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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
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İNGİLİZCE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER PROGRAMI  
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

# **ISRAEL IN SOUTH CAUCASUS: SECURITY AND ENERGY CHALLENGES**

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**2009**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Master's Thesis**

### **Israel in South Caucasus: Security and Energy Challenges**

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In a world where there is only a limited source of energy, many developed and developing countries desperately seek cheaper, stable and reliable alternative sources for their economies. In this regards, it might be quite sensible to expect that numerous future disagreements and conflicts would take place over energy resources unless humanity finds alternative energy technologies.

Until recently, the Gulf region with its vast energy resources was one of the primary energy sources. But, the problematic and rather complicated political dynamics of the region has always had potential to cause stability, consistency and reliability problems for consumer states. Through the last two decades the Caucasus emerged as an excellent alternative for those states in the region such as Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt. Many countries like Russia, the US and their allies are in rivalry to become more influential in Caucasus and to gain access to rich energy resources of the region. This situation is called 'The New Great Game' by Lutz Kleveman. With its desperate need for alternative energy sources Israel is part of this game.

Israel's main interest in the region lies on Azerbaijan's vast energy sources. Through its influence in Azerbaijan, Israel hopes to benefit from natural resources of the region. BTC and Blue Stream pipelines have great importance for Israeli interests in the region. Especially, BTC – having Western support, has a strategic meaning. Both Georgia and Azerbaijan have a positive attitude towards the presence of Israel in South Caucasus, because they hope that close relations with Israel will give a chance to build closer economic and political relations with the West

In the recent years, there were regional conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia in Caucasus. These conflicts have the potential to pose risks for the flow of oil through BTC-which might cause negative results for the energy security of Israel.

In this thesis, energy security concerns of Israel which affect its foreign policy formulations on the South Caucasus will be studied. Particularly, Azerbaijani-Israeli relations will be reviewed since Azerbaijan is considered to be a pivot country for Israel to reach to vast energy resources of Caucasus. Two major energy pipelines - BTC and Blue Stream- will be analyzed from Israel's point of view. And finally two regional conflicts –Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia- will be analyzed to answer the question whether they can cause burden on Israeli energy security.

**Key Words :** 1) Energy Security, 2) Israel, 3) Energy Pipelines

**ÖZET**  
**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**  
**Güney Kafkasya'da İsrail: Güvenlik ve Enerji Tehditleri**

**Namık TANRIBAKAN**

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**İngilizce Uluslararası İlişkiler Programı**

Sınırlı miktarda enerji kaynaklarına sahip dünyamızda pek çok gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülke ekonomileri için yoğun biçimde daha ucuz, istikrarlı ve güvenilir alternatif enerji arayışı içindedir. Bu bakımdan, ileride ortaya çıkabilecek pek çok anlaşmazlık ve çatışmanın insanlık yeni enerji teknolojileri üretmedikçe mevcut enerji kaynakları üzerinde olacağını tahmin etmek oldukça mantıklı olacaktır.

Yakın zamana kadar Körfez bölgesi, zengin enerji kaynakları ile önde gelen enerji kaynaklarından sayılıyordu. Ancak, bölgenin problemlili ve hayli karmaşık dinamikleri alıcı ülkeler için istikrar, tutarlılık ve güvenilirlik problemleri yaratmak için her zaman belli bir potansiyele sahip olmuştur. Geçtiğimiz 20 yıllık süreçte Kafkaslar bölgesi Körfez bölgesindeki Irak, Kuveyt, Suudi Arabistan ve Mısır gibi ülkelere karşılık mükemmel bir alternatif olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Rusya, ABD ve onların müttefikleri gibi pek çok ülke Kafkaslarda daha etkin olabilmek uğruna çetin bir rekabete girişmiş bulunmaktadır. Bu durum Lutz Klevean tarafından 'Yeni Büyük Oyun' olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Alternatif enerji kaynaklarına olan büyük ihtiyacıyla İsrail bu oyunun bir parçasıdır.

İsrail'in bölgedeki asıl ilgisi Azerbaycan'ın sahip olduğu büyük enerji kaynakları üzerindedir. BTC ve Mavi Akım projeleri İsrail'in bölgedeki çıkarları açısından önemlidir. Özellikle BTC boru hattı elde ettiği Batı desteğiyle stratejik bir öneme sahiptir. Hem Gürcistan hem de Azerbaycan İsrail'in bölgedeki varlığı konusunda olumlu bir tutum içindedir. Çünkü bu ülkeler İsrail ile yakın ilişkilerin kendilerine Batı ile daha yakın ekonomik ve politik ilişkiler kurmada yardımcı olacağını değerlendirmektedirler.

Yakın zamanda Kafkaslarda Dağlık Karabağ ve Güney Osetya'da bölgesel çatışmalar meydana gelmiştir. Bu çatışmaların BTC boru hattı üzerinden petrol taşınmasına zarar verme potansiyeli vardır ve böyle bir gelişmenin İsrail'in güvenliğine zarar verme riski söz konusudur.

Bu çalışmada, İsrail'in Güney Kafkaslarla ilgili politikalarının şekillenmesi üzerinde etkili olan enerji güvenliği konuları ele alınacaktır. Özellikle, Azerbaycan-İsrail ilişkileri incelenecektir; çünkü Azerbaycan İsrail'in bölgedeki geniş enerji kaynaklarına ulaşmasına yardımcı olabilecek bir mihver ülke olarak değerlendirilmektedir. İki büyük enerji boru hattı –BTC ve Mavi Akım- İsrail'in bakış açısı dikkate alınarak değerlendirilecektir. Son olarak iki bölgesel çatışmanın – Yukarı Karabağ ve Güney Osetya- analizi yapılacak ve bu çatışmaların İsrail'in enerji güvenliğine dair sorun yaratıp yaratmayacağı sorusu cevaplandırılmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler : 1) Enerji Güvenliği, 2) İsrail, 3) Enerji Boru Hatları**

## OUTLINE

### **ISRAEL IN SOUTH CAUCASUS: SECURITY AND ENERGY CHALLENGES**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Azerbaijan International Oil Company
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
EU	The European Union
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries
UK	the United Kingdom
US	the United States

## INTRODUCTION

The end of Cold War changed many dynamics in the world politics. The traditional definition of security which is limited with military threats became obsolete. In the new security environment, there is need to discuss issues like international terrorism, climate changes, human rights violations, use of WMD, religious fundamentalism, secure energy sources and fresh water energy supplies.

There is an enormous literature on security. But, studies focusing on 'energy security' seem relatively lacking. Energy security studies constitute a recent branch of security studies. Because awareness about depletion of primary resources like stable energy supplies has only increased following the geopolitical changes after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991<sup>1</sup>.

This study aims to analyze Israel's interest in the South Caucasus, particularly emphasizing 'energy security'. In the post-Cold War era, Caucasus became a pivotal region for many major powers where they all try to increase their influence to reach to rich energy resources of the region. This rivalry is called 'The New Great Game' by Lutz Kleveman<sup>2</sup>. Kleveman uses the term to describe the rivalry between the Western bloc and a weakened Russia for the control of Eurasia and its energy resources. Israel is one of the players in this new game as part of the Western bloc. This thesis on 'Israel in South Caucasus: Security and Energy Challenges' is analyzed because the studies reviewing Israel's energy security concerns have been considered rather limited in scope and number when compared to those analyses focusing on energy security concerns of great powers like the US, EU, Russia, China, India and Japan. Though it is a small country both in size and population, Israel is economically, technologically and military wise a rather strong country in its vicinity<sup>3</sup>. Thus, any study focusing on Israel's energy security concerns especially in relation to South Caucasus –as a newly emerging alternative energy source for the remaining global energy reserves- would be expected to contribute greatly to the literature on energy security studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Murinson, 'Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel Relations: The Energy Factor', **MERIA**, Volume 12, No. 3 - September 2008, Article 4 of 7, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Lutz Kleveman, **The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia**, Grove Press, New York, 2003, p.123.

<sup>3</sup> Israel is geographically part of the Middle East which has been home for major disruptions and political turmoil due to energy-connected political rivalries of major powers since the beginning of the 20th century.

The huge energy potential of the Caspian basin played an important role in formulating the Israeli interest in the region through the post-Cold War era. Like many energy poor countries in the world, Israel tries to enrich and increase the number of its energy suppliers. This is an important rule of energy security concept which preconditions that nations have the access to sustainable energy resources with reasonable prices from alternative energy sources. In Churchill's words: 'The key to oil supply security is diversity, diversity and diversity only.'<sup>4</sup> Caucasus means a great potential for Israel's energy needs and provides realistic opportunities to diversify its energy sources.

#### **a. The Aim of the Study**

After the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Caucasus region arose as an additional energy source for both developed and developing economies as an alternative to the Middle Eastern countries. Through the post-Cold War era, Caucasus once again became a region open for political and economic rivalry of the US, Russia and their allies. Each of these powers seeks to increase its influence in the region to gain easier access to vast energy resources of the area. Israel is one of these countries. With its developed but energy-poor economy, Israel desperately needs energy alternatives to supply its economy.

The aim of this study is to analyze Israel's energy security concerns in the South Caucasus in relation to the vast energy potential of the region and to focus on the way Israeli foreign policy making is affected depending on its energy expectations from the region –especially considering the regional conflicts Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia and the potential risks they can impose on energy security of the region. After defining the term 'energy security', geopolitical approaches to energy security is reviewed. It's argued that Israel's interest in South Caucasus can be explained through geopolitical realism. It's considered that geopolitical approach provides the best understanding about Israel's regional policy. In this regard, it is argued that energy security concerns of Israel, particularly relations with Azerbaijan, affect its regional strategy. Because, Azerbaijan with its

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Yergin, 'Energy Security and Markets', **Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy**, Eds. Jan H. Kalicki and David L. Goldwyn. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005, p. 213.

vast energy resources has a unique importance for Israel in this geography. Particularly the BTC pipeline is the main route for energy transportation to Israel.

Regional conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia have the potential to pose risks for security of the BTC pipeline which would be intolerable by Israeli economy. Israel aims to sell Azerbaijani oil to Asian countries through additional pipelines besides the BTC. It seems that the BTC is the first step for a comprehensive future energy project. The geopolitical situation in Caucasus, Israeli-Azerbaijani relations, the BTC and Blue Stream pipelines and Israel's future plans about these pipelines, Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts in the region are all important issues for Israel's energy security concerns.

The main argument of this study is that the South Caucasus has the potential to supply secure energy sources to energy dependent-Israel in the post-Cold war era following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In parallel lines the research question in this study is 'Why is Israel interested in South Caucasus?'. The facts that Israel does not have a common border with Caucasus and the region is quite away from the region do not decrease the importance of Caucasus for Israel. It can be discussed that Israel's interest in the Caucasus is widely unnoticed by academicians but such a case would add to the uniqueness of this study. Because, this study hopes to fill the gap and contribute to better understanding of energy security studies focusing mainly on Israel's energy security concerns in the South Caucasus.

#### **b. The Limits of the Study**

Israel's interest in the Caucasus has many dimensions such as political, cultural, economical, security, historical. This thesis only focuses on energy security.

#### **c. The Method and Plan of the Study**

In this thesis, secondary resources are used for literature survey. In the first chapter, a conceptual and theoretical framework is given. The Chapter One includes a definition of energy security concept and geopolitical approaches to energy security. The aim is underlining the importance of energy security in a world where consumers increase their demand day by day but the total reserves for energy

remain stable or even diminish. A brief lineage of the conceptual evolution of 'energy security' is given and how the concept 'energy security' has been developed through security studies is analyzed. The two prominent international security and economic organizations; the EU and NATO's definitions of energy security are discussed. An academic literature evolving around political and economic aspects of energy security are analyzed. The academic weaknesses of economic perspectives – which only focus on economic variables and neglect the political constituents of energy security- of energy security are compared to those of political perspectives of energy security. Political economy literature is part of the studies on political perspectives of energy security. It is divided between two policy options either using military force or foreign policy instruments to secure energy resources. Concerning Israel's energy security, it's discussed to figure out which policy option would be more beneficiary for Israel. Through Chapter One, geopolitical approaches to energy security are also reviewed. First, the relation between geopolitics and energy security is discussed. It's argued that in a world where there is scarcity in energy resources, nation-states no more show the patience to abide with market rules. Instead a political rivalry takes place to gain access to rich energy resources of various geographies in the world. As a result, geopolitics becomes part of energy security studies. One of the questions to answer through this study is whether regional conflicts which cause instability in the South Caucasus would cause disruptions in the flow of energy to Israel. Through an analysis of theory of geopolitics, the reasons and policy options to handle this issue are discussed.

The Chapter Two is about the analysis of the relation between Israel and the South Caucasus. Energy geopolitics of Israel is analyzed through a modern history of energy needs, and deals of Israel through the 1970s until today. Israel with its desperate need for foreign energy sources seems to have continuously struggled to find alternative energy producers to keep away from major disruptions in the flow of natural resources to its soil. The US is its closest partner to help it with its struggle against energy crises. Second, Israeli interest on the South Caucasus energy resources is reviewed. It's underlined that the changing geopolitics in the Caucasus after the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled Israel to develop policies concerning the region. Israel's interest in the region is formulated around its interest in vast energy resources of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is stressed as a pivot country for Israel to gain access to energy sources.

The Chapter Three is about energy security challenges for Israel. First an analysis of security environment of the South Caucasus is given to background. The BTC and Blue Stream pipelines which are crucial for Israeli energy security are analyzed. It's emphasized that especially when these pipelines are further developed and extended to reach to Israeli port Eilat, they will play a vital role to supply Israel's future energy needs. The two regional conflicts –Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia- are analyzed. Possible threats they can pose to the physical security of the pipelines are discussed. The regional conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia not only have the potential to risk the regional stability in the Caucasus but also for Europe and the wider international community. It's argued that these conflicts have a limited capacity to cause physical threats to the pipelines in the region but, political and economic stability in the region can be negatively affected and some future investment can be deterred through successive turmoil. The possible negative outcomes of these threats over Israeli energy security concerns in the South Caucasus are reviewed from this perspective.

In The Conclusion part, it is suggested that the South Caucasus has the potential to supply secure energy sources to energy dependent-Israel in the post-Cold war era following the collapse of the Soviet Union. When Israel's highly problematic relations with its neighborhood is concerned, the vast energy supplies of the region presents a vital opportunity for Israel to use the region as a pivot area to diversify its energy supplies. Through the study, it is concluded that regional instability is the only tangible threat to pose risks for energy security of Israel in the region. Some state and non-state actors seem to wish regional instability in the region due to geopolitical concerns. As major powers in the region, Russia and Iran don't want to see Western powers especially the EU, the US and Israel in the region because they fear that they might lose the region to these powers and give up their hegemonic influence. But, as further analyzed in the study, none of the major states would dare to cause physical harm to the BTC pipeline for fear of heavy repercussions of such an attempt. One branch of literature supports the view that military force should be used to solve energy security problems. The other perspective supports the view that a global and regional pro-active foreign policy should be pursued to solve energy security problems. In Israeli case, concerning its alternative policy options about Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts the latter perspective seems to be more effective and profitable for Israeli interests in

the region. It should be noticed by Israel that the highly complex multiethnic demographic structure in the region always has the potential to cause problems for the energy security in the Caucasus through political instabilities. So, Israel should pursue proactive foreign policies to prevent conflicts and establish good relations with the regional countries against the possibility that these conflicts might have negative effects on production and transportation of Caucasus energy resources.



# CHAPTER ONE

## CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON ENERGY AND SECURITY

### 1.1. WHAT IS MEANT BY 'ENERGY SECURITY'?

Our world faces serious economic security challenges. The problem is caused by a growing population and growing need for resources in developed and developing countries. By the year 2030 the 6.5 billion population of the world is expected to reach to 8 billion and 95% of that increase will take place in developing countries. It won't be a surprise to predict that young generations will require their standard of living at least maintained and if possible improved much more in the years ahead. Such a desire will mean dramatic increases in energy consumption rates since almost all economic and technological instruments are based on the use of oil and gas. The International Energy Agency expects that the energy demand will increase 50% by 2030 even if resources are efficiently used. A great majority of that increase (70%) will take place in the developing countries and these countries primarily use fossil fuels due to relatively much cheaper prices<sup>1</sup>. But despite such increases in demand, it's a fact that the world has a limited source of natural resources. Today, energy production, transportation and consumption issues are becoming part of national security. The scarcity in energy resources leads to problems even military conflicts among states. Similar analyses make the 'energy security' issue a relevant topic for debate.

Nation-states' concern over energy security dates back to first Winston Churchill's decision to use oil instead of coal in the British Navy to continue its hegemony before the WW I. At the time, energy security has become an important constituent of national security and strategy first time ever in history for nations. But such a change can be considered a rather bold movement. Because, Royal Navy decided not to use the secure coal from Wales but insecure oil supplies from Persia. Churchill received harsh criticisms because of his decision. But when asked he said 'safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone.'<sup>2</sup> And in congruence with his remark, through the WW I, Allies invaded the Middle East for the vast resources

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.iea.org/subjectqueries/keyresult.asp?KEYWORD\\_ID=4139](http://www.iea.org/subjectqueries/keyresult.asp?KEYWORD_ID=4139), (15.11.2009)

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Yergin, 'Ensuring Energy Security', **Foreign Affairs**, 2005, Volume 85, No. 2, p. 69.

of the region. Through the WW II, oil and remaining energy sources were even more important. One of the primary reasons for the Japanese attack on the US forces was the oil embargo by the US on Japan<sup>3</sup>.

In 1973 and 1974 oil crises OPEC used its natural resources as a weapon against energy-poor Western countries. It was once again clear that energy security was one of the most important concerns of the security conceptualization of modern nation-states.

Following the end of Cold War, the energy security policies underwent through radical shifts. The ex-Soviet states in the Caspian basin emerged as new sources of energy supplies for the world market. Both the US and the EU which suffered from dependency on Middle Eastern natural resources in 1973-74 and 1979 crises started to developed policies to increase their influence in the region to gain easier access to its highly rich energy supplies. Today, the world experiences a great power rivalry called 'The New Great Game' in the region. By this term, the rivalry between the Western countries and Russia over gaining the initiative to control the vast energy potential of the Caspian basin is meant<sup>4</sup>. The two regional conflicts -Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia- in the South Caucasus which will be analyzed through this study are in fact part of this New Great Game rivalry. Israel is part of this great rivalry as one of the prominent allies of the Western world in the region. Through the study, the focus will be on Israel's energy security and possible threats that can be caused by these regional disputes over the flow of energy sources from the South Caucasus to Israel. For Redgewell, insecurity for energy supplies can come from differing causes like 'geopolitical instability, natural disasters, terrorism, poor regularity designs or lack of investments'.<sup>5</sup> The focus of this study will be on regional instabilities or in other words, the geopolitical causes of energy insecurity. In today's world, energy security/insecurity is one of the primary

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<sup>3</sup> Barry Barton, Catherine Redgewell, Anitta Ronne, Donald N. Zillman (Eds.), **Energy Security: Managing Risk in a Dynamic Legal and Regulatory Environment**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Lutz Klevevan, **The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia**, Grove Press, New York, 2003, p. 43.

The term 'Great Game' was used in the 19th century to describe the power struggle between Tsarist Russia and United Kingdom to gain control over Afghanistan. Later, in the 20th century, the term is used to define the power struggle between the two great powers and their allies over controlling the natural resources of the Caspian basin.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine Redgewell, 'International Energy Security', in Barry Barton, Catherine Redgewell, Anitta Ronne and Donald N. Zillman, (eds.), **Energy Security: Managing Risk in a Dynamic Legal and Regulatory Environment**, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 57.

concerns of national security. In other words, oil dependency has great effects on constructing national security framework of modern nation states, and with the beginning of present century, energy security has been considered as 'second only to national defense'<sup>6</sup>. Israel's interest in the South Caucasus will be analyzed from a similar perspective. Energy security is part of the national security of Israel, and as will be discussed later, the energy resources of the region supply a great majority of Israel's annual energy demand.

Literature on 'energy security' developed as part of security studies and though studies on energy security issues are relatively more recent -beginning in the mid 1970s- security studies date back to as early as 1945. The aim of security studies literature at the time was dealing with the problems of Cold War and nuclear weapons. Through security studies academicians were trying to understand military and technological threats that can pose a risk to national security. The concept of security has been debated since 1970s. Through this period it has undergone through a rather comprehensive formation and evolution process.

Traditional understanding of security relies on the assumption that the referent object of security is the nation state and this state should be secured against aggressor states or other external threats. The security studies are based on the concept of security dilemma<sup>7</sup>. The impetus behind security dilemma is the anarchic nature of international system and the aggressive character of human beings. The classical realist academicians based their arguments about human nature on philosophical and religious premises.

Buzan asserts that the term security should be used concerning the issues which are 'staged as existential threats to referent objects by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind'<sup>8</sup>. This definition seems to be full of complicated academic terms but in fact it presents three elements: the concept of security, the nature of

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<sup>6</sup> Lee H. Hamilton 'Foreword' in **Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy**, (Eds.), Jan H. Kalicki and David L. Goldway, Washington D.C. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Security dilemma is the ever-present threat that outside states might use their power to launch an attack.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Buzan, "People States and Fear: The National Security Problem in the Third World", in Abd al-Mun'im Mashshat (Ed.), **National Security in the Third World**, Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, p. 5.

referent objects and the role of securitizing actors. Buzan further argues that security is defined to involve perceived threats to the survival of a valued referent object. The objects of such threats can be either territorial states or non-state actors like nations, tribes or classes or abstract principles like the rules of capitalist economy or even the nature itself when for example global environment is considered. Threats can be posed from numerous sources like states, social trends like rapid population growth or natural disasters like famine, drought or floods. These threats can be observed through numerous fields including economic, environmental, cultural and other political and military spheres. Buzan identifies five major constituents of security. These would be cited as 'national security, military security, political security, societal security, economic security and ecological security.'<sup>9</sup>

As for national security it can be said that a nation is considered safe when it is able to protect its core values, has a desire to keep away from wars and when such a war is an inescapable threat, it's able to win that war. Martin argues that a state has three components to deter a threat. These are territory, society and regime<sup>10</sup>. According to Buzan national security is the security of a whole sociopolitical entity. For Buzan 'national security concerns the way of life of a self governing people, including their social, cultural, political and economic modes of organization and their right to develop themselves under their own rule'<sup>11</sup>.

Stephen Walt underlines that the main focus of security studies is the phenomenon of war<sup>12</sup>. It's assumed through security studies that the use of military conflict between states is always a possibility. The use of military capabilities might have far reaching effects on states<sup>13</sup>. Nye and Lynn Jones define security studies as the study of threat, use and control of military force<sup>14</sup>. Through security studies certain conditions which make the use of force more likely are analyzed. In this

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<sup>9</sup> Barry Buzan, "People States and Fear...", p.13.

<sup>10</sup> Lenore Martin, "Towards an Integrated Approach to National Security in the Middle East", in Lenore Martin (Ed), **New Frontiers in Middle East Security**, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Barry Buzan, "People States and Fear...", p.26.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'The Renaissance of Security Studies', **International Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 35, No. 2. (June, 1991), pp. 211-239.

<sup>13</sup> Hedley Bull, 'Strategic Studies and Its Critics', **World Politics**, 1968, pp. 593-605.

Levin Martin, 'The Future of Strategic Studies', **Journal of Strategic Studies**, 1980, pp. 199-231.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph S. Nye, and S. Lynn-Jones, 'International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field', **International Security**, 1988, pp. 5-27.

regards, how individuals, states and societies are affected from the use of force and states' specific policies to prepare for, prevent or take part in war are examined.

The security studies literature generally fits to realist paradigm in international relations and the importance of military power is specifically emphasized through the literature. But, it's also accepted that military power is not the only constituent of national security. Brown argues that 'new threats are emerging, threats which military forces cannot cope<sup>15</sup>'. It's recognized both by academicians and politicians that military threats are not the only dangers states face today. As a result, security studies include issues like arms control, diplomacy, and crisis management which are known as 'instruments of statecraft'. These new issues are still relevant to security studies because they all have direct or indirect relations with the concept of 'war'. Stephen Walt in his analysis underlines that security studies will remain an active research area following the end of Cold War era. Because, the collapse of the Cold War order will create new policy problems and they all need to be solved. So, the scholarly agenda in security studies is expanding not shrinking<sup>16</sup>.

Buzan<sup>17</sup> and Brown<sup>18</sup> suggest that the concept of security should be broadened by adding some nonmilitary topics like poverty, AIDS, environmental hazards, drug abuse and the like because these phenomena can also threaten states and individuals. Such a proposal means that military power on its own will not be enough to guarantee security. Because of this; nonmilitary issues deserve extra attention from politicians and academicians. By this logic, issues like pollution, disease, child abuse, economic recessions, and secure access to natural resources like oil, gas and water could be viewed as threats to 'security'.

Helga Hafterdorn's classical definition of security as 'the absence of a military threat or with the protection of the nation from external overthrow or attack.<sup>19</sup>' seems to lack the nonmilitary issues cited by Buzan and Brown. Because,

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<sup>15</sup> Lester Brown, Redefining National Security, **Worldwatch Paper**, No.14, Washington DC, Worldwatch Institute, 1977, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'The Renaissance of Security ...p. 239.

<sup>17</sup> Barry Buzan, 'People States and Fear...', p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Michael E. Brown, 'The US Manned Bomber and Strategic Deterrence in 1990s', **International Security**, 1989, pp. 5-46, p.14.

<sup>19</sup> Helga Hafterdorn, 'The Security Puzzle: Theory Building and Discipline Building in International Security,' **International Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 35, No.1, 1991, pp. 3-17.

it excludes energy security and other non-military threats by definition. When compared to rather narrow traditional definition of Hafterdorn, Richard Ullman makes a broader definition of security:

*'A threat to national security is an action or a sequence of events that threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade the quality of time for the inhabitants of a state, or threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to a state or to private, non-governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state.'*<sup>20</sup>

Basic difference of Ullman's definition is that he includes non-military threats to his definition. Marc A. Levy proposes the following definition for national security: 'A threat to national security is a situation in which some of the nation's most important values are drastically degraded by external action'<sup>21</sup>. Here he claims that he is in fact inspired from Ullman's definition. But, with his new definition he added the actions of foreigners in national security definition.

A closer national security definition to the topic of this study is made by Jessica Mathews. In 1989, with the aim of broadening the definition of national security she added natural resources, environmental and demographic issues to the definition of national security<sup>22</sup>. So, we can say that according to her definition, this study's concern with Israel's energy security would be cited among relevant issues of Israeli national security.

Barton et al. define energy security as 'a condition in which a nation and all, or most of its citizens and businesses have access to sufficient energy resources at reasonable prices for the foreseeable future, free from serious risk of major disruptions of service'<sup>23</sup>.

Michael Frederick makes a definition of his own understanding of national security and in his analysis he includes 'military capability, political legitimacy, ethnic

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Ullman, 'Redefining Security', **International Security**, Vol.8, No. 1 (Summer 1983), pp. 129-153; see p. 133.

<sup>21</sup> Marc A. Levy, 'Is the Environment a National Security Issue?', **International Security**, Vol. 20, No.2. (Autumn, 1995) pp. 35-62; see p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> Jessica Tuchman Mathews, 'Redefining Security', **Foreign Affairs**, Vol. 68, No.2 (Spring 1989), pp. 162-177; see p. 162.

<sup>23</sup> Barry Barton et al., '**Energy Security**: ...', p. 5.

and religious tolerance, economic capabilities and the availability of essential nature resources<sup>24</sup> as the main constituents of his national security paradigm.

Current understanding on energy security is based on a country's own talent of gaining access to sustainable supplies of energy resources either using her own natural resources in her geography or from sources abroad. Globalization is the driving force of countries to compete for reliable energy sources and rivaling for secure energy sources has become one of the primary concerns of international agenda. Energy security is one of the primary issues of global security<sup>25</sup>.

In addition to scholars various organizations have their own considerations concerning energy security. For example, International Energy Agency (IEA) warns about the following risks to energy security: 'Increasing dependence for oil supplies on a decreasing number of producer countries; ever greater risk of disruptions to supply due to the growing international trade with oil and gas; danger of political instability in producer and transit countries<sup>26</sup>.'

In his article 'Is the Environment a National Security Issue?' Marc A. Levy complains that most of the time those who study security have a tendency to exclude to study the non-military threats like environment, natural resources, soil erosion, population growth, climate change as parts of national security<sup>27</sup>. Richard Stanley verifies Levy's such statements. In 1989, he said in a conference:

*'It is encouraging that we increasingly hear some people discuss environmental and natural resource issues as threats to security. In international relations, security issues are generally regarded as the stuff of 'high politics' while economic, social and environmental issues are*

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<sup>24</sup> Michael Frederick, 'A Realist's Conception of Environmental Security', in Daniel Deudney and Richard Matthew (eds), **Contested Grounds: Security and Conflict in New Environmental Politics**, State University of New York, 1999, p. 93.

<sup>25</sup> The US Energy Plan of May 2001 emphasizes the vital need for the 'reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound' sources of energy. The European Parliament talks about this in the context of 'security supply, competitiveness and protection of the environment.' mentioned in Report of EP Committee A5-0363.2001, October 2001. The UK government talked of '...securing cheap, reliable and sustainable sources of energy supply.', Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) Energy Review (February 2002). In Japan this issue was framed under the title '3Es: Energy, Security, Environmental Protection and Economic Efficiency,' A Report of the Japanese Committee for Natural Resources and Energy, July 2001.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.iea.org/w/bookshop/add.aspx?id=365>, (23.11.2009)

<sup>27</sup> Marc A. Levy, 'Is the Environment a National...', p. 44.

*considered 'low politics.' National leaders, of course, give priority attention to high politics<sup>28</sup>.*

Richard Stanley in his argument asserts that politicians and national leaders do not consider energy issues among their priorities. But, the developments after the break-up of the Soviet Union and the 9/11 attacks in 2001, necessitated countries and their economic and security alliances like the EU and NATO to list energy security among their top priorities.

For example NATO and its leaders see that disruptions in the flow of energy resources to the member states can affect NATO's security interests negatively. The document issued as the Strategic Concept in Washington D.C. in 1999 underlines that through the preceding years, the international trends and a number of regional and international instabilities caused Alliance members to raise their concern about resource security<sup>29</sup>. During the Cold War, energy security meant ensuring the supply of oil to Alliance military forces. In this regards, ten separate military storage and distribution systems were built across Europe. But, due to global shifts in political and strategic spheres following the end of the Cold War, NATO is trying to clarify its role in energy security. As a result, In 2006 Riga summit, NATO officially started to see energy security issue as part of a consistent and more progressive study. In 2008 Bucharest summit a report on 'NATO's Role in Energy Security' was presented to heads of member states. It was decided by the state leaders that NATO would engage in following fields of energy security: 'information and intelligence fusion and sharing; projecting stability; advancing international and regional cooperation; supporting consequence management; and supporting the protection of critical energy infrastructure'<sup>30</sup>. The 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl summit focused on the progress achieved in energy security concerning the five fields identified in Bucharest. Through this summit it was asserted that NATO members see 'a stable and reliable energy supply, diversification of routes, suppliers and energy sources and the interconnectivity of energy networks remain of critical importance<sup>31</sup>' and leaders promised their consistent support to promote energy infrastructure security.

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Stanley, 'Environmental Problems; A Global Security Threat,' Report of the 24<sup>th</sup> United Nations of the Next Decade Conference, June 18-23, 1989, p.10.

<sup>29</sup> [www.nato.int/issues/energy\\_security/index.html](http://www.nato.int/issues/energy_security/index.html), (24.11.2009)

<sup>30</sup> [www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-E2B4629C-066D7E6B/natolive/opinions.1750.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-E2B4629C-066D7E6B/natolive/opinions.1750.htm?selectedLocale=en), (21.11.2009)

<sup>31</sup> [www.nato.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=87266](http://www.nato.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=87266), (17,11,2009)



The EU on the other hand defines energy security as ‘the ability to maintain the continuation of supply during periods of excess demand or disruption and the ability to ensure that future energy demand can be met by a combination of indigenous energy sources and the reliable supply and transit of imported energy.’<sup>32</sup> Through this definition the EU seems to have three basic energy challenges. First is developing strong relations with the consumer and transporter countries; second, using local energy sources and third, establishing a regional infrastructure to supply secure energy resources to all of Europe.

In regards the European attitude towards energy security, successive green papers released by the EU should be analyzed. For example, in 2006 the EU Commission issued a document titled ‘A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy’<sup>33</sup> as a ‘Green Paper’. With this document, it was asserted that energy policies were among the primary issues to be held by the Commission. Through the paper, several objectives are identified to pursue a successful energy security policy. For example, it was requested from the member states to open their energy markets by giving up protectionist policies and in this way establishing a single energy (electricity and gas) market. Also member states were asked to develop new energy efficient technologies, and pursue a consistent foreign energy policy, especially against Russia<sup>34</sup>.

When the American and European attitudes towards energy security are compared the basic difference would lie on their preferences of use of power. Energy security has been a priority for the US for long and the US has already developed a military cooperation with the littoral states of the Caspian Sea. NATO’s ‘Partnership for Peace’ (1994) was used to bring those states together. Also the US supported the building of the BTC pipeline in the Caspian basin to weaken the Russian hegemony in the region. The US seems to be willing to deploy increasing numbers of its troops in the region to counter-balance the Russian presence in the Caspian basin. The EU on the other hand, seems to abstain from a desire to use military force. Instead, the Union prefers a moderator role regarding the geopolitical struggles in the South Caucasus and the Caspian basin. Simultaneously, the EU is

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<sup>32</sup> [www.ceps.eu/system/files/prospectusTFSec.pdf](http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/prospectusTFSec.pdf) Center for European Policy Studies, (21.11.2009)

<sup>33</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2006/2006\\_03\\_green\\_paper\\_energy\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2006/2006_03_green_paper_energy_en.htm), (30.11.2009)

<sup>34</sup> Vince L. Morelli, ‘The European Union’s Energy Security Challenges’, [www.italy.usembassy.gov/pdf/otherRL33636.pdf](http://www.italy.usembassy.gov/pdf/otherRL33636.pdf), (16.11.2009)

trying to develop further economic relations in the region and diversify its energy resources<sup>35</sup>.

Israel on the other hand, made major investments to Azerbaijani oil infrastructure and it's a strategic partner of the BTC pipeline partner and a strong ally of the US in the Caucasus. The 2006 Lebanon war of Israel can be considered as a strategic movement to control the energy infrastructure of the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>36</sup>. And finally Israel declared that it has started a cooperation program with Turkey to connect two countries by an underwater pipeline network to carry oil, natural gas, water and natural gas<sup>37</sup>. All such efforts are to diversify energy sources of Israel as much as possible.

Academicians on the other hand, approached to the 'energy security' concept from various perspectives. It can be said that the literature on energy security is divided between two perspectives. One group of scholars considers energy security from an economic perspective and another group of scholars emphasize the political and strategic side of energy security. But, it should be noted that the literature on energy security is not fully developed yet. The theoretical and methodological perspectives are not enough to conceptualize the issue yet. Ernst J. Wilson clarifies weaknesses of energy security literature by asserting that:

*'There is little if any sustained intellectual give-and-take in the field of international energy policy studies over the most appropriate ways to analyze the phenomenon. A thorough search of the literature reveals only a mere handful of review articles or monographs which seriously debate the relative explanatory power of competing paradigms for the world oil market. Given the immense practical importance of the subject and the interest shown by social scientists, and in light of potential intellectual payoffs, the quality of theoretical literature is meager at best. A void exists at what should be the center of the field.'*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, 'Globalization, Geopolitics and Energy Security Central Asia and the Caspian Region', **Clingendael Institute**, The Hague, 19 June 2003.

<sup>36</sup> 'Blue Stream Pipeline to be Extended into Israel, Lebanon', **Pipeline & Gas Journal**, Copyright Oildom Publishing Company of Texas, Inc. Mar 2006  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m3251/is\\_3\\_233/ai\\_n24984273](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3251/is_3_233/ai_n24984273), (27.12.2008)

<sup>37</sup> James Fishelson, 'From the Silk Road To Chevron: The Geopolitics of Oil Pipelines in Central Asia, Vestnik, **The Journal of Russian and Asian Studies**, Issue 7, Winter, 2007.  
[http://www.sras.org/geopolitics\\_of\\_oil\\_pipelines\\_in\\_central\\_asia](http://www.sras.org/geopolitics_of_oil_pipelines_in_central_asia), (30.11.2009)

<sup>38</sup> Ernst J. Wilson, 'World Politics and International Energy Markets', **International Organization**, Vol. 41, No. 1. (Winter, 1987), pp. 125-149, p. 126.

Wilson's article is dated 1987 and in fact not too many things changed in security literature since then and the literature on 'energy security' can be defined as 'disorganized' at best<sup>39</sup>.

Despite such limitations energy security literature can be divided into three main branches: neoclassical economics and public choice, policy and political models and political economics.

Neoclassical economics perspective argues that rules of supply and demand characterize the actions of energy markets: supply and demand in the market balance each other. The pricing of oil and gas are determined according to supply-demand equilibrium in the market. In neoclassical economics literature on energy security political variables are seen as intervening variables or market externalities<sup>40</sup>. Adelman's article 'World Petroleum Market' is one of well known studies of neoclassical economics literature on energy security. Adelman argues that governments have nothing to do about setting stable prices in oil markets<sup>41</sup>. But Adelman's such rather deterministic explanation of energy markets proved incorrect through two energy crises within six years after he wrote his article in 1972. During 1970s OPEC appeared as a market power and acted as a cartel both in 1973 and 1979 crises. Though Adelman defines OPEC a clumsy and shortsighted organization and argues that the real threat to the world oil market is OPEC's vulnerabilities it is obvious that OPEC has the capacity to affect oil prices<sup>42</sup>. This fact contradicts 'externality' premise of neoclassical economics literature.

Finally it can be said that energy security externalities and neoclassical economics literature on energy help academicians to identify certain externalities that cause energy markets to fail to internalize all costs and benefits. This literature

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<sup>39</sup> Patrick James, 'International Relations and Scientific Progress: Structural Realism Reconsidered', Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2002, p. 56.

<sup>40</sup> Externality means a person or group of people who did not actively act in decision making process but benefited from the process. For example, a person or a state doesn't directly involve in price setting in oil but as a result he or the state becomes the benefactor of the event.

<sup>41</sup> Michael A. Adelman, **The World Petroleum Market, Resources for the Future**, by John Hopkins University, 1972, p. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Douglas Bohi and Michael Toman, 'Oil and National Security: An Assesment of Externalities and Policies', In Siamack Shojai (Ed.) **The New Global Market: Understanding Energy Issues in the World Economy**, Westport, Conn., Praeger, p. 83.

helps to capture the dynamic nature of energy markets but its tendency to exclude politics and institutional variables are among its weaknesses.

Bureaucratic politics is the second part of studies on energy security. In this literature the cases where markets and domestic politics meet are analyzed<sup>43</sup>. Academicians in this field focus on 'elite decision making, leadership, interests, short-term volatilities and prices<sup>44</sup>'.

These studies focus on practical problems when state policies on energy security issues are the concern. For example, some researchers study on issues like the nature of domestic policy making concerning energy security of the EU and the US<sup>45</sup>; funding issues concerning energy research<sup>46</sup>, and the relations between organizations on security issues<sup>47</sup>. These studies mainly focus on domestic policies considering decision making, coordination and fiscal sides of energy security issues. But, they have a tendency to ignore international political side of energy security discussions.

Final branch of literature on energy security is political economy<sup>48</sup> literature. As part of a larger political economy literature, one line of security studies focuses on the relations between national energy security and foreign policy literature. There are two branches in this literature. One branch of literature supports that military force should be used to solve energy security problems and a second branch argues that proactive foreign policy-making instruments should be used to solve energy security problems. Chinese General Sun Tzu (3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC) wrote that the best strategy to win is without firing a single shot. Carl von Clausewitz on the other side underlines that foreign policy is fighting by other means than using military means and weapons<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Martin Greenberger, **Caught Unawares**, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Ballinger, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> Ernst J. Wilson, 'World Politics and International...', p. 134.

<sup>45</sup> Ronald Moe, 'Government Corporations and the Erosion of Accountability: the Case of the Proposed Energy Security Corporation', **Public Administration Review**, Vol. 39, No. 6, 1979, pp. 566-571.

<sup>46</sup> Henry Lambright, , 'Downsizing Big Science: Strategic Choices', **Public Administration Review**, Vol. 58, No.3, 1998, pp. 259-268.

<sup>47</sup> Nina Burkardt and Berton Lee Lamb, Jonathan G. Taylor, **Power Distribution in Complex Environmental Negotiations: Does Balance Matter?**, 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Political economy is defined as a social science which mainly analyzes the relations between political science, economics and law. The main focus of the field is to analyze the existing relations between different countries of the world. Scholars try to understand how the political institutions and capitalism affect each other.

<sup>49</sup> Nejat Eslen, 'Jeopolitik Üzerine', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, Sayı:142, 19 Mart 2007, s. 42.

Russett argues that there are parallels between 1914 and 1984 and predicts that a military confrontation takes place between the US and the Soviet Union on natural resources in the Middle East. But, through 1990s due to the emergence of Caspian basin resources as alternative supplies a relatively stable energy market was established in energy markets. So, his futuristic analysis was proved to be irrelevant. But, with the new millennium the demand for energy increased tremendously worldwide and not a military conflict maybe, but a great rivalry is observed in oil rich regions like the Caucasus, Caspian and the Middle East among major powers like the US, Russia and their allies<sup>50</sup>. As mentioned earlier Israel's interest in the region is part of this rivalry for gaining access to vast energy resources of this geography.

Yergin argues that various powers attribute differing meanings to energy security concept. For example, producer countries aim to maintain a 'security of demand' for their resources. Because, the economic gains they receive make up a great percentage of their national income. For Russia, maintaining its state control over the whole production and transportation mechanism domestically and abroad in its vicinity is one of its main concerns. In this way, it aims to continue its monopoly over international energy policies. Developing countries are concerned about the pricing of energy supplies and the amount of payment they have to make from their national budgets. China and India on the other hand are trying to adjust their industrial and economic infrastructure to a new dependence on international energy markets. Because, these two countries' self-sufficiency in energy has turned into a desperate dependence on global markets due to dramatic developments in their economies. In Europe, the national leaders mainly focus on the ways to manage their dependence on Russian natural gas<sup>51</sup>. The alternatives for European countries would be to build additional nuclear power plants or starting to use clean coal once again. For Israel on the other hand, dependence on oil has always been a contentious issue because of both political and economic reasons. As will be further discussed in the following chapters, through its history since 1948, at times Israel had the economic strength to buy oil and gas from the international market but

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<sup>50</sup> Bruce Russett, 'Security and Resources Scramble: Will 1984 be like 1914?', **International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs)**, Vol. 58, No. 1, 1981-1982, pp. 42-58.

<sup>51</sup> Daniel Yergin, 'Ensuring Energy ...', p. 71.

couldn't find enough resources because of political tensions aiming Israel. And at times, Israel was able to find natural resources but this time didn't have the economic strength to make further imports<sup>52</sup>. Today it seems that Israel attains both the energy supplies and the economy to support its imports. But, regional instabilities in the South Caucasus can pose a risk to secure energy supplies for Israel.

Daniel Yergin argues that among the ten requirements for energy security, one of them is 'an active pre-emptive security framework that includes foreign policy instruments to prevent disruptions of the entire chain of supply.'<sup>53</sup> This principle of energy security seems to be highly relevant with the scope of this study. Because, it underlines the importance of foreign policy making in energy security goals. Due to its limited natural resources and highly hostile environment in its vicinity, Israel needs to find alternative energy sources to supply the energy needs of its economy. Caucasus seems to be a suitable alternative for Israel. But, the demographically complex, multiethnic character of Caucasus always has the potential to cause instability in the region. And as an oil dependent country, Israel needs to develop foreign policies to promote security and stability of its suppliers to prevent any possible threats to its secure energy sources. Such a policy option for Israel is congruent with the assumption made by Kalicki and Goldwyn<sup>54</sup> that foreign policy tools should be proactively used by both the EU and the US to prevent disruptions of the whole chain of energy supply. As part of the Western world, Israel is part of such political projects.

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<sup>52</sup> Bishara A. Bahbah, 'The United States and Israel's Energy Security', **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol. 11, No. 2, Winter 1982, pp. 113-131.

<sup>53</sup> Daniel Yergin, 'Energy Security and Markets', **Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy**, (Eds.) Jan H. Kalick and David L. Goldway, Washington D.C. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2005, p. 213.

Among the other requirements for energy security Yergin cites: alternatives for natural resources, a stable global market for energy, spare capacity, a deregulated free market, close relations with producer and buyer countries, cooperation among buyer countries, public awareness, a developed energy industry and a developed research development chain.

<sup>54</sup> Jan H. Kalicki and David L. Goldwyn, 'Introduction: The Need to Integrate Energy and Foreign Policy', in **Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy**, Jan H. Kalicki and David Goldwyn (Eds.), Washington D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center Pres, Baltimore John Hopkins University Press, p. 245.

## 1.2. GEOPOLITICAL APPROACHES ON ENERGY SECURITY

Since the end of the Cold War, remarkable shifts in political and economic dynamics increased the rivalry among great powers over natural resources and geopolitical considerations over energy security issues. Caspian basin as the heart of the crescent Eurasian space is especially important for great powers and their allies because of its vast energy resources and geographic location. The effects of geopolitical rivalry and great-power competition in the South Caucasus -and in a broader sense the Caspian basin- is perhaps observed more clearly than any other region in the world<sup>55</sup>. There is always the potential to observe ethnic and religious conflicts, regional instabilities, political turmoil, and energy rivalries among international corporations in the region. All these developments in the South Caucasus make the region a pivot area for the new world order with the vast energy resources of the region and an increasing world energy demand. A report prepared by the US National Intelligence Council asserts that 'Growing demands for energy- especially by the rising powers- through 2020 will have substantial impacts on geopolitical relations.'<sup>56</sup> It's obvious that studying energy solely as an economic supply and demand mechanism in the energy market will not be enough anymore. A geopolitical perspective should be added to analyze energy security issues. Because, many nation-states in the world have ever-less confidence in free market dynamics and they increasingly prefer state intervention both in domestic and foreign issues<sup>57</sup>. This is the main reason for evolving energy security studies around geopolitics. Geopolitics studies the great power competition in the world for controlling geographies and their natural resources.

Modern economies need energy supplies to support their economies. And the fact that while demand for energy supplies increase, the global reserves of natural resources continue to diminish. The scarcity of energy supplies makes energy security issues increasingly a part of foreign policy and national security concerns. This is no different for Israel. Starting from its building in 1948, concern for

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<sup>55</sup> Guo Xuetang, 'The Energy Security in Central Eurasia: the Geopolitical Implications to China's Energy Strategy', **China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly**, Volume 4, No. 4, 2006, p. 117-137.

<sup>56</sup> 'Mapping the Future', Report of the US National Intelligence Council's 2020 Project, NIC December 2004, p.59

<sup>57</sup> Heinrich Kreft, 'China's Energy Conundrum', **The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis**, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Fall 2006, pp. 1-14.

energy security has been one of its top priorities of its national security and foreign policy options.

Energy sources in the world are mainly concentrated in the Middle East and the Caspian basin. OPEC controls almost 70% of world energy resources. This gives OPEC the power to decide on pricing and transportation regulations. But, due to historical and political reasons, Israel doesn't have the chance to buy natural resources from OPEC members where Saudi Arabia is the main producer and Middle Eastern Arab countries. The only major alternative remaining for Israel is to buy from ex-Soviet states in the Caspian basin. For example, as a non-OPEC country, Azerbaijan has a unique importance concerning Israeli energy security in the South Caucasus. As a result, with limited political and economic options left Israel is one of the countries which suffer the scarcity of energy resources the most in the world.

When energy scarcity is considered in terms of geopolitics, it can be said that, states are under pressure to consider policies to ensure their energy security. Because of the importance of energy both for domestic economic growth and the global need for increasing amounts of oil supplies, states are increasingly looking for ways to secure alternative energy sources. This makes geopolitics an inevitable part of this study. Israel needs much more energy than it can produce and eventually Israel has to import large quantities of oil. With steadily decreasing energy resources and increasing rivalry in the global world, Israel is perfectly aware of the needs for securing alternative energy sources for the near future. When analyzing the possibilities and hindrances for Israel to import oil from Azerbaijan, it is clearly seen that a researcher will inevitably face a number of geopolitical moves and struggles especially evolving around regional conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia. Because of this, the study of geopolitics will be an important part of the theoretical framework of this study.

The literature on geopolitics mainly presents differing definitions of what exactly geopolitics means and includes. Mainly it focuses on the causal relationship between political power and geographical space and resources<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> The word 'geopolitics' is first used by Swedish Rudolph Kjellen in 1899. By the word he meant that if a certain state is thinking to act globally then we should expect that that state has a potential for acting



The history of geopolitics dates back to the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century when it first highlighted the relations between geography and politics. It defined the conflicts and rivalry between major powers for achieving control of certain geographical locations. It was considered to be mainly a study of the state, its borders and its relations. During its early years, traditional geopolitics was, to a great extent, a part of political realism in IR studies. In realism, the nation-state is the only actor and struggles for power with other nation-states in an anarchic international system. When geopolitics first appeared at the time, the three basic principles of realism: statism, survival and self-help were widely well-known. The first form of geopolitics, which is called traditional or orthodox geopolitics focused on sovereignty, statecraft, maps and territorial enemies<sup>59</sup>.

John Agnew agrees that the term geopolitics first began to be used at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But, he argues that real life application of geopolitics began a lot earlier with the encounter of Europe with the rest of the world in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with geographical discoveries<sup>60</sup>.

Following WW II, German Nazi politics was greatly affected by the term geopolitics. And, until the 1970s, people generally were not willing to use the term. Because, since the term was generally associated with German Nazi violence, it had negative connotations. Instead of geopolitics people preferred to use the terms like 'deterrence', 'national security', 'containment'<sup>61</sup>. Through the 1970s, the term became popular once again. This time it was known as 'critical geopolitics'. It was critical of the early form of geopolitics because of strong effect of realism in it. The critical geopolitics focused more on globalization, networks, symbolic boundaries, de-territorized dangers and interdependence<sup>62</sup>.

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globally. The term geopolitics today is used to talk about issues like international boundary disputes, structure of global finance and geographical patterns of election results.

<sup>59</sup> John Baylis, and Steve Smith, (eds), **The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations**, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, pp. 162-182.

<sup>60</sup> John Agnew, **Geopolitics Re-visioning World Politics**, Second Ed. Routledge New York, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, 'Rethinking Geopolitics in the Age of Globalization', (Ed.), Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, **Globalization, Geopolitics and Energy Security in Central Eurasia and the Caspian Region**, CIEP 2003, pp. 11-27.

<sup>62</sup> Klaus Dodds, 'The Nature of Geopolitics and Globalization' in Klaus Dodds, **Global Geopolitics, a Critical Introduction**, Wokingham: Addison-Wesley 2005, pp. 25-49.

In geopolitics field, four different trends appeared at the same time in four prominent countries of Europe. These trends appeared towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; German Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1949), French Vidal de La Blanche (1845-1918), British Sir Halford Mackinder (1841-1947) and American Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (1841-1914). Each of their ways of thinking perfectly adopted main attributes from their nationalities. Ratzel's doctrine later turned into a Nazi national movement system by a mishap. French Vidal de La Blanche tried to evaluate the events out of the chronological and spatial border of his time through an attempt to have an objective and critical point of view. Mackinder's method is completely British with its tendency to totally depend on realism and its results. The American method on the other hand brought about a dialectic analytical one<sup>63</sup>.

It's widely accepted that the beginning of modern geopolitics is based on German geographer and anthropologist Friedrich Ratzel's 1897 'Politische Geographie' (Political Geography) book and these ideas and analyses included in that text. Ratzel thought that state's geographical and political structures resembled biological organisms and later on his ideas were used to build German geopolitical trend which is called 'Lebensraum' (Life Field). Ratzel thought that borders were the temporary signs which would only show the incumbent results of states' efforts to gain more and more land<sup>64</sup>. French geopolitical trend was born as a reaction to German trend. The main character of that trend was that 'it considered the state as a cultural and national identity' rather than a living organism<sup>65</sup>.

The main feature of Sir Halford Mackinder's British method was that it preferred practice and application rather than focusing on theory. Because of this preference it has a pragmatic character. Mackinder directly tried to explain the world geography from a political especially 'world supremacy' point of view. Through his studies he developed 'Heartland Theory'. Mackinder claims that there is a monobloc, unique, massive land piece on the earth. He calls 'Europe-Asia-Africa' as 'World Island'. The region that's where roughly Russia is located (Caucasus and Caspian Basin included) is 'Kalpgah' region (Heartland). In this way, he declares his

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<sup>63</sup> George Kiss, Political Geography into Geopolitics Recent Trends in Germany, **Geographical Review**, Vol. 32, No.4, Oct. 19, 1942, pp. 632-645.

<sup>64</sup> Franco Farinelli, 'Friedrich Ratzel and the Nature of (political) Geography', Dipartimento di Comunicazione, Università di Bologna, Via Toffano, University Press, 1998, p. 343.

<sup>65</sup> George Kiss, Political Geography into Geopolitics..., p. 639.

famous formula: 'Anybody who controls Eastern Europe will control the Heartland, who controls Heartland will control the world Island and anybody who controls the world island will control the whole world'<sup>66</sup>.

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan on the other hand studied the Royal Naval Forces of England. In his 1890 study 'The Effect of Naval Forces in History' he laid the principles of 'Sea Supremacy Theory'. Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of industrial revolution, while new geographical discoveries were being made, the economic relations on the other hand, developed greatly. Expeditions looking for new raw materials, and the need for marketing new products increased the importance of naval routes. By the developing technologies the distances were shortened. In short, while the historic Silk Road was losing its importance Mahan's thesis that 'anyone who controls the Seas will control the world' gained momentum<sup>67</sup>.

The American theoreticians after the WW II used geopolitics in a global perspective and made use of the term geo-strategy which entails the strategic management of geopolitical interests. The development of American methodology especially starts with Nicolas Spykman (1893-1943) from Yale University. In his 1942 study 'American Strategy on the World Politics' and in his post-mortem 1944 study 'The Geography of Peace' he analyzed the geographical grounds for basing American security politics and strategy. With his *world geography* analysis he presented 'Rimland Theory'.<sup>68</sup> His Rimland Theory and the Sea Supremacy Theory adopted by American security strategists are still being used today.

A country's geographical location affects its security concerns. A country's distance from other territories and seas determine that country's character, economy and political interests. The threats against a country come from geography. Efficient counter-measures should be taken considering the geographical conditions. In each country's geography there are certain directions from where threats to that state's survival may come from. Foreign policy should try to divert these directions<sup>69</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Halford, John Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History", in **Democratic Ideals and Reality**, Washington, DC: National Defence University Press, 1996, pp. 175-194.

<sup>67</sup> Ronald B. John, "European Naval Expansion and Mahan, 1889-1906." *Naval War College Review*, 1971, pp. 74-83.

<sup>68</sup> Nicholas Spykman, **The Geography of Peace**, Archon Books, 1969, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> Mustafa Yılmaz, **Tehditlerin Jeopolitik Kaynakları**, Başarı Yayınları, 2007, p. 34.

Countries divert those risky directions through two means, by taking either political or military measures. The political approach requires to control the country which is located on the risky direction and if there is not enough or appropriate means to do so, creating 'bumper zones or countries'. If all the routes are held by a single power then stability and order will be achieved<sup>70</sup>.

Use of 'political options' seems to be a suitable approach when analyzing Israel's energy and security interests in the South Caucasus. It's obvious that Caucasus is an important region for Israeli energy security concerns with its vast natural resources. But, with its highly complicated demographic structure and regional conflicts, Caucasus is a problematic geography. Various state and non-state actors have the potential to cause trouble in the region. While analyzing the nature of these conflicts, Israeli policy options concerning these crises will be analyzed. The term 'policy options' is used intentionally because due to the long distance between Caucasus and Israel and the fact that Israel doesn't have a border with Caucasus seem to limit the possibility that Israel uses any military means to solve or influence the conflicts. The only instrument left for Israel to use in the region would be foreign policy formulations.

With the frequent use of 'death of distance', 'the end of geography', 'byte city', 'speed empire' terms it was proposed by many that 'cyber space' replaced geography in international politics. Behind these views was the belief that the developments in communications, transportation and military technology lifted the physical limitations among distance, space and force. Among the military leaders some of them refer to sensors, invisibility technology, high tech missiles to underline that the new equipments changed conventional means of wars. Many other academicians on the other hand, believe that revolution in information age didn't much change physical geographies and physically deployed military centers and structures. They further claim that physical geography still affects the nature and formation of wars as a strong, continuous and broad parameter<sup>71</sup>. This study assumes the relevance of this second view when analyzing Israeli policies in the South Caucasus. In parallel lines, through our analysis on whether Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts can create a risk to the flow of energy

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<sup>70</sup> Mustafa Yılmaz, **Tehditlerin...** p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> Patrick Gowan, 'A Calculus of Power', **The New Left Review**, 2002, pp. 47-67

resources to both Israel and the Western world our study will totally base on geopolitical factors affecting this research question.

Global information networks still didn't save wars from real life facts like physical geography or logistics. For example, John Mearsheimer<sup>72</sup> still insists the survival of the persistent eventual role of geography and strategy in formulating the strategic conditions. As an example, Mearsheimer states that the rise of China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century can't be explained without a geopolitical analysis. In sum, with globalization and information technologies neither the modern state which has its own territory nor geography is cleared off the table. But, the practice of statecraft and fighting changed to a certain extent<sup>73</sup>.

John Agnew describes the traditional geopolitics as 'an overarching global context in which states vie for power outside their boundaries, gain control (formally and informally) over less modern regions (and their resources) and overtake other major states in a worldwide pursuit of global primacy.'<sup>74</sup> Analyzing the Israeli position in South Caucasus seems to present a good example for this definition of traditional geopolitics by John Agnew. As will be seen through the following chapters of this study, Israel seeks to use Azerbaijan as a pivot country in the region to reach to the vast natural resources of the Caucasus and Caspian basin. While following such policies it uses its technological, economic and military strength to affect the countries of Caucasus. Through these efforts its aim is gaining primacy in the region. Israel's close relations with the US and EU give those countries the impetus that Israel is the opening door for them to the Western world.

David Newman underlines that Israel's use of its economic advantages in the region could be seen as a modern form of colonialism<sup>75</sup>. Because, Israel is seen by many as a country which makes use of its economic advantages and strong capacity to achieve everything it couldn't do through the 40 year Cold War era while the Soviet Union was the super power in the region.

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<sup>72</sup> John Mearsheimer, **The Tragedy of Great Power Politics**, W.W. Norton and Company, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>73</sup> John Mearsheimer, **The Tragedy ...**, p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> John Agnew, **Geopolitics, Revisioning...**, p. 8.

<sup>75</sup> David Newman, 'Israeli Security: Reality and Myth', **Palestine-Israel Journal**, 4 (2), 1997, pp. 17-24.

In modern geographical taxonomy, different regions and areas are classified as 'advanced' or 'primitive'; 'modern' or 'backward'<sup>76</sup>. For example, Europe and some of its off springs (the US for example) can be seen as defining modernity. Moving from Agnew's analysis considering its rather close relations with Europe and US it seems to be relevant that we call Israel as part of modernity as well.

Agnew defines a new age of 'global' geopolitics. The dissolution of USSR changed the structure of the whole Cold War ideological geopolitics. Following the end of Cold War came an extreme ontological insecurity. There is widespread sense of uncertainty about how to organize world politics in the absence of USSR and a 'balance of power' status. In some circles, there is a nostalgia for the past. With the 9/11 events the US feels an increasing insecurity after the Cold War, there are varying geopolitical scenarios under construction. In the past, things were easier. Because, there was the Soviet Union which was equivalent for the US in terms of political power and military capacity. But, in a new era there are non-state networks. Neither for example Islamic fundamentalism nor drug traffickers are clearly defined, competitive substitutes for the Soviet Union. In the absence of the Soviet Union or an equivalent power the global geopolitical imagination once more should be reconstituted.<sup>77</sup>.

For Mehdi Amineh there can be different aspects of geopolitics. Differing people see the events from different positions so differing definitions can be made for geopolitics. About geopolitics, Amineh says:

*'it is synonymous to political geography or politics in terms of spatial dimension; for the realist school of international relations it refers to rivalry between great-power states; the geographic dimension of the foreign policy of a state; and in strategic terms, the control of a certain geographic area. Geopolitics also used synonymously for international politics stressing political and military behavior in a specific context.'*<sup>78</sup>

Amineh also thinks that after the Cold War era the geopolitical world system changed greatly. For him the five major reasons for these changes are globalization, the end of Cold War, tremendous developments in information and communications

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<sup>76</sup> John Agnew, **Geopolitics, Revisioning...**, p. 8

<sup>77</sup> John Agnew, **Geopolitics Re-visioning...**, p.119.

<sup>78</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh 'Rethinking Geopolitics', p. 13.

technology, the rise of newly industrialized countries and presence of increasing number of non-state actors<sup>79</sup>.

While defining geopolitics, Klaus Dodds emphasizes the role of natural resources in shaping domestic and international politics. Concerning the foreign-policy making of Israel it can be said that energy security is one of the main concerns of Israeli policy-making process. Israeli national security agenda cites water and energy security among two primary concerns of its national security concept. Any intrusion to its water and energy sources and transportation routes will justify Israeli reaction even military attack to the intruder<sup>80</sup>.

For Michael Klare geopolitics can be described as the political and economic rivalry among great powers, for controlling larger portions of territory, important geographical features and natural resources and some other sources for economic and military advantage. Klare underlines the economic side of geopolitics that engaged in the field during 1990s. 'Clingandael'<sup>81</sup> the Dutch Institute for International Relations, reveals a study on energy security and geopolitics and says that specific geopolitical developments may risk energy security. This statement by Clingandael underlines the importance of geopolitics as a relevant aspect of this study. For Klare through the 20<sup>th</sup> century geopolitics and energy had a rather close relationship and it's not likely to change in a near future. On the contrary, while the energy supply of the world is diminishing day by day, geopolitics will become more important in the world politics of energy security<sup>82</sup>.

Through Clinton years of 1990, the US administration had undertaken the task of integrating the major states in a rule-based transnational-liberal order. But, in the new millennium, the Bush administration pursued a rather offensive realist geopolitical imagination. Lieven quotes the following statement about the features of Bush foreign policy:

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<sup>79</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, 'Rethinking Geopolitics', p. 18 and Presentation given by Mr. Amineh at the University of Amsterdam on April 4, 2007.

<sup>80</sup> Klaus Dodds, **Geopolitics in a Changing World**, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000, p. 5-9.

<sup>81</sup> Study on Energy Supply Security and Geopolitics, Final Report, January 2004, Clingandael International Energy Program (CIEP), Institute for International Relations 'Clingandael', The Hague, the Netherlands.

<sup>82</sup> Michael Klare, **Blood and Oil: How America's Thirst for Petrol is Killing Us**, London, Penguin Books, 2005, p. 34.

*'preventing by every possible means the emergence of any serious rival or combination of rivals to the US, anywhere in the world, and to opposing not just any rival would-be world hegemon, but even the ability of other states to play the role of great power within their own regions.'*<sup>83</sup>

The new approach was popularly supported by nationalist groups domestically and some countries like Israel for example. Because, Israel in its geography considers that it will benefit from a more aggressive US foreign policy. The US support for Israel in the region will serve to guarantee both the Israeli military superiority in the region and long time supply of oil to a demanding American economy<sup>84</sup>.

Much of US economic power depends on avoiding direct control over distant places. The struggle for favorable access and control over key resources like oil is no exception<sup>85</sup>.

In his book, Charles Kupchan analyzes the geopolitical fault lines around the world. According to Kupchan, geopolitical fault lines will be formulated depending on the distribution of the power in international arena. Today, there is only one super power which dominates the entire international arena. The US being this sole super power will not be alone in the future says Kupchan. Because, EU, Japan, Russia and China will be seen as the new rivals of the US hegemony in a near future<sup>86</sup>.

According to Clingandael study on Energy Security and Geopolitics of January 2004 'geopolitical phenomenon can jeopardize energy security'<sup>87</sup>. This is certainly a relevant statement concerning Israel's attempts to secure energy supplies from Azerbaijan.

Various geopolitical phenomena have posed a serious threat to Azerbaijan's oil in the past. Nagorno-Karabakh dispute with Armenia and also following the establishment of the BTC pipeline, the South Ossetia conflict which are going to be analyzed in detail in this study can be cited among regional geopolitical examples.

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<sup>83</sup> Anatol Lieven, **The Push for War**, London Review of Books, Oct. 3, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Mehmet Şimşek, **Ortadoğuda İsrail Amerikan Çıkarları**, Çağdaş Yayınları, 2008, p. 34.

<sup>85</sup> Klaus Dodds, 'The Nature of Geopolitics...', pp. 25-49.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Kupchan, **The End of American Era, US Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century**, New York: Vintage Books, 2003, p. 26.

<sup>87</sup> Study on Energy Supply Security and Geopolitics, Final Report....



On a global perspective, geopolitical struggles influence energy security to a great extent as well. For example, China, India, Russia, the US, EU, Iran, Israel and numerous other rivals are fighting for gaining control over the Middle East and Caspian Basin.

Brzezinski refers to this central region concentrated in two areas just in the center of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa as the 'Grand Chessboard'<sup>88</sup>. Halford Mackinder called this region the 'pivot area' or the 'Heartland'<sup>89</sup> hence referring to the geopolitical importance of this region.

For major powers, the whole Middle East and Caspian basin can be a 'pivot area' or 'Heartland'. For Israel on the other hand, this study assumes that 'pivot area' is limited to include Azerbaijan. At present Israel already established close relations with Azerbaijan in the region. The aim of this alliance is gaining easier access to rich natural resources of the region for Israel. Azerbaijan on the other hand expects to receive political, economic, military and technological support of Israel.

As mentioned earlier, geopolitics is based on two opposing views of Land versus Sea supremacy. These are the two ontological and epistemological concepts of geopolitics. 'Supremacy on the Land' view is associated with stable spaces and views of conservatism and strict legal norms which rule people in the form of tribes, states or empires. 'Supremacy on the Sea' view on the other hand is associated with individualism, liberalism and relative ethnic and legal norms. The priority is given to seafaring over the traditional civilization. Because, the marine cultures have a higher potential for development while preserving the main characteristics of its own identity<sup>90</sup>.

Classical geopolitics distinguishes a third zone. It's called 'Rimland' or 'coastal zone' as called by others. Rimland does not have an ontological identity.

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<sup>88</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, '**Büyük Satranç Tahtası: Amerika'nın Önceliği ve Bunun Jeostratejik Gereklere**', İstanbul, Sabah Yayınları, 1998, s.40.

<sup>89</sup> Halford J. Mackinder, 'The Geopolitical Pivot of History', **Geographical Journal**, 1994, No. 23 , pp. 421-442.

<sup>90</sup> Nazim Cafersoy, 'Enerji Diplomasisi: Rus Dış Politikasında Stratejik Araç Değişimi', **Stratejik Analiz**, C: 1, Sayı: 8, Aralık 2004, s. 54.

So, it cannot be identified as a third center. Rimland can be described as a space which can join 'Sea' or 'Land' or become a scene of their confrontation<sup>91</sup>.

Geopolitically, Caucasus-Caspian region is a Rimland. Land (Russia) considers that the region should be used as a strategic area to establish continental influence. Sea (UK-the US-NATO) thinks that it should be used as a jumping spot for further expansion. The aim is strengthening political and economic control over Eurasia.

The concept 'Big Game' describes continuous struggle of great powers to gain control over certain geography. The term was first used by Arthur Connolly. As of 1907, it was believed that the 'Big Game' between Great Britain and Russia ended because with a convention in St. Petersburg the spheres of influence were identified and divided between the two. But, today the Big Game seems to continue. Because, the new super power of the 21<sup>st</sup> century insists to simply 'advance democracy' in the post-Soviet geography<sup>92</sup>.

Considering the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the US it can be said that the rivalry is increasing. It's true that in Caucasus there are differing nationalities, religions and cultures. But, we can't explain the conflictual nature of the region from only this perspective. There are other factors of a geopolitical nature which is based on ethnic, political and socioeconomic contradictions<sup>93</sup>. If somehow the conflicts in the region increase tremendously and parties decide to use stronger measures, then the boundaries of the conflict will be enlarged and a third force is involved in it. In the Caucasus, this third force will be the Transatlantic community (the US and its allies for example Israel) which tries to look for ways of geopolitical interest in the region. And through this study Israel's interest in the South Caucasus will be the main concern.

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<sup>91</sup> Nicholas Spykman, **The Geography...** p. 118.

Spykman defines Russia as 'Land' and the US, and UK as 'Sea' forces in Rimland theory.

<sup>92</sup> Haledin İbrahimli, 'Değişen Avrasya'da...', s.34.

<sup>93</sup> G.B. Gavriş, 'Prostranstvenno-vremennai model Kavkaza v usloviakh globalizatsii,' Nepriznannyye gosudarstva luzhnogo Kavkaza I etnopoliticheskie protsessy na luge Rossii. Issue 29, 2005, p.25.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ISRAEL AND SOUTH CAUCASUS

#### 2.1. ENERGY GEOPOLITICS OF ISRAEL

Concern over energy security has always been a cornerstone of Israel's overall security conceptualization. As an energy poor country, Israel has always felt the burden of economic and political dependency on foreign resources of energy. Although Israel has been trying to diversify its energy resources since its building in 1948, it still desperately depends on various traditional hydrocarbon reserves.

Bahbah in his 1982 article 'The United States and Israel's Energy Security', analyzes Israel's energy security problem through a rather comprehensive perspective. According to him, oil was the only source of energy Israel could use at the time<sup>94</sup>. Crude oil constituted 99% of energy demand of Israel as of 1980 and the remaining one percent was supplied through solar energy and natural gas<sup>95</sup>. In 1980, Israel paid around 2.2 billion US dollars<sup>96</sup> in return for its oil consumption and that amounted to almost equivalent to country's total exports for the same year<sup>97</sup>. It was true that paying for oil was a problem at the time for Israel. But, a greater problem was finding producers willing to sell oil to Israel in the market. Due to its wars against neighboring Arab countries at the time, Israel was internationally isolated and only a meager 5% of the energy market was available for Israel<sup>98</sup>. Only two countries Mexico and Egypt were willing to officially sell oil to Israel. But, still the oil from both of these countries was only enough to supply 55% of Israel's overall consumption<sup>99</sup>. Israel had to depend on the fluctuating spot market to supply the remaining part of its energy demand.

Before 1980s until 1975, Israel was controlling the Egyptian Sinai oilfields. But due to political pressures from the US and concessions by Egyptian President

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<sup>94</sup> Bishara A. Bahbah, 'The United States and Israel's Energy Security', **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol.11, No.2, (Winter, 1982), pp. 113-131.

<sup>95</sup> John Yemma, 'Oil-Short Israel Trying to Reduce its Dependence on Imported Fuels', **Christian Science Monitor**, April 3, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> 'Can Israel Maintain its Economic Balancing Act', **World Business**, July 6, 1981. Quoted from the Bank of Israel.

<sup>97</sup> Haaretz, February 15, 1980.

<sup>98</sup> Los Angeles Times, November 23, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> Petroleum Press Service, No. 47, January 1980, p. 19.

Sadat, Israel decided to relinquish its control over the Sinai oilfields. Until then, Israel was producing an annual 4.4 million tons of oil which would supply 55% of its domestic needs<sup>100</sup>. Through the mid-1970s until the Iranian revolution in 1979, Israel could buy oil from Iran as well. For example, it was reported that the Shah promised the American (President Ford) administration to continue to sell oil to Israel without fear of disruptions caused by an embargo<sup>101</sup>.

As seen above, until the Iranian revolution, Israel was able to find adequate sources of energy resources at reasonable market prices. But, the Iranian revolution posed the most serious threat to Israel's energy security until 1979 in its history. On January 11, 1979 Iran imposed an oil embargo on Israel<sup>102</sup>. With the Iranian embargo Israel lost 60% of its oil supply<sup>103</sup> which left it without any secure suppliers. Iran even stipulated that if it decides to sell oil to any second country that country should promise not to sell that oil to Israel again. If consumer countries would not abide with the Iranian rules, they would 'lose the privilege' of buying Iranian oil<sup>104</sup>.

Israel had to take measures to compensate for the Iranian oil it lost. First, Israel used its substantial stocks just like it did in the 1973 War<sup>105</sup>. Second, it bought oil from wherever it was available; for example, in February 1979, it was reported that Israel bought 20% of its oil from stock market<sup>106</sup>. Israel never officially declares its foreign suppliers due to security concerns but according to reports circulating in Jerusalem the energy sources for Israel at the time were Mexico, Venezuela, Gabon and Nigeria<sup>107</sup>.

The 1980s were highly problematic in terms of Israel's energy security. First, Iranian revolution deprived it from its major supplier. Second, the September 1978 Camp David Accords it signed with Egypt with the US intervention resulted in Israel's loss of Alma field from where it provided 20% of its oil needs. Third, the huge increase in oil prices in 1979 would mean that Israel had to pay more than ever to the energy it consumed. And finally, although Egypt agreed to sell oil for a

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<sup>100</sup> Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, No.14 (September 15, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Ernest Gilman, 'Israel and the Iranian Oil Embargo', **Round Table**, No. 276 (October 1979), p. 292.

<sup>102</sup> Petroleum Press Service (March, 1979), p. 127.

<sup>103</sup> Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, May 28, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, June 11, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> Oil and Gas Journal Newsletter, January 22, 1979, pp. 2-3.

<sup>106</sup> Oilgram, February 13, 1979, p.2

<sup>107</sup> Oilgram, ... p. 2.

short time, Israel was unsuccessful to obtain a long-term energy deal with Egypt. Under these circumstances Israel's energy security was under great threat because almost all variables in the market seemed to negatively affect Israel's energy policies. But, thanks to ever-present US support to Israel in the region, Israel managed to solve its energy problems. Israel owes this success to the US-Israeli Memorandum of Agreement signed on March 26, 1979. With this agreement, in return for Israeli participation in Camp David Accords and withdrawal from Gulf of Suez oilfields the US promises to supply a six-month supply to Israel when Israel cannot find enough oil resources to support its economy. With June 22, 1979 'Understanding' Agreement separately prepared after the March 26, 1979 US-Israeli Memorandum of Agreement the responsibilities of the US to support Israel in terms of its energy needs were enlarged. It was signed by both countries that:

*'Because of the unique security situation of Israel, its oil reserves are and should be at the level equal to six months of Israel's oil consumption; and in this connection US oil supplies should be at such levels that US ability to meet its oil requirements will not be adversely affected'<sup>108</sup>.*

The provisions of this Agreement would be activated when any of the following three situations takes place: First, when Israel cannot simply find enough oil to support its needs, 'no matter what price or terms it offers'. Second, when Israel can find oil but has to pay an excessive average price and forced to sign insecure arrangements. Finally, the third situation is that Israel loses one of its main sources of supply (Mexico, Egypt and the spot market<sup>109</sup>) though it struggles to maintain its sources<sup>110</sup>.

Through 1980s, though Israel had difficulty in arranging its energy policies it always had the support of the US in difficult times. No other country in the world, including the NATO members enjoyed the full support of the US in energy field as much as Israel. The US made occasional commitments to help Israel to secure its energy supplies. It encouraged several non-OPEC countries to sell oil to Israel and it used its influence on Egypt and Mexico to increase their oil export to Israel and finally exported Alaskan crude to Israel<sup>111</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> US Congress, House, The Search for Peace in the Middle East, Documents and Statements, 1967-79, 96th Cong., 1st Session, 1979, p. 83.

<sup>109</sup> Bishara A. Bahbah, 'The United States ... p. 127.

<sup>110</sup> New York Times, October 16, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Bishara A. Bahbah, 'The United States ... p. 130.

The US support to Israel continued in this way until the 1991 break up of the Soviet Union. And Israel's energy security policies are formulated around a similar pattern through all these years. It continued to buy from markets like North Sea, Mexico and Africa and at times when it faced troubles it asked for the US support to supply natural resources to its economy.

But, the collapse of the Soviet Union presented an excellent opportunity for Israel not to miss. The newly independent ex-Soviet states with their massive reserves of natural resources emerged as alternative energy sources to the whole world including Israel. Considering the unique security environment of Israel that it cannot buy oil from its Arab neighbors and OPEC members due to historical and political reasons, such a geopolitical shift in the South Caucasus and the Caspian basin would mean that Israel would gain access to new alternative sources much easily than ever before. The non-ideological and secularist positions of the Caucasian and Central Asian leaders further accelerated the process for establishing economic relations between Israel and countries like Azerbaijan, Georgia in the South Caucasus and especially Kazakhstan in Central Asia. The details of Israeli interest in the South Caucasus will be further discussed in the following section. As of today, although it has never accepted officially due to security concerns, Israel imports almost 80% of its energy needs from Russia and old Soviet states. Among these states we can cite Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Russia itself.

On the other side, dependency on Russia is another contentious issue for Israelis<sup>112</sup>. Some Israelis fear more from Russians than Arabs. Repeated energy crises between Ukraine and Russia in 2006 and 2008 also frighten Israelis. They don't want to be dependent on Russia either.

Currently, 67 % of Israel's energy balance depends on oil, 30% on coal and 1% on natural gas consumption<sup>113</sup>. With a recent significant offshore natural gas discovery Israel seems to attain its own energy sources for the first time in its history. But, excepting that recent development, Israel almost entirely depends on

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<sup>112</sup> Faruk Arslan, 'Vahhabilik ve Evanjelizm', (Der.) Mustafa Karaca, **Evanjelizm ve Vahhabilik**, Nokta Kitap, Birinci Baskı, İstanbul, Kasım 2005, s. 45.

<sup>113</sup> [www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/20002009/2002/8/Energy%20Management%20and%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Develop](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/20002009/2002/8/Energy%20Management%20and%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Develop), (22.11.2009).

foreign energy resources to supply its energy demand. Israel has also attempted to use other sources like solar and wind energy other than oil and gas to decrease its dependency on foreign oil and gas. Traditionally Israel had long-term deals with Mexico (oil), Norway (oil), The United Kingdom (oil), Australia (coal), South Africa (coal), and Colombia (coal) to supply its energy needs. Though the country names are mentioned; the commercial agreements and the amounts of energy sources imported are not declared officially by Israeli authorities due to security concerns. Israeli officials want to increase their natural consumption as opposed to coal due to its cheaper price and environmental security concerns. Israel plans to increase its natural gas consumption to 25% by 2015. The long-lasting US-Israeli partnership continues and as of February 2000, Israel and the US signed an energy cooperation deal. The deal defines cooperation in gas coal, solar power and electric power. In the years ahead the partnership is planned to expand including cooperation on nuclear power plants<sup>114</sup>.

As for oil, Israel imports almost all of its oil demand. Through the years following the 1940s almost 410 oil wells have been drilled in Israel with limited success. But, though Israel produces no oil at all, it hopes that the peaceful settlement of Arab-Israeli conflict will offer alternative routes to carry the Middle Eastern oil to the Western markets. Currently, Gulf oil is carried to the foreign markets through three routes. First, by ship through the Suez Canal or around the cape of South Africa; second, by pipeline from Iraq to Turkey; and third through the Suez-Mediterranean pipeline. Israel hopes that the 1940 constructed Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline) can once again be used to carry Gulf oil to the West. The Tapline was originally built to carry Saudi Arabian oil to the international markets. The route was connecting Jordan with Haifa (the then Palestinian but currently Israeli port city). But, with the establishment of the state of Israel, the direction of the pipeline was diverted from Haifa to Sidon. The use of the pipeline was stopped in 1983 due to turmoil in Lebanon and economic reasons. An analysis indicates that carrying oil through Tapline through Israeli Haifa to international markets is at least 40% cheaper than shipping by tanker over the Suez Canal<sup>115</sup>.

In regards gas, as mentioned earlier, Israel hopes to increase its consumption of natural gas due to energy security, environmental and economic

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<sup>114</sup> [www.energy.gov.il/mni/en-US/Energy/Fuel/Ministry of national infrastructures](http://www.energy.gov.il/mni/en-US/Energy/Fuel/Ministry%20of%20national%20infrastructures), (24.11.2009)

<sup>115</sup> George Bahgat, **Energy Partnership Israel and the Persian Gulf**, Elsevier, 2005, p. 45.

concerns. With this aim in mind, Israel has been trying to diversify its natural gas sources through the recent years. One of the alternatives is Egypt. The other is Israel's recent discovery of natural gas reserves in its own off-shore territory. Egyptian gas is geographically rather close to Israel, but it depends too much on regional politics. Israelis don't want to be strategically dependent on their political rivals even potential 'enemies' on energy issues. But, all in all, Israel buys its gas from Egypt. But, for its growing economy this isn't enough either. As of June 2005, a new treaty is signed between Egypt and Israel. According to this treaty, Egypt will supply 1.7 mmk gas to Israel each year. The route will be the sea route. The gas will reach to Ashkelon in Israel. This is a 2.5 billion\$ project and it will be valid for at least 15 years<sup>116</sup>.

Second alternative which is related with a recent discovery of natural gas reserves off the coast of Israel is a contentious issue either. Because, it seems that the natural gas reserves are also close to the coast of Palestinian Gaza Strip (majority in fact) and Israelis don't want Palestinians to benefit from this energy discovery. Despite the initial reluctance, two groups are working on Israeli natural gas reserves: the Yam Thetis group –including Israel's Delek Driling and Avner Oil and a BG partnership with Islamco and others. Israeli petroleum commissioner Yehezkel Druckman estimates 3-5 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) in proven reserves and that would supply almost 20 year demand of Israel in the future<sup>117</sup>.

As clearly seen above Israel's energy strategy is a rather complicated issue. And the upcoming years will witness many political, economic maneuvers concerning the Israeli interests in the region. So far, a historical and current analysis is tried to be made to account for Israel's energy geopolitics. Below will follow an evaluation of the geographical, social, historical and foreign policy instruments to conceptualize the real motives behind Israeli geopolitics concerning energy security.

George Friedman underlines that geography has a vital role in determining the foreign policy formation of states. When especially Israel's foreign policy is considered there are three factors to take into consideration: the domestic

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<sup>116</sup> M. Ali İstikbal, 'Türk Boğazları'nın Stratejik Önemi', (Der.) Osman Metin Öztürk, Yalçın Sarıkaya, **Uluslararası Mücadelenin Yeni Odağı Karadeniz**, Platin Yayınevi, Ankara, s. 53.

<sup>117</sup> [www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/20002009/2002/8/Energy%20Management%20and%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Develop](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/20002009/2002/8/Energy%20Management%20and%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Develop), (22.11.2009)



geopolitics of Israel, the interaction of Israel with its immediate neighbors and Israel's interaction with major powers in the world system which is beyond Israel's borderlands. Since its founding in 1948 Israel can be said to have played a pivotal role in its geography for major powers the US and Soviet Union. Struggle for independence, internal tension and imperial ambition were features of Israeli politics. Through its history, Israel has always been an important geography for any great power to the East of the country. It was for example seen that during the Macedonian expansion under Alexander the Great, any power ruling Levantine and Turkish coasts could support any military campaigns far to the East even until Himalayas. Considering its relations with major powers Israel can have three forms of relations. First would be called a David Model. In this model, Israel is completely independent. There are no major imperial powers outside its geography. Second would be called Persian Model. In this model, it can live as part of an imperial power. It continues to preserve its identity but, doesn't have much room for an individual foreign even domestic policy. And final option would be called a Babylonian Model. In this alternative Israel would totally fail with huge immigration or deportation. As for contemporary policy, Friedman says that after its foundation both the US and the Soviet Union saw this newly founded state a new geography where they could introduce their power to. The Soviet Union expected that they could influence Israel through ideology whereas the US thought they could make use of the presence of American Jews in establishing the country<sup>118</sup>.

Through its history, Israel was first under the great influence of the Soviet Union. Israel received military support from the Soviet Union. By this way, the Soviet Union's aim was to gain control in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Israel was aware of what was expecting it. Israel moved closer to France not to lose its autonomy to the Soviet Union. France perfectly welcomed the Israeli affinity because at the time France had problematic relations with Arabs. But, with the end of the French struggle to control Algeria, France established closer relations with Arabs. And as of 1967, Israeli-French relations weakened<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup> George Friedman, 'The Geopolitics of Israel: Biblical and Modern'  
<http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewarticle/articleid/1906219>, May 16, 2008, (29.09.2009)

<sup>119</sup> Joel Fishman, 'A Stormy Romance of France and Israel', **Jewish Political Studies Review**, 2006, p.1-2.

Until 1967 Israel didn't have close relations with the US. In fact, close relations with Israel was what the US was quite willing to attain. The US strategic concern at the time was keeping Russia away from Mediterranean Sea. Turkey with its control over straits was playing a central role to achieve American strategic goals. But, Russia was pressing hard from the north of Turkey. From the South of Turkey also, Syria and Iraq were threats to Turkish security as close allies of Russia. Global balance of power in the region was under danger for the US<sup>120</sup>.

The US used Iran to weaken Iraq's power. Also, Israel was equally used by Americans to divert the attention of Syria. Israel as a threat from its South, Syria lost its effect as a potential threat for Turkey in its North<sup>121</sup>.

For a country in formulating its security discourse, geography and demography play an important role. For Israel, for example, the country's location in a hostile geography with a small size and population affects its discourse. The small size is used to present Israel as an isolated but surrounded country<sup>122</sup>. Demographically, Israel is depicted as a country which is located in a hostile environment in which it has a much slower birth-rate than its Arab opponents<sup>123</sup>.

In Israel's security discourse water geopolitics retains an important effect. Water is seen as an existential resource considering the fact that it's dramatically diminishing. As a result, water is viewed in political terms<sup>124</sup>. Any attempts to blockade Israel's water sources is seen as a legitimate reason for war<sup>125</sup>. Similar things can be said about energy security of Israel. When Israel considers that its energy resources -including the international routes that carry oil to the country- are in danger it will not hesitate to call it a legal right for war.

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<sup>120</sup> Robert O. Freedman, 'Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Yeltsin and Putin, **Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>121</sup> Stefanos Yerasimos, **Milliyetler ve Sınırlar Balkanlar, Kafkasya ve Oradoğu** (Çev.) Şirin Tekeli, İletişim Yayınları, 2nci Baskı, İstanbul, 1995, s.78.

<sup>122</sup> David Newman, 'Israeli Security: Reality and Myth', **Palestine-Israel Journal**, 4 (2), 1997, pp. 17-24.

<sup>123</sup> David Newman, 'Population as Security: the Arab-Israeli Struggle for Demographic Hegemony', 163-86 in Nana, Poku and David Graham (Eds), **Redefining Security: Population Movements and National Security**, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group. 1998, p. 84.

<sup>124</sup> Klot Nurit, **Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East**, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 127

<sup>125</sup> David Newman, 'Citizenship, Identity...p. 312.

Brent Sasley states that studies on foreign policy of Israel generally focus on certain issues like the problematic geography of Israel, potential for violence in the region, the long-lasting Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the presence of oil reserves in the Persian gulf and Caspian basin and finally the American influence in the region<sup>126</sup>. He says that when analyzing Israeli Foreign Policy generally a Realist perspective is used. Realist theories generally focus on external or material forces, profit maximization, natural interest and domestic politics arguments focusing on the interplay between societal forces.

Another point in constructing the Israeli foreign policy is that Israelis consider that it's the responsibility of the elites that lead the country to decide on foreign policy issues<sup>127</sup>. They have a tendency to trust and support the politicians on security issues. Public opinions do not much alter the foreign policy issues. When compared, this is a unique feature of Israeli foreign policy-making process. Because, in Western democracies, public opinion affects the decisions of the elites to a great extent. But, in Israel due to its unique character of security needs, people grant more chance for politicians to decide on foreign security policy.

Through its history Israeli territory has served as a pivot region for great powers to increase influence and gain power in the East. Israel was aware of its importance and built closer relations with various major powers since its building. Today, it can be said that to survive in its vicinity some degree of subordination is needed and Israel is subordinate to the US because of the current geopolitics. Especially while struggling to reach to rich energy resources of different geographies in the world, Israel hopes to benefit from this subordination. Domestic politics has great effect in foreign policy building in Israel. National security is the main concern for this country since its establishment 60 years ago. In this study, energy security is accepted as one of the primary constituents of national security for Israel. Generally, Israeli foreign policy making is considered to be based on realist perspective. In parallel lines, elites are given almost all the responsibility in decision-making process of Israeli foreign policies. This is different than the Western policy dynamics because in the Western democracies public opinions affect the foreign policy

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<sup>126</sup> Brent Sasley, "Ideas and Power: The Construction of Israeli Foreign Policy", Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Le Centre Sheraton Hotel, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Mar 17, 2004 [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p72882\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p72882_index.html), (27.09.2009)

<sup>127</sup> Brent Sasley, "Ideas and Power...", p.45.

decisions. This difference is caused by the 'security' environment Israel lives in. The fact that Israel has to deal with security issues all the time forces its citizens to provide more support to their politicians. In fact, this is exactly the reason Israel needs to diversify its energy suppliers considering energy security. Because of the unique status of Israel, the country and its leaders should always ensure the presence of alternative energy sources to guarantee the survival of the country in a highly problematic geography.

## **2.2. ISRAELI INTEREST ON SOUTH CAUCASUS ENERGY RESOURCES**

Geographically, Israel and South Caucasus have no common borders and they are too distant from each other. But due to their mutual interests, both the local governments in South Caucasus and Israel pursue rather close relations with each other. The reasons for this affinity will be discussed further below. Yet, Israel's primary concern in the region is related with vast energy resources of especially Azerbaijan in South Caucasus.

It should be underlined that Israeli interest in the region emerged in the last two decades. Changing geopolitics enabled Israel to develop policies concerning South Caucasus. Below an analysis will follow to clarify how Israel has become one of the players in geopolitical game concerning natural resources of South Caucasus.

The 1991 dissolution of Soviet Union resulted in geopolitical and geo-economic changes in the Caucasus and the Central Asia. Geopolitically, changing political borders and effective areas; geo-economically re-invention of the natural resources of the region and new rivalries to reach to these sources affect the dimensions of these great changes. When the Caspian Basin is considered, the fact that the amount of proven oil resources rise up to 25 billion barrels and unproven to 200 billion barrels once again underlines the importance of efforts to plan suitable routes for transporting oil to international markets<sup>128</sup>.

The geopolitical position of the earth is different in the post-Cold War era than the Cold War era to a great extent. One of the most conspicuous results of the post-Cold War era is the central role attained by Caucasus and Central Asia in world politics. For example, Graham Fuller comments that in fact the clash of Soviet Union

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<sup>128</sup> Ian Lerche and Elchin Bagirov, **Impact of Natural Hazards on Oil and Gas Extraction - The South Caspian Basin**, Springer Press; (1st Ed.), 1999, p.36.

meant a clash of a 200 year overwhelming empire<sup>129</sup>. As a result, with first the Tsarist Russia and later the USSR, the clash of hegemony resulted in a great vacuum right in the Center of Eurasia. Suat İlhan argues that there are three main vacuums in Eurasia after the dissolution of Soviet Union. These geopolitical vacuums are first in Eastern Europe, second in Central Asia and finally with a connection to Turkey the Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East<sup>130</sup>. From this perspective, the reflection of post-Cold War era to the region was the struggle for filling this vacuum both by neighboring and cross-bordering countries. The impetus behind these states' enthusiasm for filling in this vacuum is directly related with their interests in security and energy benefits from the region.

Different powers have differing visions about the South Caucasus and its vast energy resources. For the West the most important issue is energy security concerning the region. For the US, presence of multiple lines, for the multinational companies the choice of safe and secure transportation routes are important. For Russia, the most important thing today is the restoration of the old Soviet pipelines again<sup>131</sup>.

For Israel, the most important thing is the transportation of Russian gas and Azerbaijani gas and oil through Turkey to Israel. Because, 'Israel is like an island in an ocean of oil.'<sup>132</sup>

Through the years from 1920s until the end of Cold War in 1990s, the nationalities living in and around the Caspian Basin were called Soviet Nations without specific religious or ethnic emphasis. But, it was obvious after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that the newly independent states were not homogenous and there were no statistics to show reserve amounts of national reserves<sup>133</sup>. This inevitably resulted in new rivalries about controlling oil reserves and transporting them to the world markets in the newly independent states. The effects of these

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<sup>129</sup> Graham E. Fuller, 'Central Asia: The Quest for Identity', **Current History**, Vol. 93, No. 582 (April 1994), pp. 147-148.

<sup>130</sup> Suat İlhan, 'Kafkasların Coğrafi Konumu, Jeopolitik, Jeoekonomik, Jeostratejik Özellikleri ve Bölge Üzerinde Güç ve Rekabet Mücadelesinin Geleceği', Kafkasların Ortadoğu ve Avrasya Perspektifinde Türkiye'nin Önemi Sempozyumu, Harp Akademileri Komutanlığı, İstanbul, 28-29 Nisan 1998, s. 124.

<sup>131</sup> T. Melih Kodaloğlu, 'Avrasya Ülkelerinde Petrol ve Doğalgaz Zenginliği', **Avrasya Dosyası**, No: 116, March-1999, p. 5

<sup>132</sup> Mithat Çelikpala, 'Kafkasya'dan Çatışma Sinyalleri Geliyor', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, 11 Eylül 2006, Sayı: 115, s. 16.

<sup>133</sup> Robert A. Manning, 'The Myth of the Caspian Great Game and the 'New Persian Gulf', **The Brown Journal of World Affairs**, Vol: VII, Issue: 2 (Summer/Fall 2000), p. 15.

rivalries can be seen on the regional conflicts like Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia. It seems that major powers, Russia and the US, use such small geographies to show their position compared to the others. Such conflicts are deeply related to security policies in the region. These security issues will also affect Israel's energy security in the region as will be discussed in the following chapter.

In parallel lines, Brzezinski underlines the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Caucasus which is the middle area between the Eastern and Western ends of Eurasia is in a vague political and economic position today. Brzezinski reminds that this area was under the control of a Russian hegemony until recently. So, it was vital for American hegemony to control the region together with its Western allies. On the other hand, against an America which tries to gain control in the region, Russia is struggling not to lose its power in a region which was once under the control of the USSR. Because, a possible loss in political effect in the region would yield catastrophic results for Russia. In such a case, there will be a serious dissolution in Russia's geopolitical enlargement area. This would mean serious troubles for Russian security policies<sup>134</sup>. It will be further analyzed through the following sections that Russia's interference to regional conflicts Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia can be completely related to this instinctive fear.

Today it can be said that Caucasus has a rather vital geopolitical importance for both the Western bloc and Russian Federation. Russia's interest in the region has its own reasons. During the Cold war era and until President Vladimir Putin took the office, the international relations were mainly based on ideology. With Vladimir Putin in office security dynamics slowly changed and started to be based on 'economic concerns'. Russia adopted a national security perception not only based on security concerns solely but also including economic concerns as well with January 10, 2000 National Security Doctrine and July 10, 2000 Foreign Policy Doctrines. As a result, Russia with its richest natural resources of the earth started to emphasize energy issues in its foreign policy making<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> Manning, 'The Myth of...', p. 16.

<sup>135</sup> Sinem Kara, 'Rusya Enerji Politikasını Sağlamlaştırıyor', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, 14 Ağustos 2006, Sayı:111, s. 5.

Israel's interest in the Caucasus followed a similar changing pattern. Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Israel's interest in South Caucasus was rather limited. There was almost nothing other than ethnic Jewish residents in Caucasus to connect Israel with South Caucasus. But with the end of Cold-war era Israeli leaders thought that the era was full of new opportunities. One of their concerns was related with changing energy strategies of Israel. But, in this new geopolitics, South Caucasus was emerging as a geographically closer potential producer area for Israel. Towards the end of the millennium, Israel sought for ways to build closer relations with Russia. So, we can say that Israel's main interest in the Caucasus is energy oriented and like Russia's increasing emphasis on energy issues, secure energy resources started to gain increasing importance in Israeli policy-making.

In fact, some of the headlines related to Israeli national interests in the region can be cited as the vast potential of natural resources in the area, the presence of Islamic fundamentalism in the region (Wahhabism and Iranian supported Shi'ite fundamentalism especially in Azerbaijan and North Caucasus), and Iranian and Russian threats for the well-being of Israel.

This study will focus only on 'energy security' aspect of Israel's interests in the Caucasus. Iranian and Russian threats for Israel on the other hand will be analyzed through the scope that they can cause troubles and disruptions for the flow of energy to Israel through their effect on regional conflicts.

### **2.2.1. SOUTH CAUCASUS ENERGY RESOURCES**

From an economic view, some analysts consider that the natural resource reserves of some countries on Trans-Caucasia geopolitics will turn the region into a new 'Gulf Region' and operating these resources will be a new struggle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>136</sup>. Bill Richardson the then US Secretary of Energy during Clinton administration in 1996, underlines that the region will help the US to decrease its dependence on Middle East oil through the rich natural resources of the Caspian basin<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>136</sup> Manning, 'The Myth...', p. 19.

<sup>137</sup> Gabil Hüseyinli, 'Azerbaycan'da Siyasal Partiler ve Siyasal İlişkiler', **Avrasya Dosyası Azerbaycan Özel**, Cilt:7, Sayı:1, ilkbahar 2001, s. 67.

Although varying numbers are pronounced concerning the potential of its resources it can be said that Caspian Basin is not a new Middle East but it is comparable to the reserves of North Sea or North America<sup>138</sup>. Many sources claim that Caspian Basin has the second richest reserves following those of the Gulf Region<sup>139</sup>. Some others claim that the oil resources in Caucasus are not very high but with a decrease in the production of North Sea and North American energy reserves, it will receive an important place in the energy markets. When that time comes, Caucasus oil will really gain an importance for the world economy<sup>140</sup>.

At this point, the potential of Caucasian oil reserves to meet rising energy needs of the world should be analyzed. As seen above there are varying numbers about the capacity of Caspian oil and gas reserves and these numbers may change seriously. This chaos is the result of misuse of the terms 'possible reserve', 'productive reserve', 'proven reserve' etc.; plus, with the studies continuing in the region since 1990, adding new reserve fields to old reserves adds to the confusion. These differences in numbers also have relations with some people's manipulations on numbers to maximize their profits by either increasing or decreasing the amounts. According to International Energy Agency in Transcaucasia, proven (and productive) oil reserves amount around 15-40 billion barrels in the region. According to the same source, possible reserves are around 70-150 billion barrels. These numbers are parallel to Rosemarie Forsythe's (a former US National Security Advisor) study which assumes a total of 200 billion barrels totaling possible and proven reserves. Terrence Adams the first president of AIOC on the other hand claims that the total of Azerbaijan's and Kazakhstan's (near Caspian) proven resources is around 27.5 billion and total of possible reserves is 40-60 billion barrels<sup>141</sup>.

When the energy resources in the South Caucasus are the concern, in fact the issue is about the energy resources of Azerbaijan only. Because, Azerbaijan is the only country in the South Caucasus to possess natural resources and Israel is

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<sup>138</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Türkiye'nin Orta Asya- Kafkasya Politikası", **Küresel Politikada Orta Asya**, (Ed.) Mustafa Aydın, Nobel Yay. Dağ, Ankara, 2005, pp. 101-147.

<sup>139</sup> Suat Parlar, **Barbarlığın Kaynağı PETROL**, Anka Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, s. 75.

<sup>140</sup> Sinan Ogan ve İlke Aytekin, 'Mavi Akım: Türk-Rus İlişkilerinde Mavi Bağımlılık', **Stratejik Analiz Dergisi**, Aralık 2002, ss. 66-70.

<sup>141</sup> Necdet Pamir, 'Hazar Bölgesi'nde Enerji Politikaları: Avrupa'nın ve ABD'nin Konseptleri', Avrupa'nın ve Türkiye'nin Kafkasya, Orta Asya ve Ortadoğu'da Ortak İlgi Alanları Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Ankara, Türkiye, 13-14 Kasım 2000.



especially interested in the energy resources of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan according to Brzezinski is similar to the cork of a bottle opening to the Caspian Sea. Brzezinski also adds that Azerbaijan is the guarantee for the independence of Central Asian countries. For operating the Azerbaijani oil resources, around more than 30 multinational companies signed 21 deals since 1993. Total amount of investment may reach to 50 billion dollars. The total reserve would be 6-7 billion barrels and 1.3 trillion m<sup>3</sup> natural gas. These projects are planned to be finished until 2010. It's expected that Azerbaijan's daily production reaches to 0.8-1 million barrels/day. (As of 2009 the production rate is 340.000 barrels/day). The deal which is known as the 'Deal of the Century' means the production of 4.2 billion barrels (55-60% Azerbaijan's total reserves), 70 billion m<sup>3</sup> as natural gas reserve and would cost around 11.5 billion dollars. In accordance with the Mega Project approved by the Azerbaijan National Parliament, countries received the following amounts of revenues: the US 27%, Russia 23%, England 13%, Turkey 6.75 and France 5%. Daily production of AIOC is around 300.000 barrels/day<sup>142</sup>.

### 2.2.2. INTEREST OF ISRAEL IN THE REGION

Following the break up of former Soviet Union, the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan emerged as poor, instable states in Caucasus. The primary problems of these states were related with high inflation and unemployment. The economies were mainly based on agriculture and rate of foreign investments remained low. As a result, the region turned into an area of foreign power competition. Main concern of foreign countries was establishing closer relations with the regional countries to make economic profits, spread their ideologies and religious doctrines<sup>143</sup>.

Azerbaijan can be defined as the economic and political leader of these states in Caucasus. Geographically it is a small country. But its location, vast energy resources and political relations guarantee that it will remain as an important actor in the international system through the foreseeable future. Azerbaijan's main aim in the region is to maintain its independence. With this absolute aim in mind it had to

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<sup>142</sup> Yaşar Kalafat, 'Hazar Enerji Kaynakları'nın Jeopolitik ve Jeoekonomik Dinamikleri', **Avrasya Etüdleri**, (Yaz-Sonbahar—2002) s. 39 (ss. 29-67).

<sup>143</sup> Jacob Abadi, 'Israel's Quest for Normalization with Azerbaijan and the Muslim States of Central Asia', **Journal of Third World Studies**, Fall 2002, p. 43.

maneuver between Russia, Turkey, Iran, the US and Israel. Due to its vast oil resources, its strategic importance increased but the same fact also made the country a target for international rivalry<sup>144</sup>.

This study assumes that Azerbaijan is a 'pivot' country for Israel in South Caucasus with its main energy resources, perfect relations with Israel and its central geographical location in the region. If Israel wants to gain easier access to those energy resources of the region it has to build close relations with Azerbaijan<sup>145</sup>.

Azerbaijan is the political and economic leader of South Caucasus. In addition to its huge natural resources, its balanced policy concerning the neighboring geography adds to the geopolitical importance of Azerbaijan. Increasing number of countries today understand the pivotal role of Azerbaijan to build efficient relations with the remaining South Caucasus.

While analyzing Azerbaijan as a 'pivot' country for Israel in Caucasus, making reference to Brzezinski's analysis of Eurasia being a pivotal area for the major powers of the world seems relevant. In this way a broader picture of world politics can be viewed. Brzezinski resembles Eurasia to a chessboard where the global power struggle will be pursued. In this struggle, there are different actors of various size and power. Brzezinski divides these actors as 'geostrategic player' and 'geopolitical pivot' countries. He defines the geostrategic players as countries which have the capacity to use force in cross-border regions to change or affect the current geopolitical situation in favor of American interests. Geopolitical pivot countries on the other hand can be considered instruments for fine tunings and

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<sup>144</sup> Hasan Kanbolat, 'Kafkasya'nın Jeopolitiğinde Değişim Sinyalleri', **Stratejik Analiz Dergisi**, Issue: 60, Ankara, April 2005, pp. 88.

<sup>145</sup> Israel's approach to Azerbaijan can be connected to Domino Theory in international relations studies. This Domino Theory has been used by the US since 1950s. The US Southeast Asian policies depended on this theory. According to this theory when you lose a region or state in an area you will probably start losing the remaining others. It was first used by President Eisenhower to explain American political strategy about Vietnam in 1964. Eisenhower's view was that if Communists invade an area they will continue their invasions first with the neighboring countries and then the whole world. So, the US had to do all it could do to prevent Communism spread anywhere. Moving from Domino Theory there is another version of the theory. It's called 'Reverse Domino Theory' cited by Hasan Kanbolat (2005). In this view, just an opposite view of Domino Theory is supported. If a state or major power somehow manages to control a region or a country then that country will have the chance to reach to other areas through its struggle for power. It will be for the interest of that power by first entering into the region through a proxy and then further trying to increase influence in the remaining parts of the area either politically, technically, economically or militarily. Israel's strategic perception concerning Azerbaijan suits to this definition of Reverse Domino Theory. Through its close relations with the strongest and richest country in the region, Israel hopes to increase its influence and economic and strategic gains from the region.

minor roles concerning the struggle between geostrategic players. Here, the focus is on the role of pivot countries rather than power and motivations of the countries as in geostrategic players. Brzezinski underlines that a geopolitical pivot country can be vital in certain cases under certain conditions or it can be a security shield to hinder and limit a rivaling country in a certain region. So, defining some key geopolitical pivot countries in the post-Cold War era and gaining their control should be primary targets for sustaining American global supremacy strategy. In this regards, Brzezinski sees Russia, Germany, France, China and India as geostrategic countries in addition to the US. Brzezinski classifies Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, South Korea and Ukraine as pivot countries. Brzezinski also adds that this classification may not be a stagnant status quo though. Depending on the conditions, if any factor necessitates the opposite, some Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, or Kyrgyzstan and South Caucasian countries Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia could be included among pivot countries. Brzezinski adds that because of their capacity, power, ethnic, historical and religious missions Iran and Turkey can be effective into the depths of the Caucasus geopolitically. Brzezinski draws attention to the potential of these countries to be geostrategic players in the region<sup>146</sup>.

Brzezinski in his analysis argues that defining pivot countries is a must for major powers through the geopolitics of the Cold War era. But, changes in the geopolitics right after the Cold War era also proves that certain powers including Israel still need to define pivot countries to secure their interests in different geographies of the world<sup>147</sup>.

During the Cold War era, Caucasus was not geopolitically an important region for Israel. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union a quick shift took place in Israel's foreign policy making and today it imports 20% of its oil needs from Azerbaijan. This development affected Israel's foreign policy dynamics concerning the region completely. Israel plans to make energy deals not only with Azerbaijan but also with the whole Caspian basin and Central Asian countries which own natural resources. Azerbaijan plays a strategic place in Israel's foreign policies. Because, Azerbaijan will be the opening gate for all these energy routes. If Israel

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<sup>146</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'Büyük Satranç Tahtası...', s.40.

<sup>147</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'Büyük Satranç Tahtası...', s.48.

has to by-pass Azerbaijani territory it has to make deals with Armenia, Russia or especially its archenemy Iran to transport natural resources of Caspian basin, which seem impossible and problematic for Israel.

It can be argued that Israel's policies aiming to build closer relations with the former Soviet Union countries and especially Azerbaijan became very successful because these underdeveloped countries modeled on capitalist states like South Korea and Singapore and hoped that Israel's immediate support to them would help them to turn into these countries of their dreams<sup>148</sup>. Also the fact that Azerbaijan managed to disconnect itself from any political ideology eased the way for Israel to gain acceptance to the region<sup>149</sup>. Both Israel and Azerbaijan considered that their mutual relationship would be based on pragmatic drives.

Israeli interest in Azerbaijan has differing dimensions. One of them is the fact that some Israeli policy-makers see Azerbaijan and Caspian basin as part of the 'Greater Middle East'<sup>150</sup>. Being influential in a geography largely Muslim but non-Arab has been a long lasting Israeli security objective. But, this study mainly aims to deal with economic aspect of Israeli interest in the region. So, military or national security dimension of Israeli interest in the region will not be examined.

After the end of the Cold War, another important event affected Israel's policies concerning Azerbaijan. Following the 9/11 events the US recognized the need for diversifying natural resources other than the ones in the Gulf region. As a result, the US increased its support to Israeli policies which aimed to pursue closer relations with Azerbaijan. So it can be said that with the new millennium, Israeli-Azerbaijan relations made a new breakthrough and are improving day by day.

Alexander Jackson comments that present geopolitics is geo-economics. By that he means that economic interests of a country frames the way it acts politically and economically. In similar lines Israel's economic and energy related concerns seem to formulate its foreign policy dynamics concerning Azerbaijan. Jacob Abadi

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<sup>148</sup> Ufuk Tavkul, 'Kafkasya'nın Hassas Etnik Dengelerinde Yeni Bir Tehdit Unsurları', (Der.) Okan Yeşilot, **Değişen Dünya Düzeninde Kafkasya**, İstanbul Kitabevi, 2005, s.89.

<sup>149</sup> Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's New Eastern Orientation," (eds.), Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, **Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China**, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993, p. 72.

<sup>150</sup> Bülent Aras, "Post-Cold War Realities: Israel's Strategy in Azerbaijan and Central Asia," **Middle East Policy**, Jan. 1998, p. 68-9.

argues that when Israel and Azerbaijan's relations are closely examined it's seen that both parties are motivated by economic gains and ideological perspectives played a minor role in building their relations<sup>151</sup>. For example, In 2000, Israel was Azerbaijan's tenth largest trade partner. In 2005, in only 5 years, Israel became the fifth largest trade partner<sup>152</sup>.

Through the years following the collapse of Soviet Union, Israel and Azerbaijan built rather close relations. Both countries cooperated in economic, security related, cultural, educational and strategic issues. Israel helped Azerbaijan to modernize its military, Israeli intelligence helped Azerbaijan against Islamic terrorists. Today, Israeli businessmen have rather comprehensive deals in investments in Azerbaijan. A major Azeri telephone company Bezeq is owned by Israeli investors<sup>153</sup>. Bakcell is a joint venture with Israel and Azeri Ministry of Communication. Numerous Israeli energy companies are active in Azerbaijan.

Rafael Abbasov, former director of economic and trade development at the Israeli embassy in Baku, believes that there is a growing cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan in energy sector. Which most of the time cannot be seen on fiscal reports. Abbasov says: 'In terms of oil, Israeli firms are a lot more involved than when the eye first meets. Often they use the US or UK names to enter Azerbaijan's energy market & bid for energy contracts.'<sup>154</sup>

Azerbaijan hopes that Israeli technical support would help Azerbaijan to develop its technology and economy. Israel on the other hand, plans that Azerbaijani oil reaches to Israel through an underwater pipeline which will be connected to the BTC in Ceyhan. Israel does not only want to supply its energy needs through its import of Caspian oil over Azerbaijan. It also wants to gain money by selling this oil to other consumers in the world. For example, on June 5, 2007 Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan Arthur Lenk underlined that being a key consumer of Azeri oil Israel can be a strategic partner with Azerbaijan to sell Caspian oil to

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<sup>151</sup> Jacob Abadi, 'Israel's Quest for Normalization with ...', p. 44.

<sup>152</sup> Rob Eshman, 'But What about Azerbaijan?', **Jewish Journal**, 23 February, 2007 [www.jewishjournal.com/tag/azerbaijan/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/tag/azerbaijan/), (02.03.2009).

<sup>153</sup> Ahmet Sandıklı, **Küreselleşen Dünyada Birlik Oluşturma Stratejisi ve Egemen Devletler Birliği**, Harp Akademileri Basımevi, İstanbul, 2003, s.58.

<sup>154</sup> The Jerusalem Report, June 17, 1993, [www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-19814209.html](http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-19814209.html), (12.04.2009).

Asian countries through Israeli Ashkelon-Eilat pipeline<sup>155</sup>. The main route to support such a plan would be the BTC pipeline which will be further analyzed in the following Chapter.

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<sup>155</sup> Arthur Leng, 'Israel can be a Strategic Partner for Marketing Caspian Oil to Asia', 07.12.2007, **Israel Diplomatic Network, Embassy of Israel in Azerbaijan**, <http://baku.mfa.gov.il/mfm/web/main/missionhome.asp?LanguageID=0&Question2=&MissionID=97&MissionID=03.04.2009>, (10.06.2009).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ANALYSIS OF ENERGY SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR ISRAEL IN SOUTH CAUCASUS**

#### **3.1. ENERGY SECURITY IN SOUTH CAUCASUS**

Diversity is one of the most important requirements of energy security concept. The rich energy resources in Caucasus provide such a chance to Israeli energy market. The BTC pipeline passes through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey all of which have close relations with Israel. But, any local turmoil, conflict or instability through this pipeline route may cause troubles for the security of energy supplies to Israel. Such risks should be averted either through diplomacy or military means.

Interestingly almost all energy rich regions of the world are economically and politically problematic areas. But, as a requirement of energy security, those producer regions should be secure, stable, economically developed and rule of law should prevail. In this way, access to those resources will be easier. Because, resources will remain ready, available, affordable and safe<sup>156</sup>.

When looked from a general perspective, the possible threats to the region would come from state and non-state actors. By state actors Iran and Russia are considered. By non-state actors Al-Qaeda and Wahhabi supported Islamic terrorist organizations are considered.

The energy route of the region is under threat of terrorist organizations because; both Azerbaijan and Georgia are allies of the US in the region. And both declared their support for the global war of the US against terrorism. In 2002, Azerbaijan and Georgia signed a deal act against terrorism unilaterally. In the deal it was underlined that all three countries -Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the US- support the transportation of Caspian resources to the West through the BTC pipeline and against the conflicts in Caucasus they would act together. Also, all three countries approved the project that American soldiers would train Georgian troops against

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<sup>156</sup> Ariel Cohen, 'The National Security...'

terrorism. As a result, Islamic terrorist organizations have the potential to cause problems for energy routes in South Caucasus.<sup>157</sup>

On the other side, against the Western countries which act together on transporting the Caspian oil to the international market over Baku-Ceyhan route it's observed that Russia, China and Russia act together starting from 2004<sup>158</sup>. Russia opposes the building and operation of BTC pipeline in the region because it actively seeks ways to prevent or pre-empt pipeline routes that could carry Caspian resources to the West by bypassing Russian territory.

Russia fears that if alternative energy routes are realized in the region like the BTC pipeline, its monopoly in energy will greatly be defected. Until recently it was the highest authority to decide on the pricing of energy and it used this power strategically as well. When Russia had problems with any of surrounding countries like Ukraine in 2006 and 2008 for example it simply cut the flow of gas to consumer countries. With the BTC pipeline and other future pipeline routes Russia will have to step back from this privileged position. Russia simply doesn't want to do so<sup>159</sup>.

Iran is another country that can cause trouble on energy routes. Because, Iran is uncomfortable with American and Israeli presence in its vicinity. Iran considers that the US and its allies use the cause of fighting against global terrorism as a pretext to interfere with the regional politics in the Gulf area and Caucasus and the US's ultimate aim is to control the rich resources of the region. If Iran doesn't want to act state-wise using its foreign policy tools and military power by for example either diplomatically protesting or declaring war on regional countries, it can make use of its proxies or some terrorist groups to cause burden on the security of the BTC pipeline<sup>160</sup>.

Al-Qaeda's threats on world energy routes remains as a risky factor. On February 24, 2005 Al-Qaeda attacked Aramco facility in Saudi Arabia. Although the

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<sup>157</sup> Demet Şefika Acar, 'Soğuk Savaş Sonrası...', s. 26.

<sup>158</sup> Ece Aksop, 'Azerbaycan Türkiye'nin Yarasına Merhem Olabilir mi?' **Stratejik Analiz**, Sayı 76, Ağustos 2006, s. 45.

<sup>159</sup> Igor Biryukov, **The Great Game Redux**, Springfield Press, 2004, p.46.

<sup>160</sup> İlahe Kula, Hazar'da Yarış Kızıştı, Radikal Gazetesi, 16.09.2009.



attack failed, the price of oil negatively affected and jumped nearly 2\$ per barrel in international markets<sup>161</sup>.

In addition to the first attack on February 24, 2005 two additional attempted attacks followed; the first on March 28, 2005 and the second 9/11 style assaults in April 2007. All three were successfully averted. But many analysts conclude that Al-Qaeda is still active and trying to cause economic troubles for the international markets. Their first target will be energy industry. The BTC is not an exception. The BTC can be a target for terrorist attacks because of the Azerbaijanian and Georgian governments' support for America in its fight against global terrorism.

It seems that regional instability has the potential to cause troubles on energy security in the South Caucasus. Any country which has strategic and economic interests in the region feels the necessity to be part of these problems. Because, instability and volatility can also effect these countries' interests in the South Caucasus negatively. Concerning Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts it can be said that Israel feels the same way. But there is no situation for Israel to use force to support its interests in the region concerning these regional conflicts due to geographical distance. It uses other means than directly using weapons to achieve its aim in the region.

About Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Israel sides with Azerbaijan against Armenia and in South Ossetia conflict Israel sides with Georgia against Russia. But, in both cases it is active in a rather subtle way. No one can say Israel is part of the clashes but it's never away from the conflicts either<sup>162</sup>.

Ethnic conflict has never been more effective than Caucasus except former Yugoslavia in modern times in Europe. In the South Caucasus, through 1988-1994 numerous conflicts occurred and none of them is solved yet<sup>163</sup>. Daily clashes are stopped through cease-fire deals. In the following section two of these regional conflicts Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia will be analyzed.

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<sup>161</sup> Cenk Pala ve Hasan Kanpolat, "Bakü-Tiflis-Ceyhan: 21nci Yüzyılın İpek Yolu", **Stratejik Analiz**, Haziran 2005, Cilt:6, Sayı: 62, ss.18-25.

<sup>162</sup> Murat Yetkin, İsrail'in Kafkaslardaki Rolü, *Radikal Gazetesi*, 23.10.2009.

<sup>163</sup> Svante E. Cornell, **Small Nations and Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus**, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1999, p. 34.

### 3.2. ISRAELI INTEREST ON PIPELINE SECURITY

Today there are two major powers in Caucasus; the US and Russia and each of them tries to strengthen its position in the region. The main rivalry between them depends on the issue of how to transport Central Asian and Caspian basin natural resources to the West. The US supported Western route aims to carry natural resources through Central Asia, Caspian, Georgia and Turkey to the international markets by by-passing Russia and Iran. The Russian supported Northern route on the other hand, plans to pump oil and gas reserves first to the Caucasus and then to Russian port Novorossiysk. The energy resources then will be carried by tankers through Bosphorus to European markets. Another alternative for the Northern route is using a pipeline passing through Bulgaria and Greece instead of Bosphorus. Final alternative is a pipeline reaching to Georgia's Supsa port from Caucasus<sup>164</sup>.

The advantage of Baku-Ceyhan (Western route) is that Ceyhan port can serve to rather big tankers with great capacities. Supsa and Novorossiysk ports on the other hand can only serve to smaller tankers. The results of these rivaling projects are the US supported BTC and the Russian supported Blue Stream pipelines. In fact, Israel has connections to both of them although it's strategically one of the most devoted allies of both the Western world and especially the US in Caucasus. Israeli politicians are planning to reach to oil resources of Caspian basin through the BTC pipeline and natural gas resources via the Blue Stream pipeline<sup>165</sup>.

The real reason for building the BTC with the US support is the strategic aim of breaking the monopoly of Russia in Caucasus and the Caspian basin. When the rivaling project Blue stream pipeline started to operate, the BTC pipeline was still on paper as a project. During Cold War era and later with President Yeltsin, Russian foreign policy was mainly based on military security concerns. With President Putin however, following 2001 National Security Document Russia changed its policies from security to energy concerns. Russia today owns the greatest and richest energy resources of the world and the Putin administration wants to make use of them. Through this period, Russia developed two strategies concerning energy

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<sup>164</sup> Yunis Nesibli, 'Rusya'nın Kafkasya Politikası ve Rus Askeri Üsleri', **Kafkasya'nın Jeopolitik Sorunları**, Ankara, ASAM Yayınları, Sayı:53, 2003, s. 59.

<sup>165</sup> Sedat Laçiner, "Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliği", *Türk Harb-İş Dergisi*, Sayı: 219, Şubat 2006, ss. 1925.

resources. First, controlling the biggest possible share of natural resources and second attaining the full control of transportation routes<sup>166</sup>.

Today, Russia wants to continue its monopoly on transportation routes due to economic and security reasons. Its aim is to preserve its decision-making role on oil prices and production rates by controlling all the routes into its region<sup>167</sup>.

Thus, the Baku-Ceyhan project was planned to affect the monopoly of Russia over energy corridors to a great extent. It was also considered by the Western world that the BTC pipeline would affect Russian control over oil export rates. Currently, 70% of national export is oil and natural gas in Russia. A one-dollar change in the price of oil would mean a 1.2 billion\$ loss of energy revenues for Russia.

Perfectly aware of such conditions, Azerbaijan has always been part of Russia's energy plans. But, all the Azeri governments since 1991 tried to free themselves from the influence chamber of Russia. The best way to gain independence from Russia was to build a pipeline that would bypass Russian territory. The construction of the BTC gave Azerbaijan this chance to keep away from Russian sphere<sup>168</sup>.

The attempts of Russia under Commonwealth of Independent States to involve Caucasus and South-West wing under its control resulted in the establishment of GUUAM which included Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Uzbekistan. GUUAM'S major feature is that it's established by countries that are bothered by the increasing Russian influence. One of the primary aims of GUUAM is to balance the increasing effect through Commonwealth of Independent States by building close relations with NATO and the Western world<sup>169</sup>.

The Western world also wanted to build close relations with Azerbaijan and in this way to increase stability in the region. The aim of this regional stability and

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<sup>166</sup> Vicken Cheterian, 'Sea or Lake: A Major Issue for Russia', **CEMOTI**, No:23, p. 6.

<sup>167</sup> Mehmet S. Erol and Latif N. Çakıroğlu, 'Köpetdağı'nın İki Tarafındaki Komşular: Türkmenistan-İran İlişkilerinin Son On Yılı', **Avrasya Dosyası: Türkmenistan Özel**, Cilt:7, Sayı:2 (yaz 2001), s. 222.

<sup>168</sup> Oktay Tanrısever, 'Sovyet Sonrası Dönemde Rusya'nın Kafkasya Politikası', (Der.) Mustafa Türkeş, İlhan Uzgel, **Türkiye'nin Komşuları**, İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, Birinci Baskı, Şubat 2002, s. 46.

<sup>169</sup> Ö. Göksel İşyar, **Sovyet-Rus Dış Politikaları ve Karabağ Sorunu**, Alfa Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004 ss. 619-620.

economic development of Azerbaijan would guarantee a secure transportation of Caspian sources to the West. The BTC pipeline should be considered from this perspective. The BTC pipeline is built especially with the support of the US to stabilize the region and transport the rich sources of the Caspian basin to the West.

Following the 9/11 events and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the geopolitical dynamics in the world system changed to a great extent and these changes necessitated Israeli foreign policy makers to make shifts in their foreign policy-making strategies. The ideological and geopolitical vacuum in the region led Israeli foreign policy-makers to consider Caucasus and Central Asia having importance for Israeli energy security<sup>170</sup>. The geographic distance between Israel and Caucasus didn't much affect the process.

As a result of these geopolitical changes, the aim of Western world was to build secular and pro-Western democracies in the newly independent Muslim states. Israel as part of the western world was actively involved in this strategy. And Israel received the approval of the US to establish close relations with the regional countries<sup>171</sup>. Israel offered to transfer its technical knowledge about medicine, agriculture and irrigation to Azerbaijan in addition to its close relations with Azerbaijan in military, economic and political spheres.

In fact, according to some analysts Israel was so active in these policies that it even affected the planning of the pipeline route to further include Israel in the future. Christopher Bollyn says:

*'The relationship among Israel, Turkey and the United States is the major factor for the selection of the Baku-Ceyhan route, which could be extended to bring oil directly to the energy-deficient Israel.'*<sup>172</sup>

As for Israeli interest in natural gas from Blue Stream pipeline, it can be said that with Ariel Sharon's election as the Prime Minister of Israel in 2001, Israeli-Russian relations are softened. In 2001, Sharon visited Moscow and at the end of

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<sup>170</sup> Cavid Veliev, 'Kafkaslarda Enerji Mücadelesi', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, 18 Aralık 2006, Sayı: 129, s. 14.

<sup>171</sup> Jerusalem Post, November 26, 1996.

<sup>172</sup> Christopher Bollyn, 'Same Old Names, Faces Primed to Make Big Bucks Off Tragedy,' **American Free Press**, [www.rense.com/general15/game.html](http://www.rense.com/general15/game.html), (10.08.2009).

that visit both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon expressed their support for future plans to carry Russian gas to Israel through Blue Stream pipeline<sup>173</sup>. Israel's interest in the Russian gas can be explained by Israel's energy plans to increase the amount of natural gas consumption while decreasing oil consumption rates. Because, gas is cheaper and easier for Israel to supply when compared to oil.

### 3.2.1. THE BTC PIPELINE

The BTC pipeline has strategic importance in terms of energy security not only for the countries of the region but also for the whole Western world including the US and Israel. In fact, the BTC pipeline signifies the energy rivalry between Russia and US.

Against all the objections from Russia, the US pressed hard to realize this great project. When looked from our study's view, the BTC has a vital importance to transport Caucasus energy resources to Israel.

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was the only monopole for carrying Caspian basin energy resources to the Western markets through its pipeline system. For the EU and the US on the other hand, the best way to decrease their dependence on Russian pipelines was to build various alternative pipelines over producer countries in the Caspian basin and the Central Asia. The Western bloc considered that these pipelines had to pass through 'friendly' countries. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey were the three friendly countries for the Western world in the region. The BTC pipeline uses the territories of these three states to reach to the Mediterranean from the Caucasus.

A short 'facts' part can be relevant to visualize what is meant by the BTC pipeline. By many, the BTC pipeline is called 'The 'Project of the Century'. It is planned through early 1990s and costs around 4 billion \$. The total cost of the project is around 12 billion \$ including oil platform and oil storage facilities. Total length of the pipeline is around 1776 km. 1076 km of the pipeline passes through Turkey. The oil carried from Shahdeniz via the BTC first loaded in Ceyhan as of

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<sup>173</sup> Fikret Ertan, **Rusya'nın Dönüşümü (1990- )**, Kızılelma Yayıncılık, Birinci Baskı, Ekim 2001, İstanbul, s. 58.

June 2006. Daily capacity of the pipeline is around 1 million barrels/day. The Azeri oil in the BTC is considered lighter and sweeter (mostly composed of benzene and motorin) by refinery companies and because of this international markets prefer Azeri oil on rivaling Russian oil<sup>174</sup>.

The primary instinct behind building the BTC was totally dependent on geopolitical concerns. The aim was helping certain states like Azerbaijan and Georgia gain their independence from Russian Federation. Israel as part of the western world shared the same vision and supported efforts to build this massive pipeline. In parallel lines Necdet Pamir argues that the geostrategic importance of the BTC is far beyond its economic gains. Because, the BTC will help bypass Russia and Caspian and Central Asian states will no longer remain landlocked to transport their natural resources to the West<sup>175</sup>.

Through the mid 1990s both Ankara and Baku supported an oil pipeline passing through Azerbaijan and Turkey to avert a unilateral Russian effect on energy. The US on the other hand, at first was reluctant to support such a project due to security concerns and the possibility that it could cost more than the other alternative routes, and more importantly it didn't want to face the Russian reaction for the US support. Oil companies which were seeking a better cost-effect ratio were also affective in this policy. In 1998, the Clinton administration declared that the primary alternative would be to transport Caspian oil through Turkey to world markets. In October 1998, the regional countries convened in Ankara and decided that Baku-Ceyhan would be the main route. When oil companies voiced their concern about oil cost and the possibility that enough resources would not be found to support the pipeline, Turkey asked for the support of the US which saw Baku-Ceyhan as a strategic alternative<sup>176</sup>. President Bush, after Clinton was more determined to realize the project. Vice President Dick Cheney of Bush administration told the incumbent Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit that the US saw the project as a strategic rather than a commercial one<sup>177</sup>.

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<sup>174</sup> Utku Yapıcı, **Küresel Süreçte Türk Dış Politikasının Yeni Açılımları Orta Asya ve Kafkasya**, Otopsi Yayınları, Birinci Basım İstanbul, 2004, s. 126.

<sup>175</sup> Necdet Pamir ve İlyas Kamalov, 'Rus Gazı ve Enerjide Rusya'ya Bağımlılığın Bedeli', **Stratejik Analiz**, Sayı: 70, Şubat 2006, s.40.

<sup>176</sup> Cavid Veliev, 'Azerbaycan'ın Enerji Atağı', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, Sayı:126, 27 Kasım 2006, s. 25.

<sup>177</sup> Robert Cullen, 'Hazar Denizi Düşüş ve Yükseliş', **National Geographic Türkiye**, No:10, Şubat 2002, s. 140.

Iran opposed the construction of the BTC in this route. The reason for this opposition was both the possibility that such a project would diminish the profit of Iran from natural resources and that this route would open Caspian resources to Iran's archenemy Israel. Russia on the other hand, opposed the construction of this pipeline that it would break its monopoly over natural resources in the region. Also in Russia, it was argued that the Western world was willing to deploy military units close to the pipeline route with the pretext that the region was an instable area and the route had to be secured<sup>178</sup>.

The BTC pipeline has affected the global energy politics from the very beginning. In the past South Caucasia was left to the influence of Russia and the US respected this for a long time. But, with the changes in geopolitics the US strategists decided to follow a more active policy in the region. In fact some steps of these Western policies were criticized because it was claimed that the regional states were not very much reliable partners due to their immature democracies<sup>179</sup>. The Caucasian counterparts of Western leaders were theoretically elected politicians through legal elections but were not very much trustworthy due to their corrupted relations.

In contrast to Russian argument that the BTC pipeline would cause disruptions and add to the volatility of the region, the Western world considers that the project will facilitate security in the Caucasus. For example, both Azerbaijan and Georgia consider that the BTC pipeline will support their territorial integrity and sovereignty rights in their countries.

As part of the Western world, Israel is one of the benefactors of the BTC pipeline. In fact while the BTC pipeline was being constructed the only aim was not simply transporting energy resources of the Caspian basin and Central Asia to the Western markets. The BTC is not simply an energy pipeline. It is also one of the guarantees of regional security for all the actors in the Caucasus including Israel.

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<sup>178</sup> 'İran'ın da BTC'den Beklentileri Var', Milliyet Gazetesi, 13.10.2006.

<sup>179</sup> Sinan Ogan ve Kamil Ağacan, 'Güney Kafkasya'da Yeniden Başlayan veya Bitmeyen Soğuk Savaş', **Stratejik Analiz**, Cilt:2, Sayı:13, Mayıs 2001, s. 56.

In Helena Kane Finn's words,

*"The most important development on the political-economic front resulting from the September 11 attacks is a renewed effort toward the implementation of plans to actualize the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline."*<sup>180</sup>

The United States considers that terrorism especially the one stemmed from religious fundamentalism is the most important threat to its own well-being. Because of this, it supports strategic projects on critical regions which support terrorism. One of these vital projects is the construction of the BTC pipeline<sup>181</sup>. In this way, by supporting the problematic geographies economically, the US hopes that its own and strategic partners' security will be guaranteed. Israel is among those strategic partners of the US in Caucasus<sup>182</sup>.

Israel has always been part of the BTC project. Even in its planning phase Israel was part of the process. The BTC pipeline drew attention of Israel due to consistent support it received from American Jewish lobbies which considered that one of the main concerns of energy security concept would be increasing the number of possible routes to carry natural resources. Here the aim is avoiding from limiting energy dependency to only one pipeline route in case this route is attacked by a terrorist group or regional conflicts take place in the neighborhood of the pipeline. With this idea in mind, American Jewish leaders met with the then Azeri President Haidar Aliyev in 1997 to discuss how they could support the project in the US Congress. Israel and American Jews had great influence during the construction phase of the BTC pipeline. The Armenian lobby in the US opposed the construction of the pipeline because of Azerbaijan-Armenia dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. But, Azerbaijan managed to gain the support of Jewish Caucasus members and prominent Jewish lobbies like American Jewish Community and the B'nai Brith in the construction period of the BTC pipeline<sup>183</sup>.

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<sup>180</sup> Helena Kane Finn, "Turkish Political Disarray: Why Now? What Next?", **Policywatch**, No. 633, 10 July 2002,

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/Policywatch/policywatch2002/633.htm>, (29.01.2009).

<sup>181</sup> Kasım Kamer, '11 Eylül Sürecinde Kafkasya'da Güvenlik Politikaları', **Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Araştırmaları Dergisi**, Cilt:1, No:1, 2006, s. 75.

<sup>182</sup> Nasuh Uslu, 'The Russian, Caucasian and Central Asian Aspects of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Period', **Alternatives Turkish Journal of IR**, Volume 2 Number 3&4 Fall & Winter 2003, s. 33.

<sup>183</sup> 'Strategically Minded Jewish-American Groups May Help Effect Needed US Regional Policy Shift,' **Caspian Watch # 14**, The Center for Security Policy, No: 99-D 22, February 10, 1999.



The BTC pipeline has the potential to transport Azeri oil (in the future Kazakhstan is expected to join the project) to Israel in a more reliable way. The BTC pipeline gives Israel a chance to step away from the Iranian domination in the Gulf region and its possible threats to its territory and economic benefits. Also it's the shortest route to carry Caspian resources to Israel<sup>184</sup>.

Officially, Israel has been focused on negotiations with Azerbaijan and Turkey to extend the BTC pipeline to Turkey since 2006. Israeli attention to the BTC can be observed from the fact that Israeli Minister of National Infrastructures Binyamir Ben-Eliezer attended to the opening ceremony of the BTC pipeline on July 6, 2006. Israel's utmost goal in relation to the BTC pipeline is to extend the pipeline to Israeli Red Sea port in Eilat. In this way Israel will be able to transport Azerbaijani and Kazakh oil to Asian markets. In a visit to Baku in 2006, Binyamin Ben Eliezer underlines that Israel is only 400 miles from Ceyhan and because of this closeness Israel may have the chance to transport the Caspian resources to various consumers in the West and Far East. Today, Israel imports 20% of its oil supplies through the BTC. Although traditionally Israel keeps the name of its energy sources secret as a national security concern, it officially declared that it started to buy oil from Azerbaijan through the BTC pipeline. In some circles, it's commented that Israel wanted to underline the strategic nature of Israeli-Azerbaijani relations. Israel ships the oil from Ceyhan to its territory at the moment. But, in the future Israel plans to re-export some of Azeri oil to Far East countries like China, India and Japan through the Red Sea<sup>185</sup>.

The BTC route circumvents Iran and Russia. As a result, the pipeline connects Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. All three countries are strategic partners of Israel being secular and pro-Western countries in the region. Such a pipeline perfectly supports Israel's strategic interests concerning its energy security in the region.

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<sup>184</sup> Necdet Pamir, 'Getting Azerbaijan's Oil to the International Market,' **Azerbaijan International**, Autumn 1995, p. 6.

<sup>185</sup> Parag Khanna, **The Second World Empires and Influence in the New Global Order**, Random House, New York, 2007, p. 54.

The BTC pipeline helps landlocked Azerbaijan to sell its oil through Georgia and Turkey to the West. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Araz Azimov states the following on the benefits of the BTC for Israel:

*The BTC is going to Ceyhan, and that is the Mediterranean... And to buy the Azerbaijani oil is much preferable than the Persian oil... In the Persian Gulf you have 700 billion tons per year of oil being thrown into the market, while in the Mediterranean Azerbaijani oil will contribute 15 million tons a year. In the Mediterranean, you have lesser amounts of oil and more dynamics. Israel has its own demand here. Huge demands. In strategic way, Israel has certain reasons to be interested in Azerbaijan.*<sup>186</sup>

The relations between Israel and Azerbaijan are not only limited with connecting the BTC to Israel. Other than the BTC pipeline, the most strategic cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan depends on construction of a multi-purpose pipeline between Turkish port Ceyhan and Israel's southern part. This multi-purpose pipeline which was launched in July 2008 will connect the two countries by four pipelines to carry oil, gas, water and electricity to Israel. In this way, Israel plans to solve all its resource problems for the foreseeable future<sup>187</sup>.

### **3.2.2. THE BLUE STREAM PIPELINE**

The Blue Stream pipeline project was first heard on December 15, 1997 with a deal which prospected that the Russian natural gas to Turkey would be transported through a pipeline down the Black Sea. With this deal Gazexport and Botaş agreed to transport 16 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year natural gas for 25 years. At the beginning the pipeline would supply 2 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year. Today it supplies 4 billion m<sup>3</sup>/year natural gas. At the end of a 25 year period it's planned to transport 365 m<sup>3</sup> natural gas. Through the construction of the Blue Stream, the Russian desire was to further develop Russian transportation routes and hinder Turkey to sign further energy deals with third countries<sup>188</sup>.

One of the most important features of the Blue Stream is that there is no third country between Turkey and Russia to transport natural gas. This fact gives Turkey

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<sup>186</sup> Alexander Murinson, 'Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel Relations: The Energy Factor', **MERIA**, Volume 12, No. 3 - September 2008, Article 4 of 7.

<sup>187</sup> 'Turkey, Israel Committed to Giant Energy Project,' **Turkish Daily News**, July 14, 2008.

<sup>188</sup> Sefa Sekin ve Rahşan Tekin, 'Güney Kafkasya ve Gürcistan', **Kafkasya Araştırma ve Analiz**, Sayı:2, Nisan 2006-Eylül 2006, s. 32.

the chance to buy natural gas from Russia 12% cheaper when compared to previous energy deals with Russia. The financial support to project is given by Russia. It cost around 3.2 billion\$ to finish the project. In fact, the Blue Stream pipeline is highly criticized in Turkey because it would deepen Turkish dependency on Russian natural gas. Whereas the EU underlined that any member country's dependence on a single producer country should not be higher than 30%, with this Blue Stream pipeline project Turkey's dependency on Russian gas reached to more than 65%<sup>189</sup>.

Israel is also interested in Russian supported Blue Stream natural gas pipeline. Before the end of the Cold war, Caucasus was not among the regions that supplied energy resources to Israel. But, with the geopolitical changes the region emerged as an eligible source of natural resources for Israel. Today, Israel imports most of its oil from Russia and former Soviet Union states<sup>190</sup>. With the Sharon government since 2001, Israeli-Russian relations started to improve. The real reason behind this improvement is the fact that both sides were willing to profit from natural gas reserves of Russia. Israel desperately needed natural gas from another source other than Egypt. Because, due to certain dynamics in its domestic policies, being dependent on an Arabic Egypt on gas has always remained a nuisance for politicians in Israel. The same thing can also be said concerning Egypt. Having to sell gas to Israel is also a problematic issue for Egypt. Israel is uncomfortable with an Egyptian monopole in gas<sup>191</sup>. Because of this; the future pipeline project which is planned to connect Blue Stream with Israel will have a chance to diversify Israeli energy resources. Russia on the other hand, many times repeated that Russia was interested in a project which could extend the Blue Stream pipeline to Israel to carry Russian gas or carrying the same Russian gas through LNG tankers to Israel<sup>192</sup>.

In fact, similar to the BTC pipeline which receives the support of Western powers due to strategic concerns rather than economic gains, Russia's strong support to the Blue Stream project is more strategic than economic.

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<sup>189</sup> Mavi Akım Gerçeği ve Bağlantılı Projeler' Botaş Yayını, Temmuz 2001, s. 17.

<sup>190</sup> Simon Henderson, 'Russian Oil to Transit Israel: The Trans-Israel Pipeline is Reborn', November 17, 2003 <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1683>, (17.02.2009).

<sup>191</sup> Erol Taymaz, 'Kafkasya, Rusya, Federalizm', **Nart**, Sayı:44, Temmuz-Ağustos 2005, s. 72.

<sup>192</sup> 'Hopes Run High as 'Blue Dream Becomes Reality,' **Turkish Daily News**, November 18, 2005.

Russia was one of the superpowers during the Soviet Union. But, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had to reconsider its capabilities. It's obvious that during the new era, Russia doesn't have the means to continue an economic and military rivalry against the US. As a result, its only chance is to make use of its natural resources strategically<sup>193</sup>.

When looked from Russian perspective, the Blue Stream project has a vital importance for Russian strategy to become 21<sup>st</sup> century's energy super power. The ex-CEO of RAD Gazprom Rem Voyhirev underlines the importance of Blue Stream pipeline for Russian energy strategies. According to Voyhirev being economically present in Turkey would help Russia to enter European energy market<sup>194</sup>.

Contrary to the expectation that Russian politicians would focus on their vast oil resources, Russian energy strategic concept gives the major role to natural gas to become an energy super power. The fact that Russia owns the greatest gas reserves and being the only alternative for another natural gas rich but landlocked country Turkmenistan to sell its gas to foreign markets adds to the strength of Russia. On May 22, 2003 Russian government held a meeting to discuss the energy strategy of Russia until 2020. In this meeting the need to build 20.000 km extra pipelines until 2020 was discussed. Adding new pipeline routes to Blue Stream pipelines was among the primary projects then<sup>195</sup>.

The Blue stream pipeline has a capacity to supply gas to various additional routes. One of these new routes can be further lengthening the pipeline to the South of Turkey and in this way enabling Israel to connect to this gas pipeline.

Like the consumer countries, producer countries also would like to diversify their routes and markets. Blue Stream is a major pipeline connecting Russia with Turkey. But, the BTC pipeline didn't make Russians happy. Because of this most probably they will use Bulgaria-Greece route as an alternative to Turkey by by-passing its territory. Still Russians wish to enlarge the Blue Stream pipeline and

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<sup>193</sup> Sinem Kara, 'Rusya Enerji Politikasını Sağlamlaştırıyor', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, Sayı:111, 14 Ağustos 2006, s. 46.

<sup>194</sup> Natalya Ulçenko, 'Rusya ve Türkiye'nin Güvenliğinde Enerji İhracatı ve İthalatının Rolü', **Avrasya Dosyası Rusya Özel Sayısı**, Kış 2001, C. 6, Sayı 4, ss. 141-154.

<sup>195</sup> Sinan Oğan, 'Hazar'da Tehlikeli Oyunlar (Statü Sorunu, Paylaşılamayan Kaynaklar ve Silahlanma Yarışı)', **Avrasya Dosyası Türkmenistan Özel Sayısı**, Yaz 2001, ss. 143-184.

lengthen it to either Israel in the South or Greece and Bulgaria to the East. Russia's aim is to reach to Europe and Far East with as many possible and feasible pipelines as possible. Russian Gazprom wants to increase the amount of oil it pumps to Turkey and connect the pipeline with an underwater project to Israel. While reaching to Middle East not only Israel but also European countries and especially Italy is aimed<sup>196</sup>.

Some Israelis think that Russian oil can also follow a similar route and reach to Akabe bay over Israeli territory. In this way Russian oil can reach to India and China through a much easier route. Through these projects, Israel and Russia aim to extend the Blue Stream pipeline to reach to Israel. First news about concrete steps to realize such a project began to be heard as of the second quarter of 2006. For example on April 4, 2006 it was announced that Gazprom's Chairman, Alexei Miller visited Turkey to discuss extending the Blue Stream gas pipeline to other countries in the Mediterranean region, including Israel and Lebanon. The sub-Black Sea gas pipeline would extend from the Black Sea port city of Samsun to Turkey's Ceyhan oil terminal on the Mediterranean and then on to Israel and Lebanon<sup>197</sup>.

Miller also offered to extend the pipeline Westward to Greece and then to Italy. A joint company would be formed for that project. "We consider Turkey as a reliable partner to transit gas to third countries,"<sup>198</sup> he said. As of October 2009, Israel, Turkey and Russia are still negotiating extending the Blue Stream pipeline to Israel.

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<sup>196</sup> 'Rusya: İtalya, Mavi Akım'ı Kendisine Doğru Çekiyor', Zaman Gazetesi, 08.04.2009.

<sup>197</sup> Anar Somuncuoğlu, 'Rusya'dan AB'ye Enerji Kilidi', **Cumhuriyet Strateji**, Sayı:126 27 Kasım 2006, s. 32.

<sup>198</sup> 'Blue Stream Pipeline to be Extended into Israel, Lebanon', **Pipeline & Gas Journal**, Copyright Oildom Publishing Company of Texas, Inc. Mar 2006  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m3251/is\\_3\\_233/ai\\_n24984273](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3251/is_3_233/ai_n24984273), (27.12.2008).

### **3.3. REGIONAL ISSUES AND ENERGY SECURITY**

According to Amineh and Houweling there are seven conflict risks near the BTC pipeline. These are cited below:

1. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan (20 km),
2. South Ossetia conflict. First between Georgia–South Ossetia and then between Georgia and Russia (60 km),
3. North Ossetia vs. Ingushetia conflict (225 km),
4. Russia vs. Dagestan conflict (85 km),
5. Russia vs. Chechnya conflict (115),
6. Georgia vs. Abkhazia conflict (135),
7. Turkey vs. PKK terror organization (the pipeline passes through the Turkish geography where the terrorist organization is active).<sup>199</sup>

Among the seven regional conflicts listed above, this study will focus on the first two of them due to their geographic closeness to the route of the BTC pipeline.

As seen above, there are numerous problems surrounding the route of the BTC. But, the Bush administration insisted that the BTC route would ensure the flow of secure energy supplies to the West. This policy-making strategy once again underlines that the BTC pipeline is a strategic pipeline rather than an economic one. In the following sections these conflicts, their potential security threats on the BTC pipeline and Israeli positions concerning each of them will be analyzed.

#### **3.3.1. NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT AND ENERGY SECURITY**

The history of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict dates back to 1988. In 1989, the population of the region was around 192.000 and its surface area was around 4400km<sup>2</sup>. The region was called Artsakh (Fresh Forest) among the Armenians. During the Soviet Union, it was part of Azerbaijan since 1923 with a 70% Armenian population.

Through the 1980s towards the end of Soviet Union, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region applied to all three countries USSR, Armenia and Azerbaijan

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<sup>199</sup> Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, and Henk Houweling, (Eds) 'Central Eurasia in...', p. 56.

on February 20, 1988 and declared that it wanted to unite with Armenia. Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet declined this proposal. At the time, a legal obligation that none of the Soviet Republics' borders could be changed without the consent of those republics was used as a premise for the Azerbaijani objection. On July 1988, the USSR Supreme Soviet rejected Armenian Supreme Soviet's decision to include Nagorno-Karabakh into its borders and took over the control of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1989<sup>200</sup>.

After both Azerbaijan and Armenia won their independence in 1991, Azerbaijan declared that it annexed Nagorno-Karabakh into its borders on November 26, 1991. Armenian people living in Nagorno-Karabakh responded to this by a referendum on December 10, 1991. But, Armenian proposal to enter the Commonwealth of Independent States as 'Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Republic' was declined by Russia. In 1992, the non-Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh was forced to leave the country. Armenians with the help of Russia controlled a large region surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh region and with the help of Lachin corridor they established a territorial link between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. As of 2009, 1/5 of Azerbaijani territory is still under control of Armenia<sup>201</sup>.

Around 1000.000 Azeris are refugees in Azerbaijan. In Armenia on the other hand, ¼ of the population left the country due to the difficulties and economic burden caused by the war<sup>202</sup>.

Nagorno-Karabakh war ceased with Russian pressure in May, 1994 with a cease-fire deal signed by parties in Bishkek. Since the end of the war, various meetings are held through the supervision of OSCE (Minsk Process) and the US-led Key West in 2001 to find a solution to the conflict. But, all efforts so far failed to bring peace in the conflict<sup>203</sup>. Technically Armenia won the war in Nagorno-Karabakh having occupied 20% of Azeri soil which include Nagorno-Karabakh region and

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<sup>200</sup> 'Yukarı Karabağ'da Kritik Süreç', Zaman Gazetesi, 05.10.2009.

<sup>201</sup> Mustafa Aydın, 'Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu', **Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt II:1980-2001**, (Ed). Baskın Oran, İletişim Yayınları, 2005, s. 401.

<sup>202</sup> 'Yukarı Karabağ: Kafkaslar'da Tehlike', Sabah Gazetesi, 23.11.2009.

<sup>203</sup> Soner Çağaptay and Alexander Murinson, 'Good Relations Between Azerbaijan and Israel: A Model for Other Muslim States in Eurasia?' The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, PolicyWatch: 982, March 30, 2005. [www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf.php?template=C05&CID=2287](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf.php?template=C05&CID=2287), (03.03.2009).

seven surrounding regions. But, Armenia couldn't manage to win the peace. As of today, negotiations are deadlocked and both sides seem reluctant to find an immediate solution. The reason for this reluctance is that both sides think that time will be in their favor<sup>204</sup>. Armenia considers that Azerbaijani army is weak and will never have the capacity to cause a threat to Armenia. Azerbaijan on the other hand thinks that with its rising oil revenues it will both strengthen its army and gain the political support of Western world against Russia and Armenia<sup>205</sup>.

Robert O. Freedman discusses that the future of regional conflicts will depend on the differences on the amount and technology of military weapons the regional countries will have. For example, through the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Armenia bought 1 billion \$ worth armaments from Russia. And Azerbaijan may use its future oil revenues to invest in its military technology. In such a case, it seems that the dynamics of the conflict will change favoring Azerbaijan<sup>206</sup>.

The conflict and invasion of part of its territory affected the domestic stability of Azerbaijan and delayed its integration with the international society. Though its territory is invaded and part of its population became refugees, Azerbaijan couldn't receive much foreign support. Though they had better realist or idealist reasons to support Azerbaijan, many countries remained reluctant to give their support to this country. Russian Federation supported Armenia to force Azerbaijan to become a Commonwealth of Independent States member and due to its historical strategy of supporting Armenia in contentious cases<sup>207</sup>.

The US on the other side which could be expected to support Azerbaijan side with idealist reasons pursued negative policies due to the influence of the Armenian lobby in the US. When looked from a realist perspective with its rich energy sources Azerbaijan is strategically much more important than Armenia. Though Azerbaijan is rather important in building an East-West energy corridor, the US Congress approved 907 Freedom Support Act which would blockade American

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<sup>204</sup> Svante E. Cornell, **Conflict Theory and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Guidelines for a Political Solution**, Stocholm, Triton, 1997, p. 45.

<sup>205</sup> Murat Şahin, 'Transkafkasya Siyasi Coğrafyasında Etnik Dağılımın Etkileri', **Avrasya Etüdüleri**, İlkbahar-Yaz 2001, TİKA, ss. 33-50.

<sup>206</sup> Robert O. Freedman, 'Russian Policy Toward the Middle East Under Yeltsin and Putin', **Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**, No. 2 September 2001  
<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp461.htm>, (21.06.2009).

<sup>207</sup> 'Yukarı Karabağ İşgali Engellenebilirdi', Zaman Gazetesi, 07.06.2009.



aid to Azerbaijan. American administrations tried to soften this decision and it took a long time to change the situation. In the face of Armenian attempts to enlarge the Azerbaijani invasion, there were declarations by the US side that such attempts couldn't be supported. The US State Department declared with the Lachin and Susha invasion that changing the legal status of Nahcevan, Nagorno-Karabakh or any other region unilaterally by using military power or violence cannot be accepted. UN Security Council issued various decisions concerning the invasion of Azerbaijan. With an 882 Resolution UN underlined the need for respecting territorial integrity and sovereign rights of all countries in the region. The same resolution warned the parties that internationally recognized territorial boundaries shouldn't be changed and asked those intruders to withdraw their military power which invaded Kelbejer and other parts of Azeri soil. After the invasion of Agdam, the 853 Resolution emphasized the withdrawal of invaders. UN Security Council 874 and 884 Resolutions have parallel points. Though changing natural borders is prohibited by international law it seems that the international society can't act together to finish the Armenian invasion of Azeri soil<sup>208</sup>.

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict affected not only the Azerbaijanian-Armenian relations but also almost all major projects including the BTC pipeline and Russian-Georgian-Turkish-Iranian foreign policy dynamics through the period since the 1990s. In the Caucasus one of the greatest threats for international security would be caused by the possibility that major states become part of a military conflict taking place in the region. Through Nagorno-Karabakh conflict there was such a risk. At the time, Iran and Turkey acted rather cautiously not to upset Russia. Because, a possible Turkish interference would cause a Third World War<sup>209</sup>.

Strategically Nagorno-Karabakh region cannot be said to be very important. Because it has no natural resources and no international transportation route passes over the region. In fact Armenia itself could be defined as strategically important before the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict broke out. Because, to transport Azerbaijani oil to the western markets the shortest route would pass over Armenian territory. But, Armenia preferred not to cooperate with the neighboring countries

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<sup>208</sup> Nazmi Gül ve Gökçen Ekici, 'Azerbaycan ve Tükiye ile Bitmeyen Kan Davası Ekseninde Ermenistan'ın Dış Politikası', **Avrasya Dosyası Azerbaycan Özel**, Cilt:7, Sayı:1, İkbahar 2001, s. 27.

<sup>209</sup> Nesib Nesibli, 'Azerbaycan'ın Milli Kimlik Sorunu', **Avrasya Dosyası Azerbaycan Özel**, Cilt:7, Sayı:1, İkbahar 2001, s. 43.

during the construction period of the BTC pipeline. As a result, Armenia lost its geographically advantageous position. The country emphasized its anti-Turkism policies. The BTC on the other hand continued its route over Georgia with some degree of increase in its finance. The route was lengthened but the parties in the construction of the project preferred security over economy<sup>210</sup>.

The deadlock in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict obfuscates regional cooperation. Armenia's relentless uncompromising policies and its irredentist strategy against its neighbors results in isolation for this country. Armenia is excluded from the project of carrying Caspian energy resources to the West. Also, the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey railroad project which would connect Caucasus with the West Armenia is also excluded from this project<sup>211</sup>.

With similar isolationist policies Armenia is doomed to be dependent on Russia both economically and politically today. Azerbaijan on the hand tries to attain a better economic and political stance in the international society with its vast energy resources and its producer position in the BTC pipeline project.

Probably Azerbaijan is the most motivated country in the region to solve this conflict through the long-lasting deadlock. Because, it has to deal with a massive refugee problem and with 20% of its territory invaded it wants to re-build its territorial integrity. With this aim in mind, Azerbaijan built closer relations with all countries that can be effective to solve this problem. It has been a devoted US ally in the region and has always seemed willing to develop close relations with Israel. It has always cared about pursuing balanced relations with Russia. And as a recent development, according to a Washington Institute report, Azerbaijan's final political act is seeking even Iranian support to deal with the conflict<sup>212</sup>.

The Western world and the UN want the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to be solved. The US wants to solve Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Because, in this way America will ensure stability and security in the Caucasus through building regional

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<sup>210</sup> Alaeddin Yalçınkaya, **Kafkasya'da Siyasi Gelişmeler Etnik Düğümden Küresel Kördüğöme**, 1nci Baskı, Lalezar Kitabevi, Ankara, 2006, s. 242.

<sup>211</sup> Emin Gürses, 'Kafkasya'da Uluslararası Rekabet', **Avrasya Dosyası**, Cilt:7, Sayı:1, Ankara, 2001, s. 49.

<sup>212</sup> Soner Çağaptay and Alexander Murinson. 'Good Relations between Azerbaijan and Israel: A Model for Other Muslim States in Eurasia?' The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, PolicyWatch: 982, March 30, 2005. [www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf.php?template=C05&CID=2287](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf.php?template=C05&CID=2287), (03.03.2009).

peace. Also, the US will have the opportunity to weaken Russian influence in Caucasus. Both the US and EU support peace talks between sides and wish stability to be settled in the region. Because, they care about rich energy sources and the Caucasus means an alternative source for the Western world in addition to the Middle East. The US continues its support to Aliev government despite human rights violations in the country and the allegation that elections were manipulated.

It can be said that Israel has always supported Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict against Armenia. This support has reasons. First, Israel has strategic concerns regarding Azerbaijan and Caspian basin natural sources. With its support to Azerbaijan, Israel considers that it will gain easier access to these energy reserves. Second, historically Israeli and Armenian relations have never been warm if not cool. This has various reasons according to Sedat Laçiner. He argues that there are seven main reasons for the Armenian mistrust towards the Jews: 'historical reasons, religious reasons, the Armenian Western skepticism and the Armenian isolationist perception, the impact of Israeli-Turkish friendship on Armenia, Azerbaijani oils, Israel and the American Jewish lobby, and finally Israeli attitude towards the Armenian allegations<sup>213</sup>.

When it comes to focus on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Sedat Laçiner argues that during the Soviet Union there was a rather liberal and tolerant atmosphere for different ethnic and religious backgrounds in Nagorno-Karabakh. Jews were among those who enjoyed this freedom. Many Jews escaping from anti-Semitism in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus flooded to Nagorno-Karabakh. But, during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict anti-Semitism emerged as part of rising nationalism among Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result, many Jews in Nagorno-Karabakh emigrated through 1990s<sup>214</sup>.

However, Israel's main concern with the region depends on petro-economic reasons. In addition to Israelis, Jewish businessmen living America have always considered Azerbaijan a new 'Kuwait' for their energy interests. To reach to Azerbaijan sources the best policy would be having excellent relations with Azerbaijan, the main enemy of Armenia. In fact, Armenia with its small size,

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<sup>213</sup> Sedat Laciner, "Armenia's Jewish Skepticism and Its Impact on Armenia-Israel Relations," **The Journal of Turkish Weekly**, Oct. 11, 2004, p. 49.

<sup>214</sup> Sedat Laciner, "Armenia's Jewish...", p. 50.

isolationist policies and no-natural resources could provide no chances for cooperation with Israel and American Jews. As a result, the American Jewish lobby has always been rather close to Azerbaijan. Some Jewish lobbies struggled enormously to invalidate Section 907 of the US Foreign assistance legislation which limited the US aid to Azerbaijan due to Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

With the influence of strong Armenian Lobby, 907 Freedom Support Act declared that the US would not help Azerbaijan economically unless the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was solved. As a result, Azerbaijan received no monetary aid while Armenia was given 1 billion \$ aid through the years in 1990s<sup>215</sup>. The act called Azerbaijan an aggressor although 20% of its soil was occupied by Armenia and prohibited direct American aid to Azerbaijan. In autumn 2001<sup>216</sup>, Jewish organizations declared their opposition to Section 907<sup>217</sup>. The Jewish lobbies supported the view that Azerbaijan is a close ally of Israel, the US and the West and must be supported by the US. With the help of effective Jewish organizations, Turkey and Zbigniew Brzezinski's personal efforts the Congress members are persuaded to lift the Section 907 in Freedom Support Act. Jane Hunter argues that Armenia considered such Turkish, Israeli efforts as a conspiracy against Armenia and nationalist Armenians blamed local Jews as representatives of Israel<sup>218</sup>.

One of the reasons for Israeli support to Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be related with Israel's own regional problems with its neighbors in its vicinity. Israel had to fight against five invading Arab armies against its independence through its history. At the moment, Israel is technically in a war against Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Daily clashes are stopped through cease-fire deals. Similar things can be said about Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is surrounded by a long lasting military conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Today, part of Azeri soil is invaded by Armenia<sup>219</sup>.

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<sup>215</sup> Hasan Kanbolat, 'Ahıska Bölgesi ve Ermeni Oluşumu', **Bizim Ahıska**, Ocak-Mart, Sayı:2, 2005, s. 61.

<sup>216</sup> Ayhan Ozer, 'The Armenian-Nazi Collaboration in WWII' , [www.ataa.org/ataa/ref/arm\\_nazi.html](http://www.ataa.org/ataa/ref/arm_nazi.html), (21.09.2009).

<sup>217</sup> Araz Aslanlı, 'ABD'de Adaletsizliğe Verilen Ara: 907 Sayılı Ek Madde'nin Uygulanmasının Durdurulması', **Stratejik Analiz**, Vol. 2, No. 21, January 2002, pp. 55-62.

<sup>218</sup> Jane Hunter, 'Israel and Turkey: Arms for Azerbaijan', **Middle East International**, 23 October 1992, p. 12.

<sup>219</sup> Jane Hunter, "Israel and Turkey...", p. 13.

For Israel, building cordial relations with Azerbaijan was expected to yield positive outcomes for Israel. But, Israel also had to take into consideration the possibility to alienate Armenia. Azerbaijan expected Israel's support at least neutrality in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Israel had a chance to sell arms to Armenia. But, it preferred not to be part of such a deal. Because of such Israeli attitudes some analysts prefer to state that rather than openly supporting Azerbaijan in the conflict, Israel avoided from taking an overt stand in the conflict<sup>220</sup>. Some analysts on the other hand, argue that Israel supplied Stinger missiles to Azerbaijan during the conflict<sup>221</sup>.

For Azerbaijan, Israeli support for Azeri policies is important. Because, Azerbaijanian policy-makers hope that Israeli support would affect the rather powerful Jewish lobbies in the US. In this way, Azeri demands would gain support in US politics. Former Azeri foreign minister Hasan Hasanov underlines their expectations from Israel openly stating that 'We don't conceal that we rely on the Israeli lobby in the US'.<sup>222</sup>

Azerbaijan expects that Israeli lobby can provide a counterweight against strong Armenian lobby in the US to defend Azerbaijani rights concerning Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Abulfas Elchibey the first President of Azerbaijan says: 'Israel could help Azerbaijan in [the] Karabakh problem by convincing the Americans to stop the Armenians.'<sup>223</sup> Azerbaijani foreign policy makers were perfectly aware of the fact that they had to increase the number of their supporters in the US. Because, at the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, the US Congress imposed sanctions on Azerbaijan with the effect of the Armenian lobby. Azerbaijani generals on the other hand believed that the weak Azerbaijani army could be developed with the help of Israeli technologic and military help against a stronger Armenian army. Because, Azerbaijani defeat in Nagorno-Karabakh was partly related with ineffective military power of the country. As a result, Israel sold Azerbaijan modern military equipments

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<sup>220</sup> Jacob Abadi, 'Israel's Quest for Normalization ...', p. 56.

<sup>221</sup> Soner Çağaptay and Alexander Murinson, 'Good Relations Between...'

<sup>222</sup> Svante E. Cornell, 'Geopolitics And Strategic Alignments In The Caucasus And Central Asia' **Journal Of International Affairs**, June - August 1999 Volume IV - Number 2  
<http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume4/June-August1999/cornell.pdf>, (02.01.2009).

<sup>223</sup> Sedat Laciner, "Armenia's Jewish Skepticism and ...", p. 91.

including advanced aviation, antitank, artillery and anti-infantry weapon systems following the conflict<sup>224</sup>.

### 3.3.2. SOUTH OSSETIA CONFLICT AND ENERGY SECURITY

Georgia is one of the regional countries in South Caucasus which benefited from the development of energy resources in the Caspian basin. But, right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, ethnic tensions rose in Caucasus and Georgia has become one of the states facing this problem. Right now there are two regional conflicts in Georgia; South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In fact, these conflicts hinder Georgia to be part of further energy projects in South Caucasus. Below an analysis of South Ossetia conflict will follow.

South Ossetia is officially an autonomous region in Georgia. Its surface area is 3900 km<sup>2</sup>. It has one of the smallest rates of population density in Caucasus. According to 1993 statistics there were only 70.000 people living in South Ossetia. Around 68% of the population is composed of Ossetians. Other than Ossetians Russian, Georgian, Armenian and Jewish people live in the region.

The 'frozen' conflict in South Ossetia since 1992 suddenly arose the attention of the international agenda last year on August 8, 2008. The story of the conflict dates back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On May 24, 1918 Georgia gave equal social and political rights to all minorities living in the country. But, Georgians decided to close the regional parliaments in 1919. Georgian rule in South Ossetia ended on February 25, 1921 with the entrance of the Red Army to the region. Later South Ossetia is included in Georgia with the name 'South Ossetia Autonomous Region' in 1922. During the Soviet Union rule, the region underwent through a 'stable' period. But, right after the collapse of the Union, the region witnessed many upheavals aiming independence.

South Ossetians first want to gain their independence and then unite with North Ossetia. 90% of South Ossetians carry Russian passports<sup>225</sup>. Following some

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<sup>224</sup> Jane's Defense Weekly, Oct. 16, 1996, [www.janes.com/.../Janes-Defence-Weekly.../USA-S-CW-DESTRUCTION-FACILITY-GOES-ON-LINE.html](http://www.janes.com/.../Janes-Defence-Weekly.../USA-S-CW-DESTRUCTION-FACILITY-GOES-ON-LINE.html), (02.02.2009).

<sup>225</sup> Yalçın Sarıkaya, 'Rusya Federasyonu'nun Gürcistan Politikası', (Der.) Osman Metin Öztürk, Yalçın Sarıkaya, **Uluslar arası Mücadelenin Yeni Odağı Karadeniz**, Platin Yayınevi, Ankara, 2005, s. 63.

military clashes between Georgia and South Ossetia during 1992-1994 period, an official cease-fire was declared on July 14, 1992. With this cease-fire, a 4000 unit of peace-keeping force composed of Russian, Georgian and Ossetian troops entered the region.

This cease-fire was not a long lasting one. In 2008, Georgia claimed that South Ossetian troops are bombarding Georgian villages. As a result Georgia entered into South Ossetian territory claiming self-defense.

Russian reaction to the Georgian military action was rather radical. On 08.08.2008 a massive bloc of Russian troops entered South Ossetia. Georgian troops withdrew. Russian President Medvedev declared that 'Russia wouldn't respect territorial integrity of Georgia. Also he pointed to Georgian President Michael Saakashvili that 'He is politically a dead man'<sup>226</sup>.

In fact Russia's such radical reaction was a surprise to almost all countries in the world. At the time, the attention of the world was focused on the opening ceremony of 2008 Beijing Olympics. Even Georgian President Michael Saakashvili was in a fitness spa in Italy. Russian PM Vladimir Putin and the US President George Bush were in Beijing to attend the ceremonies.

The fact that the Russian military invaded Gori which is only 80-100 km away from BTC and Shahdeniz pipelines and Georgia is surrounded by Russia from Black Sea has a deeper meaning than simply symbolic. And recent events in South Georgia should be analyzed from a perspective including Kosovo's independence, energy security, and Georgia's dreams for NATO membership.

But, it should be underestimating Russian foreign policy to expect that Russia directly damages BTC pipeline. Russia's entrance into Gori is basically to challenge the US and EU in the region. Russia, as the main natural gas supplier of European countries would not prefer to be seen more aggressive than it really is. Because, Moscow perfectly knows that with such an image the EU will look for alternative energy sources to supply its energy needs. In the long term it will mean

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<sup>226</sup> 'Medvedev'den Saakashvili'ye Sert Ültimatom', Hürriyet Gazetesi, 13.08.2008.

that Russia will lose its energy market. Moscow at the time was trying to only intimidate its rivals and in the long term it will most probably stabilize.

Through the last five years, Georgia took rather successful steps to invite foreign investors to its soil. Against rather effective Russian embargo it managed to economically develop. Through this period, BTC, Shahdeniz and Baku-Supsa pipelines were positively affective. But, with the recent tensions in South Ossetia, Georgia faces some difficulties. Despite positive developments, Georgia is still the weakest chain of East-West Energy Corridor. In fact, Sedat Laçiner argues that in a country the increasing number of pipelines means further national unification and peace. If a country's unity is wanted to be preserved the policy would be to build additional energy transportation routes as much as possible<sup>227</sup>. This can be theoretically true but in Georgian case it seems that there are other factors to be taken into consideration. The same pipelines can be target of major powers and ethnic tensions can be provoked to make the country instable. Similarly Russia is uncomfortable with the Western supported BTC in Georgia and it uses every chance to increase tension in the region. For example, in South Ossetian case Russian pretext was saving the lives of a Russian minority residing in South Ossetia. The result of Russian reaction to South Ossetian-Georgian conflict was invasion of Georgian territory by Russia.

The BTC supplies 1% of overall global energy needs by producing more than 1 million barrels/day. When operated professionally, pipelines are the most secure oil transportation means. But, with 08.08.2008 incursion of Russia into Georgia, Georgia undergoes through difficult times. But, if somehow Georgia domestically experiences conflicts and faces with political and military tensions with Russia once again, this time operating the BTC safely would be a problem. For example, following the clashes in South Ossetia Ravnag Abdulayev the Azerbaijani Energy Transportations CEO made a declaration and told that due to an explosion which took place in the Turkish part of the BTC pipeline on August 5, 2008 Azerbaijan had decided to export its oil through the Baku-Supsa pipeline but the recent ethnic clashes in South Ossetia caused an insecure environment in Georgia and made it impossible to continue pumping oil through Batum and Kulevi ports and that's why Azerbaijan had to use Russian route until the security of the BTC pipeline was

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<sup>227</sup> Sedat Laçiner, "Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliği", Türk Harb-İş Dergisi, Sayı: 219, Şubat 2006, s. 49.



provided<sup>228</sup>. As seen from this example, the security of BTC is a highly delicate case and the producer and consumer sides of the energy sources don't have a tendency to tolerate cuts or even delays in the flow of energy.

BTC is simply one of the first chains of East-West Energy Corridor. The main aim is to connect Kazakh oil and Turkmen natural gas by passing over Caspian Sea. But, if in the long term, Georgia will not be able to guarantee the security of the region, multinational corporations and Western countries most probably will not be willing to invest in such a contentious geography.

To understand Israeli position in relation to South Ossetia conflict first Israeli-Georgian relations should be reviewed. Israel's interest in Georgia is based on two main issues: selling arms to Georgia and using the BTC pipeline to reach to energy resources of the Caspian basin.

Israel has been selling weapons to Georgia since 2000 and the sponsor of Georgia is the US in this deal. Israeli military advisors whose numbers changed from 100-1000 have been active to build the military infrastructure of Georgian army completely based on Israeli model. Also, it's argued that there are two airbases in Georgia which can be used by Israeli forces against a possible Iranian threat. Israel has always remained a close ally of Georgia. Though it displeased Russia, Israel continued to sell weapons to Georgia. Russian General Anatoly Negovitsyn says Israel provided Georgia with "eight types of military vehicles, explosives, landmines and special explosives".<sup>229</sup>

Israel's close military relations with Georgia can be related to the US strategy in the Caucasus. It's obvious that Israel is part of Western bloc and close ally of especially the US in the region. In this situation, it seems that the US didn't prefer to directly involve in Georgia because it didn't want to increase the tension in relations with Russia. The US attempts in the region which can be cited as the Missile Shield initiative, supporting Georgian membership to NATO and efforts to weaken the Iranian effect in the region together with Israel and fighting against terrorism in Central Asia and Caucasus had already caused displeasure among Russians. For

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<sup>228</sup> 'BTC Boru Hattı Tehlikede mi?', Hürriyet Gazetesi, 10.09.2008.

<sup>229</sup> Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Israel of the Caucasus?" **The Washington Times**, 09 April, 2008, <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2008/sep/04/israel-of-the-caucasus/>, (08.05.2009).

all these reasons, the US seems to have granted the chance for Israel to use its capabilities in the Caucasus in the name of the US<sup>230</sup>.

The second reason affecting Israeli interest in Georgia is based on energy resources and their transportation. Israeli investors acting together with multinational oil giants are interested in pipelines transporting oil from Azerbaijan and gas from Turkmenistan through Georgia. The main feature of these pipelines is that they all bypass Russian territory. Oil and gas resources currently reach to Ceyhan. Israel expects that these supplies can later be transported to Israeli port of Ashkelon and the Red Sea port of Eilat through pipelines built under water between Turkey (Ceyhan) and Israel.

Through such future plans Israel aims to both support its economy with secure energy resources and then to sell these supplies to Far East through Indian Ocean. Currently Israeli companies are seeking the means to get the approval of EU and the US. It seems that Israeli investors will not face much difficulty because the EU wants to reduce its dependency on Russian oil and gas. And the US is aiming to decrease its import from the Gulf region in the following years ahead. Potential consumers like India, China and Japan have positive attitudes towards Israel's such energy plans.

Concerning Israeli interests in Georgia it wouldn't be a surprise to expect that Israel –as part of Western world- supported Georgia in its struggle against Russia concerning South Ossetia. For example, it is reported that Georgian Minister Temur Yakobashvili says on August 9, 2008 one day after Georgia attacked South Ossetia:

*“The Israelis should be proud of themselves for the Israeli training and education received by the Georgian soldiers...”*<sup>231</sup>

In parallel lines a Swiss-based Israeli journalist Shraga Elam argues that Israel, with the US approval, was behind the Georgian attack against South Ossetia.

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<sup>230</sup> Abdel Aziz Shady, 'The Israeli Infiltration in the Caucasus' 04 Sep 2008 <http://www.ecssr.ac.ae/CDA/en/FeaturedTopics/DisplayTopic/0,1670,902-0-129,00.html>, (23.02.2009).

<sup>231</sup> Hesham Tillawi, 'Georgia: Israel's Home Sweet Home' [www.ccun.org](http://www.ccun.org), (24, 08. 2008).

“There is an obvious Israeli involvement in the present conflict between Georgia and Russia,” Elam said<sup>232</sup>.

South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoyti on the other hand, asserts that the US, Israel and Ukraine are responsible for the conflict in the region. Kokoyti’s claim is that these countries continue to support armaments to Georgia even after 08.08.2008 Russian incursion to South Ossetia. According to Kokeyti, Russia is right to defend South Ossetia because first Georgia started the attacks.

As seen from both of these statements although it’s not officially declared and proved Israel has some sort of presence in the region and favors Georgia against Russia. But, Israeli support is not in an overt fashion. Because, Israel’s counterpart and ‘rival’ is a potential superpower Russia in this South Ossetian case. And none of the Israeli leaders would prefer to openly oppose a super power which both has vast amounts of natural resources and is very influential in the region. On the other hand, Israel has rather close economic relations with Russia. For example, Israel receives 80% of its energy supplies from Russia and old Soviet states. But, the same Israel fears that Russia may provide military equipments to Iran and Syria against Israel. This is a rather risky situation for Israeli national security. As a result, Israel followed a pro-active policy and it withdrew its citizens, military experts and businessmen just a week before the 08.08.2008 Russian incursion started into Georgia<sup>233</sup>. The aim of Israel was to divert attention from Israeli presence in Georgia both economically and military-wise before the crisis took place.

The recent conflict in Georgia had important implications for Israel’s energy security because it was near the BTC and South Caucasus pipelines which are all very critical for transporting natural resources to Israel. By various analysts it was argued that Russia was sending a message to the Western world about who had the means to control the natural resources of the whole region including Central Asia and the Caspian basin.

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<sup>232</sup> Yusuf Fernandez, ‘Israeli Involvement in the Georgian-Russian War’, 17.08.2008, [http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ge3-\\_Israeli\\_involvement\\_in\\_the\\_Georgian-Russian\\_war.pdf](http://www.gab-ibn.com/IMG/pdf/Ge3-_Israeli_involvement_in_the_Georgian-Russian_war.pdf), (07.06. 2009).

<sup>233</sup> Alexander Murinson, ‘Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel Relations: The Energy Factor’, **MERIA**, Volume 12, No. 3 - September 2008, Article 4 of 7.

## CONCLUSION

This study has underlined that in the post-Cold War era Israel's energy policies underwent through a major shift. During the Cold War, Israel imported its energy needs from the North Sea, Africa, Mexico and Egypt. Yet, in the post-Cold War era, Israel increased its energy imports from Russia and old Soviet states to the extent of almost 80%. Moreover, Israel currently imports 20% of its oil needs from Azerbaijan.

Thus, particularly Azerbaijan is considered as an important country for Israel in the Caucasus. Israeli foreign policy-makers in a way consider Azerbaijan a pivot country for Israel in the region, because they think that when bilateral relations are improved Israel will attain better means to carry the Caspian basin resources to its territory.

As argued in this study Israel's main concern in the region is based on two energy pipelines in Caucasus. The American supported BTC pipeline transports oil to Ceyhan from Caucasus, and Israel plans to extend this pipeline to its Eilat port in Israel. The Russian supported Blue Stream pipeline carries Russian gas into the depth of Anatolia and Israel again wants to extend the pipeline first to Ceyhan and then to Israeli territory through an underwater pipeline project.

It is found out that these projects are supported by the Western powers due to strategic concerns rather than economic factors. Yet, Russia also wants to strengthen its monopoly on natural gas markets through increasing the number of its consumer countries and extending the scope of its pipelines. The US and EU on the other hand, want to weaken the influence of Russia in Caucasus. The BTC pipeline is only a chain of further pipelines projected in the future aiming this ultimate target of building more and more pipelines in the region.

As a conclusion Israel's stance concerning pipelines is highly pragmatic. In fact, it's a staunch ally of the Western world, but it also has deep economic relations with Russia especially in energy issues since Ariel Sharon government of 2001. With its pro-active energy policies, Israel wants to secure its energy supplies for the

future. Even from today Israel's energy security is guaranteed at least until 2020, through various deals especially with Egypt and Russia.

Secondly, from the analysis of Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts, it is concluded that although there are some state and non-state actors to cause risks for the security of pipelines, the highest risk factor to cause disruptions in the flow of natural resources in the region is the ethnic instability. In addition, non-state actors like Al-Qaeda has always remained a nuisance in the region especially following 9/11 events. Three major attempted attacks took place in the region targeting pipelines so far. But, all of them failed and it seems that a terrorist attack is unlikely to cause a major burden on energy pipelines.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that regional instabilities and ethnic clashes have the highest potential to cause risks for the security of pipeline routes in the South Caucasus. The possible risks to be caused through these conflicts seem to be limited with temporary delays rather than physical threats or continuous cuts on the flow of resources to international markets. Since Israel sides with the Western bloc, it supports Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Georgia in South Ossetia conflict. Yet, Israel's support to these countries is not openly declared, official support. Officially, Israel retains its neutrality concerning the regional powers. Thus it is concluded that Israel should pursue proactive policies to solve regional conflicts in Caucasus, because these conflicts have the potential to harm its energy security in the Caspian basin. For example, Israel may help to democratic and economic growth of both Azerbaijan and Georgia together with the US and EU. As democratized and economically developed countries, these two countries will further integrate with the Western world and strengthen their position against regional powers like Iran and Russia. In this way, the burdens on transporting natural resources to the Western markets will be eased and Israel for example will be positively affected from the resulting situation.

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