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ZSÓFIA TONGORI

The Southern Gas Corridor and Turkey's geostrategic role A Déli Gázfolyosó és Törökország geostratégiai szerepe

Abstract

One of the most important security challenges of today is energy security. Talking about energy security, natural gas supply and it's uninterrupted availability has a particularly important role in Europe. Because our continent relies on import of this raw material and the recurring problem of EU strategy regarding Russian gas and the alternative transport routes, the topic of the Southern Gas Corridor elevated to strategic importance. Which is basically focusing on transporting Caspian natural gas to Europe. In this regard Turkey, due to it's geographical location and ambitions, might become a key player in pipeline projects in the region.

In regard of the 21st century's primal security challange, energy security and security of supply, Turkey is unarguably a key palyer in it's region, gaining more attention as a rising global player relating various international energy supply projects. Turkey has a remarkable role in more aspects in European and global energy supply. This paper studies the role of Turkey in the Southern Gas Corridor.

Keywords: Turkey, Southern Gas Corridor

Absztrakt

Az energiabiztonság napjaink egyik fő biztonsági kihívása. E témakörön belül különösen fontos helyet foglal el Európa földgáz-ellátottsaága, illetve annak folyamatos rendelkezésre állása. Mivel kontinensünk ebből a nyersanyagból behozatalra szorul, illetve az orosz gáz, és útvonalak alternatívája évek óta visszatérő problémája az EU energiastratégiáinak, a Déli Gázfolyosó témaköre stratégiai szintre emelkedett. Ennek lényege pedig nem más, mint a kaszpi-tengeri gáz Európába történő eljuttatása. Ebben a vonatkozásban Törökország – mind földrajzi fekvésénél fogva, mind ambícióit tekintve - fontos szereplővé válhat a különböző vezeték-projektek kapcsán.

Kulcsszavak: Törökország, Déli Gázfolyosó

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THE SOUTHERN GAS CORRIDOR

Natural gas is one of the most important components of EU's energy consumption. The sustainability of gas supply clearly became a strategic matter due to the EU countries' gas production shows a decreasing tendency, thus their dependence on imports is growing at the same time. The topic of security of gas supply became relevant recently relating the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute in 2006. Because the problem happened repeatedly and became critical, the EU formulated a double intent. On one hand the increase of internal energy market effectiveness, mainly through connecting member countries' gas lines, on the other hand the diversification of external players of the gas market. The topic of the Southern Gas Corridor is related to the latter with the purpose of transporting gas from the Caspian region or possibly from the Middle East to Southern Europe.¹ In 2008 the European Commission elaborated the second review of the Energy Strategy, which included the more dominant presence of energy policy in international relationships besides energy efficiency and increased share of renewable energy. ²³ The document mentions and outlines the Southern Gas Corridor as a pillar of European Natural Gas diversification - here it mentions the Nabucco Project as the most ambitious plan of the time. 4 In May of 2009, in the time of Czech presidency, a extraordinary EU summit was held relating the Southern Gas Corridor. Besides the EU institutions representatives from Azerbaijan, Turkey and Turkmenistan participated the event. The conference called 'The Southern Gas Corridor - The New Silk Road' was not a full success, because the potential source countries of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan did not sign the final document. The second crucial topic of the meeting was the problem of competing gas lines. ⁵ At that time more international pipeline project competed for EU support and the natural gas of Azeri Sah Deniz gasfield, because the planned pipelines both were to transport the Azeri gas to Europe.

PIPELINE PLANS

The Nabucco pipeline project was the most dominant of the EU's attempts for diversification, it would have transported natural gas to Baumgarten gas hub (Central European Gas Hub) passing through Turkish soil, bypassing Russia. The line was supposed to transport primarily gas from the Azeri Sah-Deniz fields, as well as Turkmen, Iraqi and Iranian gas on the longer run. The Nabucco consortium was founded in 2004 by five

¹ hhttp://www.naturalgaseurope.com/southern-gas-corridor-and-eu-gas-security-of-supply-22688 download:21 March 2015

² http://www.nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/cikkek/dobos edinaaz energiaellatas biztonsaga az europai unio strategiai dokumentumaiban.pdf download: 15 March 2015

³ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-1696_hu.doc. download: 15 March 2015

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release PRES-09-43 hu.doc. download: 15 March 2015

⁵http://kitekinto.hu/europa/2009/05/05/deli gazfolyoso az eu csucs es dontes eltt/#.VSuKZZMppQ U dowload: 21. March 2015

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companies, namely OMV Gas and Power GmbH, Turkish Botas, Hungary's MOL, Bulgarian Energy Holding and Romania's Transgas, later the German RWE joined in 2008. The 3800 kms long and 31 bn cubic meters yearly planned capacity lines was clearly the alternative of Russian gas import, meantime became the flagship of EU diversification ambitions. 6 Besides EU the USA supported the project and it became strategically important for Turkey, as Ankara would have established a geopolitical key role as the transit country of fossil fuels. The Nabucco Project had the necessary political support, so the financial background seemed stable, foremost on the EU side. The project failed and was closed in 2013, in spite of the five transit countries, the EU and USA had both interest, at least politically in it's success. The main problem besides the project's financing was the source of the gas and finally in June 2013 the Sah Deniz II consortium⁷ turned down the Nabucco⁸ and decided to transport a planned yearly 10 bn cubic meters of gas via the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) ⁹ to Italy from the Turkish border through Greece and Albania. The Nabucco's failure did not mean the end of Southern Gas Corridor plans, at the time it already had it's alternative to transport Caspian natural gas to Europe, though still at the planning phase. Turkey and Azerbaijan signed an agreement in 2012 to construct the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) to transport gas from Azerbaijan to the Turkish-Bulgarian border. Due to it's planned path was parallel to Nabucco's in Turkey, the project companies agreed to integrate the two lines in 2013. 10 In March 2015 the construction of the lines began and will be finished in 2018 according to the plans. At first with a yearly capacity of 16 bn cubic meters, with increase up to 31 bn cubic meters. 11 Important to mention that out of the planned 16 bn cubic meters 6 bn will be used by Turkey for it's own internal consumption. 12 The TANAP line already knocked out Nabucco at the integration negotiations, because the Nabucco's future became doubtful with the integration of the two lines on Turkish soil. From then only a shortened version of the project was planned, Nabucco West.

Talking about planned pipeline projects relating the Southern Gas Corridor we have to mention Project AGRI. The Azerbaijan–Georgia–Romania Interconnector (AGRI) was also

⁶ http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/southern-gas-corridor-and-eu-gas-security-of-supply-22688 21 March 2015

⁷ The Shah Deniz II consortium is comprised of British BP, Azeri Socar, French TOTAL and Norwegian Statoil ernergy giants

http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20130626 Az azeri Shah Deniz nemet mondott a Nabuccora download: 21 March 2015

⁹ Trans-Adriatic Pipeline: the joint project of Swiss EGL, Norwegian Statoil and German E.On Ruhrgas, supposed to transport gas from the Turkish-Bulgarian border to Italy via Greece

¹⁰ http://www.tozsdeforum.hu/tozsde/reszvenypiac2/egyuttmukodik-a-nabucco-es-a-torok-tanap/21 download: 21 March 2015

¹¹ http://www.napigazdasag.hu/cikk/38820/ download: 21 March 2015

¹² http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/southern-gas-corridor-and-eu-gas-security-of-supply-22688 download: 21 March 2015

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planned to transport Azeri gas to Romania through Georgia with the use of LNG terminals on both Georgian and Romanian sides. ¹³ The study will go into details later on this.

TURKEY AS A TRANSIT COUNTRY

Due to it's geographical location Turkey is undoubtedly a key player in energy policy. The country's direct neighborhood to North, East and South possesses 70% of the world's oil and natural gas reserves, it's western neighbor is Europe, the prime importer of the fossil fuels. ¹⁴ With the construction of present and planned oil and gas lines Ankara can become an important energetic center. Particularly if we take into account that the country is not only aspiring for East to West transportation, but also for North to South. Turkey's energy needs is growing parallel to it's economical development. In the last decade it's gas consumption has quadrupled, experts say this number might double in the coming decade. ¹⁵ Because 70% of the gas consumption comes from import, to assuring energy security is a necessity for the growing economy. Turkey's basic interest is to participate in more pipeline projects, thus guarantee it's own energy security and sthrengthen it's geopolitical positions. Turkey is committed to becoming a strategic and unavoidable gas distributor and transit country.

Turkish minister of energy and natural resources, Taner Yildiz signed an agreement of ministerial level energy talks with European Union in March 2015, which aimed to deepen cooperation and establish secure energy supply. Turkey is a key player in European gas diversification ambitions and with construction of the TANAP line both it's internal consumption and role as a transit country can strengthen. 'The TANAP hes key importance for EU's and Turkey's gas security and for the establishment of the Southern Gas Corridor. The regional gas distributor center role of Turkey is a common interest and part of the EU-Turkey high level energy dialogue' – states the joint papers. The signing of the document can be beneficial to Ankara relating the EU accession negotiations, due to the declaration in the statement that Turkey has gained significant results in EU law harmonisation and internal energy regulation. The signing of the document can be beneficial to Ankara relating the EU accession negotiations, due to the declaration in the statement that Turkey has gained significant results in EU law harmonisation and internal energy regulation.

According to our present knowledge the realisation of Southern Gas Corridor is through the TANAP-TAP lines. According to the plans the European Union would receive 10 bn cubic meters of natural gas annually from the Caspian region, however this number is very small compared to the EU's gas consumption, namely 3% of it. So altogether the

http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20141208 na persze majd jon az azeri gaz download: 21 March 2015

¹⁴ http://www.ensec.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=247:the-role-of-turkey-in-the-global-energy-bolstering-energy-infrastructure-

security&catid=106:energysecuritycontent0510&Itemid=361, download: 24 November 2010

15 http://archive.turkinfo.hu/db/mutat.php?tabla=hajra&&id=85 download: 21 March 2015

http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20150317-szorosabb-eu-torok-egyuttmukodes-az-energiapolitikaban.html, download: 21 March 2015

http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20150317-szorosabb-eu-torok-egyuttmukodes-az-energiapolitikaban.html download: 21 March 2015

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construction of the pipelines does not really strenghten the EU's energy security, but for South-East Europe this increase of energy supply can be important. The TAP will join the gas network operated by the Italian Snam RETE Gas, from there it will transport the gas to other important European hubs.

Turkey's appreciation as transit country is something that Russia, like the EU, can not ignore. And Ankara is strengthening it's position by not committing to any sides. Russia's economy is highly dependent on hydrocarbons export, this source of income is indispensable to it's economy to function, so Moscow, as a gas export giant, is obliged to diversify transport lines. This became more relevant since the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes/war since 2006. The South Stream pipeline plan was a reaction to the problems of Ukrainian transit, planned to transport Russian gas through the Black Sea to South-East Europe (to Austria via Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Slovenia). ¹⁸ The construction of the pipeline was cancelled by Vladimir Putin in December 2014, due to the tensions between Russia and EU caused by the still ongoing Ukrainian war. ¹⁹ The Gazprom immediately announced the successor of the South Stream, the Turkish Stream. The pipeline is meant to fully take the part of Ukrainian transit, thus practically this would be the only transport line of Russian natural gas to Europe.

Thus Gazprom will transport gas till Turkey and saying if Europe is in need of the gas which was formerly brought via Ukraine, than the EU should build the pipelines to Turkey and commence negotiations with Ankara. 'There is no other solution. We informed our European partners of this and now it's their task to build the necessary gas transport infrastructure to the Turkey-Greece border. And they have at most a few years for that. This is a really tight schedule.' ²⁰ – said Alexey Miller, CEO of Gazprom.

Turkey's geostrategic role in gas transit is nothing new and the Russia-Ukraine gas disputes inevitably fueled Ankara's ambitions. However it's in question if Turkey is going to be a more relaible transit country than Ukraine. In fact, already the Nabucco negotiations were delayed by the Turkish transit issue, namely the demand to purchase their share of the transported gas at a lower than market price. An other important issue is that in case of closeing the spigot of a fully constructed line to Europe, will the Azeri side be able to represent interest as effectively as Russia did with Ukraine? ²¹

¹⁸ http://www.vg.hu/vallalatok/energia/kijeloltek-a-torok-aramlat-gazvezetek-utvonalat-442819 download: 21 March 2015

¹⁹The Southern Stream – possibly due to pressure of the European Committee – did not get the necessary permissions for the construction of the pipeline, because according to the liberalisation of energy market, the owner of the gas field and the pipeline can not be the same. source: http://figyelo.hu/cikkek/416422-kinek-jo-a-torok-aramlat, download: 21 March 2015

²⁰ http://energiainfo.hu/cikk/vezeteket_epittetne_europaval_a_gazprom.32939.html, download: 21 March 2015

²¹ Deák András György: A Gazprom és a szuperagy, in: Nemzet és Biztonság, 2010. szeptember, http://www.nemzetesbiztonsag.hu/cikkek/deak andras gyorgy-a gazprom es a szuperagy .pdf, download: 21 February 2015

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Turkey's role as a land interconnector will be crucial till the main means of transporting natural gas, pipelines will have an advantage over alternative technologies. These days the main concurrent of the pipelinesis the LNG technology. 22 Talking about pipeline transportation of gas. Turkey has a strategic role without doubt, but in case of transporting liquified gas the role of European ports can be more significant. With the cancellation of more pipeline projects in the recent years, and with the lines under construction being questionable when they reach Europe, the building of LNG terminals seems to be a solution worth considering, supported by the fact, that the present transport capacity is not able to guarantee the EU's gas security. Unfortunately Eastern-Central Europe has significant disadvantages in regard of LNG terminals too, compared to Western. Europe, where, besides the pipelines' and the import countrys' diversification there are significantly more LNG terminals. The post eastern block countries are more dependent on Russia both by the means of infstrastucture and by import. The construction of LNG terminals could decrease Eastern-Central Europen dependency on Russian gas, but these projects are of very expensive nature. Additionally the price of liquified gas is 10-20% more expensive than pipe-gas. 23

At the present there is a project within the concept of Southern Gas Corridor, that provides around Turkey. called AGRI (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania way Interconnector). This line is planned to transport LNG from Azerbaijan to Romania through the Black Sea, via Georgia, with the LNG transformed back to gas and transported towards Central-Europe by the developed Romanian lines. For this project LNG terminals would be needed on both Romanian and Georgian sides. 24 This project however is currently on hold, due to it's source would be the Azeri Sah Deniz II fields, which officially and unofficially promised it's supplies to many of the planned pipelines. The question is if the Sah Deniz II will be able or willing to supply a new export line towards Europe after the construction of TANAP and TAP. 25

SOURCE COUNTRIES

Often the term 'Caspian-sea gas' is meantioned as the sources of Southern Gas Corridor. In fact only Azerbaijan and the Sah Deniz II gas fields²⁶ are committed to Europe, only one of the potential source countries. However Azerbaijan promised gas to more planned

²²Liquefied Natural Gas: http://www.portfolio.hu/vallalatok/energia/a gazpiac nagyjai amit az Ing-rol tudni kell.118842-2.html, download: 21 March 2015

²³Dobos Balázs: A cseppfolyósított földgáz szerepe a regionális gázpiacok integrációjában, in: http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/HLWHRV/2011 164 dobos balazs a cseppfolyos%C3%ADtott foldga z szerepe a regionalis gazpiacok integraciojaban.pdf, download: 9 March 2015

http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20141208 na persze majd jon az azeri gaz, download:21 March 2015 http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/romania-natural-gas-strategy-22916, download: 21 March 2015

²⁶ The Sah Deniz I field's production is reserved for Russia, so the gas supplying the Southern Gas Corridor is planned to transport gas of Sah Deniz II. Source: Virág Attila: Elgázolt szuverebitás PhD értekezés, in:http://phd.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/745/1/Virag Attila.pdf, download: 25 February 2015

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projects of the Southern Gas Corridor, only in January, 2011 committed itself officially to natural gas transportation to Europe. José Manuel Barroso then chairman of committee and Azeri president Ilham Aliyev signed the joint statement, in which Azerbaijan committed itself towards EU. The chairman of European Committee commented on this: 'This new supply route will increase the energy security of European consumers and corporations. The corridor is a common interest. It is crucial to our energy supply, security and diversification of the demand. Azerbaijan plans to diversify it's export at the same rate, as EU plans it's import. The Southern Corridor provides Azerbaijan a reliable physical access to EU's energy market, which is the largest in the world.'27

The countries of the Caspian region are still potential sources of course, but there is still no significant agreement relating gas export with these countries. The policy of 'buoyancy' is much more of a trait of these countries. Of course the success of Azeri gas transports can open the route for the countries of the region towards Europe. ²⁸ Turkmenistan as a country with enormous natural gas reserves, more times committed itself in statements to European gas export, like Nabucco, but without serious aggreement. An important aggrement was signed with Beijing and following some disputes with Moscow. So the vast majority of Turkmen capacities became aimed Eastwards. Kazahstan and Uzbegistan, despite the significant natural gas reserves, have no export capable production and most of the production is used locally or sold in the region. ²⁹

Iran is currently really isolated at international level, especially it's energy sector, Turkish government is lobbying in order to transport Iranian gas via TANAP. ³⁰

WHAT MAKES TANAP THE WINNER?

In regard the competing pipeline projects, we can talk about a great success, if any of them reaches the phase of construction. This is the case with TANAP, the construction started this year. This rises the question why could TANAP be successful and Nabucco not. In this relation TANAP seems to be more stable both financially and regarding it's political background.

Prior to the economical crisis, European Union would have contributed with 200 mn Euros to Nabucco's prefinancing. Despite this is a significant amount, only a fraction of the 7,9 bn Euro total cost. ³¹ The project's financial background was planned to be financed by three international banks, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

²⁷ http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20110113-azerbajdzsan-beszall-europa-gazellatasaba.html, download: 21 March 2015

²⁸ http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20140309-szezam-nyilhat-ki-a-deli-gazfolyosoval.html, download: 21 March 2015

²⁹ Virág Attila: Elgázolt szuverenitás PhD dissertation, in: http://phd.lib.uni-

corvinus.hu/745/1/Virag Attila.pdf, download: 25 February 2015

http://www.napigazdasag.hu/cikk/40321/, download: 21 March 2015

³¹ http://kitekinto.hu/europa/2009/01/28/vegre_kezdlokes_a_nabucconak/#.VS-qzZMppQU, download:

²¹ March 2015

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(EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and IFC, member of the World Bank Group. The mentioned banks planned to provide a 4 bn Euro background for the pipeline construction. 3233 The rest of the cost would have been covered by the participating countries and the project corporations. Gerhard Mangott Austrian energy expert believes, that it was unfortunate that the Nabucco Gas Pipeline International GmbH did not include anyone from the Sah Deniz II consortium, the gas provider, 34 The financing banks took it seriously to get guarantees that the gas will be available for transport on longer run, but source countries, especially Azerbaijan did not commit themeselves towards Nabucco.35 The existence or lack of political support shows hugh differences over time in the history of Nabucco. The project as the pipeline meant to diversificate European gas supply and decrease dependence on Russian gas was regarded as an important goal.

Among the community, the project received more or less support depending on the gas disputes from EU for a decade, however the 2008 economical crisis made the decision makers in terms of financial issues. More large EU member countries, especially France and Germany, were not at all interested in the construction of the pipeline, Angela Merkel strongly opposed the funding of the project from the common treasury. This is common sense, because her country was not involved in the project territorially, in opposite to the Northern Stream, which provides direct connection between Russia and Germany. 36 In June, 2012 Günther Oettinger, EU commissioner for energy policy stated: 'The name of the child is not important. The important is the possibility, that the Caspian gas reaches Southern Europe.' 37 So the EU does not care, which planned line transports the gas, the important is to have the desired amount and to have it guaranteed by secure agreements. Oettinger gave sound to the opinion, that the future of Nabucco is doubtful, the project operates with ever increasing costs and it's realisation had been delayed for too long. 38

The funding of TANAP is estimated 10 bn USD by experts, the investment's owners are the Azeri Socar with 58, the Turkish Botas with 30 and the British Petrol with 12 percent of holdings.³⁹ The financing of the project seems easier compared to Nabucco. Here the

³² http://energiainfo.hu/cikk/harom_penzintezet_a_nabucco_mellett.22252.html, download: 21 March

<sup>2015

33</sup> The breakdown of th financial background follows: 2 bn EUR from EIB, 1,2 bn EUR from EBRD (600 mn directly from EBRD, 600 mn from commercial banks) and 800 mn EUR from IFC (400 mn from IFC and 400 mn commrecial bank money)

http://energiainfo.hu/cikk/harom penzintezet a nabucco mellett.22252.html, download: 21 March 2015

http://m.magyarnarancs.hu/kulpol/nabucco-gerhard-mangott-europai-foldgazellatas-85685, download: 21 March 2015

http://nol.hu/kulfold/nabucco-csucs gyurcsany szerint kimozdult a projekt a holtpontrol-318142 download: 21 March 2015

http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20090320 kommerszant nabucco foldgaz, download: 21 March 2015

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largest investor is the Azeri SOCAR Corporation, with an estmated wealth of 34 bn USD, provides a strong financial background for the project through it's various export interests and SOFAZ (State Oil Found of Arerbajdjan). ⁴⁰⁴¹ Besides the financial background of course, the political commitment is also important. The other owner with large holdings, Botas, state owned oil and gas corporation, representing Turkey, which has the most interests in realising the project. Turkey's strategic energy-connecting role is only important if the pipeline runs through it's territory in an East-West direction, connecting the gas rich regions to it's own economy and to Europe.

Finally, an important thing, that might have helped significantly the construction of the pipeline. In this project, political ambitions were easily matched with the construction companies, due to both Botas and SOCAR being technically state owned corporations. The Turkish and Azeri people recognize each other as brothers, and this is shown in the TANAP motto: 'Two countries – one nation'. 42

CONCLUSIONS

The Nabucco, as a giant, mulitlateral project, might have perished due to the nunerous participants and their differencies. The rise and fall of the pipeline project was caused by the numerous contributors. On one hand, EU as an energy importer had supported it, priorizing the decreasing of dependence on Russian gas, instead to the building of a new pipeline. Gas diversification is mostly an issue of Central-East Europe, Western Europe is less dependent on Russian gas.

The next problem is the insignificant role of the exporters, namely Azerbaijan. As it was already mentioned, the project made a hugh mistake with coming to an agreement only with one source coutry and excluding their state corporation from the members. Turkey, as transit country, tried to represent it's own interests from the beginning of the project. It's main interest is gas trade besides satisfying it's own internal needs. For this reason, it took long to have the intergovernment agreement of transit countries, because Turkey demanded lower-than-market prices to purchase the gas transported through it's soil⁴³ and probably sell it to Europe for more. So Turkey tried to exploit it's strategic role and play the 'Ukrainian card', the potentials lying in the transit country status. With the construction of TANAP line, the European Union does not get any transportation routes in Turkey, so Ankara can gain advantages in natural gas trade and employing political pressure.

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⁴⁰ http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/southern-gas-corridor-and-eu-gas-security-of-supply-22688, download: 21 March 2015

⁴¹ http://www.oilfund.az/en_US/layiheler/tanap-project.asp, download: 21 March 2015

http://www.tanap.com/, download: 21 March 2015

⁴³ http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cik/20090713-ket-iranyban-aramlik-majd-a-gaz-a-nabuccoban.html, download: 21 March 2015

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