if the Iranians used Syria to send oil and gas to Europe. Thus, under the current threat of facing an alliance of Russia, United States and France in Syria, Turkey might have to compromise with a solution that would allow for a greater Russian role in Syria. In Syria the Russian-Turkish interests are closer than the Turkish-Iranian or the Russian-Iranian interests. There is already a lot of tension between Turkey and France, and we saw that when the Turkish fans boo the one minute of silence for the Paris victims. The Turkish fans were also shouting "Allahu Akbar", which is very often heard in videos released by ISIS. See "Turkey football fans boo and chant 'Allahu Akbar' during silence for Paris victims", November 2015

<http://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/620218/Turkey-fans-boo-minutes-silence-chant-Allahu-Akbar-Paris-attack>

Map 4





### The United States

Syria is a lot less important than Iraq for the United States. In Syria the American interests seem to be closer to the Russian rather than the Turkish ones. For the United States the ideal situation would involve the construction of both the Sunni (Qatar-Turkey) and the Shiite (Iran-Iraq-Syria) pipelines, so that as much oil and gas as possible would flow in the global markets. But it is impossible that both these pipeline networks are constructed, because the party controlling the region would prevent the other side from constructing the competing network.

Actually it seems that currently none of these pipelines can be constructed. Therefore it does not seem that the main problem for the United States is the construction of two pipelines which probably cannot be constructed. But if a

solution is reached in the Middle East, and there is peace, the United States could transfer military forces from the Middle East to the Asian side of the Pacific Ocean, which is at the moment the most important region for the United States. The United States are also facing China in the South China Sea, because China is trying to militarize the region ignoring the other countries of the South China Sea. The Malacca Straits are the second most important choke point in the world, second only to the Straits of Hormuz.

If the United States reach an agreement with Russia in the Middle East, they could share the military cost of safeguarding the Middle East. Until now it is mainly the United States that safeguarded the Middle East and the safe flow of oil in the world markets. Therefore the US would be very happy if Russia could carry some of the military cost. That is of course if the United States could reach an agreement with Russia. I believe the US should allow Russia to have the upper hand in the Middle East, and ask something in return in Europe or Asia.

### Iran

Iran's dream is to reach the Mediterranean Sea. The increased Russian influence in Syria might therefore be a problem for Iran. However how could Iran stop this scenario, if Russia, the United States, France and Turkey agreed? Until now Iran could fight the United States because it was backed by Russia. Iran is mainly using Russian weapons. How is Iran going to attack the US if Russia and the US are together in Syria? And I don't think that China would have a motive to help Iran in Syria, and go against everyone else. The Chinese, like the Americans and the Europeans, are

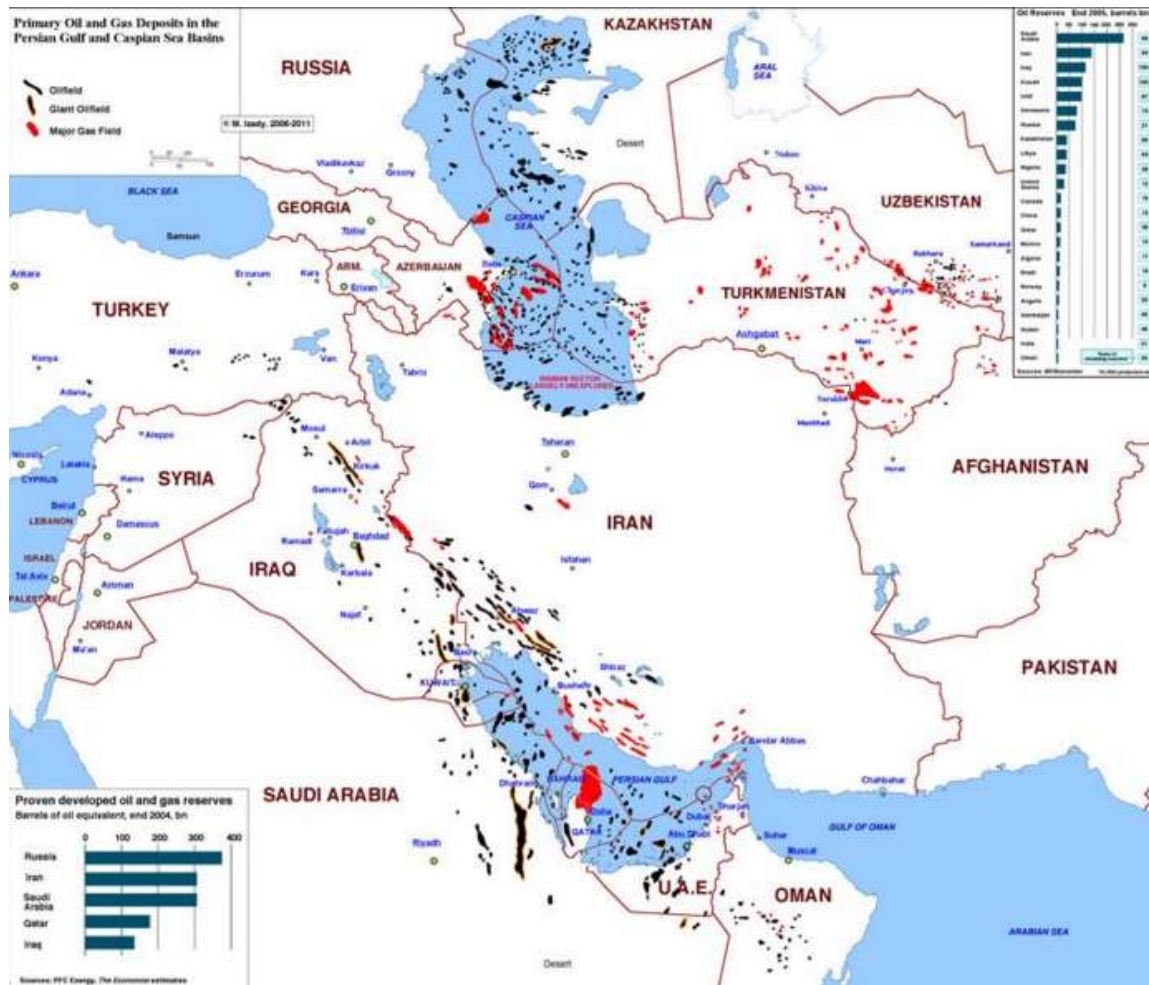
major oil and gas importers, and they want peace in the Middle East, so that oil and gas can flow freely and most importantly at low prices.

For the Wall Street Journal article see

“U.S. Eyes Russia-Iran Split in Bid to End Syria Conflict”, November 2015.

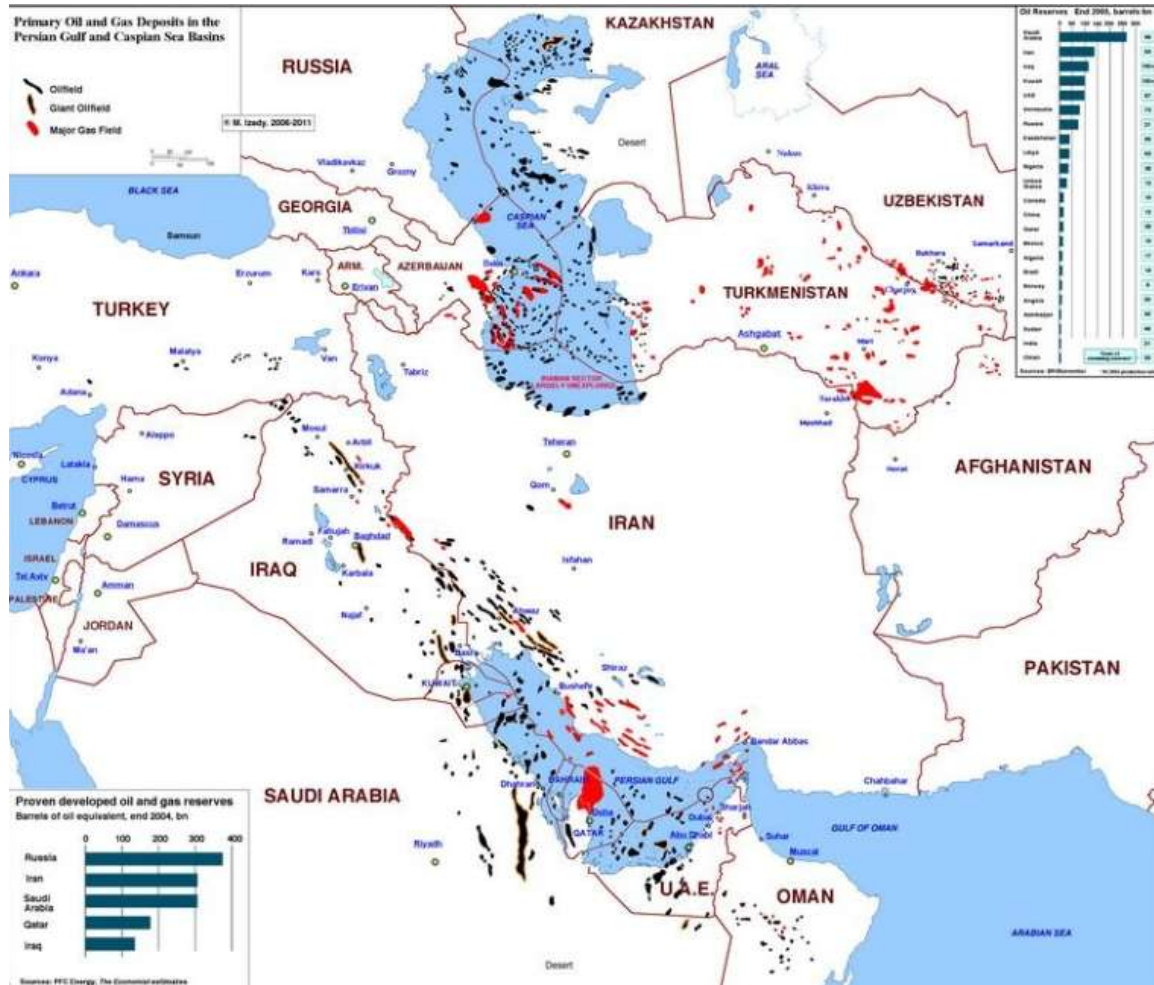
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-eyes-russia-iran-split-in-bid-to-end-syria-conflict-1447895357>

Map 5












# Americans and Russians in Afghanistan

On the first map from Columbia University, you can see with black blots the oil fields and with red blots the natural gas fields of the Middle East and the Caspian Sea.



The large red blot in the Persian Gulf is the South Pars/North Fields gas field, the largest natural gas field in the world, which holds 50 trillion cubic meters of natural gas, and it is jointly owned by Qatar and Iran. Qatar owns approximately 2/3 and Iran 1/3 of the field. The red blot at the south-east

Turkmenistan, is the second largest gas field in the world, the Galkynysh, which holds 21 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Iran is the second richest country in the world in terms of natural gas reserves, Qatar is the third, and Turkmenistan is the fourth. Below you can see the richest countries in natural gas reserves in the world from Wikipedia.

Rank ↕	Country/Region ↕	Natural gas proven reserves ↕ (m³)	Date of information ↕
Total	<i>World</i>	187,300,000,000,000	
1	 Russia	48,700,000,000,000	12 June 2013 est. <sup>[5]</sup>
2	 Iran (see: <a href="#">Natural gas reserves in Iran</a> )	33,600,000,000,000	12 June 2013 est. <sup>[7]</sup>
3	 Qatar	24,700,000,000,000	June 2014. <sup>[8]</sup>
4	 Turkmenistan	17,500,000,000,000	June 2014. <sup>[8]</sup>
5	 United States	9,860,000,000,000	12 December 2013 <sup>[9][10]</sup>
6	 Saudi Arabia	8,600,000,000,000	June 2014. <sup>[8]</sup>
7	 Iraq	6,400,000,000,000	1 January 2012 est. <sup>[11]</sup>
8	 Venezuela	5,724,500,000,000	19 July 2011 <sup>[12]</sup>
9	 Nigeria	5,100,000,000,000	June 2014. <sup>[8]</sup>

The Americans want to send the natural gas of the Galkynysh of Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and South Asia through the TAPI pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India). The Iranians and the Qataris want to send the natural gas of South Pars to Pakistan, India and China, through the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, or any other pipelines. These two huge gas fields play a very important role for the wars in Afghanistan and the instability of Pakistan.

The Qataris and the Iranians are killing each other in Syria and Iraq, but they have common interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The same is true in

Gaza, where they both support Hamas against Israel, because Israel agreed to sell natural gas to Egypt and Jordan. Iran and Qatar have also cooperated in Libya, where together with Turkey, they fight the Egyptian President al Sisi, who is supported by Saudi Arabia and Russia. Turkey, Iran and Qatar want the Muslim Brotherhood to come back to power in Egypt.

But in Afghanistan, all the Arabs and the Iranians want to block the TAPI pipeline, or any other pipeline which will bring the natural gas and oil of Central Asia to South Asia, because both the Arabs and the Iranians count on Asia for their exports. That's why the Iranians support the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban have been traditionally supported by the Arabs and the Pakistanis, and they have been a great rival for the Iranians. But now the Taliban block the TAPI pipeline, and that's good for the Iranians too. As you can read at the following article of Wall Street Journal, titled της Wall Street Journal με τίτλο “Iran Backs Taliban With Cash and Arms”, June 2015, the Iranians give money and arms to the Taliban.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-backs-taliban-with-cash-and-arms-1434065528>

For the Russians on the other hand, the TAPI pipeline is a good thing, or at least it is not a problem, because the Russians do not want Turkmenistan to send its natural gas to Europe, which is the market that Russia counts on for her exports. If Turkmenistan is busy sending its gas to South Asia and China it will be very difficult to send any gas to Europe. Moreover, the American attack on the Taliban was a good thing for Russia. The Sunni Islamists Taliban are an Arab and Pakistani ally, and a traditional rival of Russia. In

the 80s, it was the Taliban who fought the Russians, when Russia invaded Afghanistan.

Back then the Taliban were supported by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United States. Therefore for the Russians it is a very good thing to see the Americans attacking the Taliban. That's why the Russians allowed the Americans to use Russia in order to support their operations in Afghanistan. However, after the crisis in Ukraine, the Russians told the Americans that they can no longer use Russia to supply their army in Afghanistan, as you can read at the following article from the Russian state owned RT (Russia Today), titled "Russia stops transit of NATO military cargo to Afghanistan", May 2015.

<http://rt.com/news/259809-russia-stops-nato-afghanistan-cargo/>