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***New Energy Order Politics Neopolitics: From Geopolitics to Energeopolitics***

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# New Energy Order Politics *Neopolitics*: From Geopolitics to *Energeopolitics*

D. Ülke ARIBOĞAN ve Mert BILGIN\*

## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on changing understandings of geopolitics from classical, modern and critical meanings with regard to the role of energy. It suggests that oil and natural gas will maintain their significance throughout next decades despite an increased use of nuclear and renewable sources. Conflict and cooperation will likely include more territorial issues among production, transport and consumption. The paper first elaborates the permanent/continuing and temporary/changing dimensions of geopolitics with a special emphasis on energy. It then identifies the interaction between energy and geopolitics through the concept of *energeopolitics*. Finally, it focuses on the new energy order (N.E.O.), examining the geopolitical significance of hydrocarbons, and defines the principle state and non-state actors with their limits and capabilities regarding Eurasia, the Caspian region, the Middle East and Africa. The paper finally shows how a new energy order is emerging through *neopolitics* (new energy order politics) of global and regional powers such as the USA, the EU, Russia, Iran, Turkey, China and India.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, Energy, Oil, Gas, Energeopolitics, Neopolitics.

## Yeni Enerji Düzeni Siyaseti (*Neopolitik*): “Jeopolitik”ten “Enerjeopolitik”e

### ÖZET

Bu çalışma jeopolitikin klasikten, modern ve eleştirele uzanan değişen anlamını enerjinin rolüne atıfla ele almaktadır. Makale önümüzdeki on yıllarda daha fazla kullanılmaya namzet nükleer ve yenilenebilir kaynaklara rağmen, petrol ve doğal gazın öneminin süreceğine işaret etmektedir. Çatışma ve işbirliği; üretim, taşıma ve tüketim arasında daha fazla sınırsal özellik kazanma eğilimindedir. Makale öncelikle jeopolitikin sabit/devam eden ve geçici/değişen boyutlarını enerjiye atfen tanımlamaktadır. Daha sonra, enerji ve jeopolitik arasındaki ilişkisellik *enerjeopolitik* kavramı üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Makale akabinde *new energy order* (N.E.O.) olarak tanımlanan yeni enerji düzeninde hidrokarbonların jeopolitik anlamını incelemekte; devlet ve devlet dışı temel aktörleri Avrasya, Hazar, Orta Doğu ve Afrika'daki limit ve becerilerine göre saptamaktadır. Çalışma son olarak yeni enerji düzeni siyasetinin (*neopolitics*, *neopolitik*) başta ABD, AB, Rusya, Çin, Hindistan, Türkiye ve İran olmak üzere, küresel ve bölgesel güçler nezdinde nasıl oluştuğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Jeopolitik, Enerji, Petrol, Gaz, Enerjeopolitik, Neopolitik.

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## Introduction

The close link between energy and geopolitics characterized the power politics of the British Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with their ability to extensively use and control coal.<sup>1</sup> The US, which benefited from oil to feed its growth and controlled oil fields to sustain its power, dominated the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>

At the close of the 20th century, however, a new energy paradigm forged by technological advances, resource and environmental constraints and socioeconomic demands, has begun to emerge, leading to a shift from fossil fuels to virtually limitless flow of renewable energy (sun, wind, water, wood, the earth's heat) and hydrogen which in fact is the most abundant resource in the World.<sup>3</sup>

The shift from fossil fuels to sustainable resources might decrease territorial applications of geopolitics. Yet, in this article, we suggest the opposite by showing how spatial geopolitics will continue to be effective in various types of conflict and cooperation among the main actors of energy. We support the ideas that: 1- The shift to post-oil energy regimes will necessitate a transition period in which oil and natural gas will continue their significances; 2- A global shift to renewable energy necessitate the full commitment of both developed and developing countries which will be difficult to attain throughout the transition period based on the rise of some countries from the second group, such as Brazil, Russia, India and China; 3- The USA and the EU are confronted by the rise of alternative powers at global (mainly Russia, China, India) and regional scales (Iran and Venezuela) which, in turn, makes Turkey a *strategic regional power*.

Within this perspective, energy appears as the latest generator of spatial geopolitics by bringing back the significance of territory and relative locations in terms of hydrocarbon resources and transport facilities. This is why there is a need for further understanding and conceptualization of the link between energy and geopolitics: That is to say, *energeopolitics* as already discussed by Arboğan<sup>4</sup>; as well as the will and capabilities of big and rising powers to consolidate their authorities by new energy order (N.E.O.) politics (*neopolitics*) as recently

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, New York Vintage Books, 1987, p. 151-215; Jean-Marie Chevalier, *Les Grandes Batailles de l'Énergie*, Paris, Gallimard, 2004, p. 83-94.

<sup>2</sup> Chevalier, *Les Grandes Batailles*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Flavin and Seth Dunn, "A New Energy Paradigm for the 21st Century", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1999, p.167-168.

<sup>4</sup> For Arboğan's approach of "energeopolitics", See, Deniz Ülke Arboğan, *Geleceğin Haritası*, İstanbul, Profil Yayıncılık, 2008, p. 151-153.

offered by Bilgin.<sup>5</sup> In this article, we aim to combine these two approaches not only in order to indicate the constant and changing dynamics of global energy regimes, but also to show how they affect geopolitical theory. This is why we begin by discussing the theoretical move of geopolitics from primordial and classical perspectives to modern, spatial and critical approaches. We then identify the interaction between energy and geopolitics through the concept of *energeopolitics*, elaborate the basic premises of new energy order (N.E.O.) and discuss the limits and capabilities of selected actors in terms of *neopolitics*.

## **Geopolitics and its Contemporary Implications**

The influence of geography (the characteristics of the Earth *vis-à-vis* humans and other living things on life systems) is an undeniable fact for geopolitics, which combines geographic premises with international studies to indicate territorial, land and resource factors that affect power and wealth distribution at global and inter-national as well as regional and local levels. “Geopolitics is not a term for the general linkage of politics to geography. It should rather be understood as a conceptual and terminological tradition in the study of the political and strategic relevance of geography.”<sup>6</sup> Within this context, geopolitics in certain cases appears not as an immanently meaningful term but as a historically ambiguous and unstable concept.<sup>7</sup> This is why a study on the link between geopolitics and energy should start with a discussion of the lexicon and contextual meaning of geopolitics and focus on dominant characteristics, some remaining constant and others changing over time.

Early geopolitical thinking can be traced back to Aristotle, Strabo, Bodin, Montesquieu, Kant and Hegel, whereas 19<sup>th</sup> century precursors include Humboldt, Guyot, Buckle and Ritter, while the most influential forefathers of modern period were Ratzel, Mackinder, Kjellén, Bowman and Mahan.<sup>8</sup> Primordial political geography suggests that individuals as well as societal culture, production relations, economic behaviors, traditions and beliefs are influenced by geographic conditions, including climate, from which neither inter-personal nor inter-national relations can be totally detached. It is given that the influence of geographies on people is more effective than the ability of the

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<sup>5</sup> For Bilgin’s approach of “new energy order (N.E.O.) politics” (Neopolitics, *Neopolitik* in Turkish) see, Mert Bilgin, “Energy Supply Security Problems and Alternative Solutions”, Working Paper, *Turkey’s Strategic Vision in 2023 Project*, Istanbul, TASAM, 17 September 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Oyvind Osterud, “The Uses and Abuses of Geopolitics”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1988, p. 191.

<sup>7</sup> Gearoid Tuathail, “Problematizing Geopolitics: Survey, Statesmanship and Strategy”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 19, No. 13, 1994, p. 259.

<sup>8</sup> Saul Bernard Cohen, *Geopolitics of the World System*, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, p. 12.

self or the concerned actor to act freely without being affected by external influences or by neglecting them. According to the classical approach, states are also subject to geographic conditions, in which a certain amount of people live within different regimes and systems, and need to consider continuities and changes in conditions with regard to their capabilities-discapabilities as well as advantages-disadvantages while deciding how to interact with others in the pursuit of security, power or wealth.

Classical geopolitics, which dominated the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, connected inter-state relations to their global mapping and access to the resources, which appeared as the primary motivator of competition. “In the wake of the tremendous scramble among the Great Powers for their own imperial real estate on the African continent, the surface of the world political map appeared for the first time to be relatively occupied.”<sup>9</sup> Classification of sea or land power with regard to global distribution of oceans and continents was taken as the basis of international relations. Modern schools of spatial geopolitics continued this traditional approach throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but put increased emphasis on relativity of location as a generator of conflict.<sup>10</sup> “Geo-politicians” such as Halford Mackinder, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Nicholas Spykman and James Burnham combined brilliant analyses of past events with remarkable predictions of future developments, including the emergence of the North Atlantic Alliance in 1949 (already foreseen by Mackinder in the 1920s), the undermining of Soviet power in Eastern and Central Europe by the Reagan Administration’s policies that were very similar to those proposed by Burnham in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>11</sup> The 1960s and 1970s would be characterized by the geopolitical premises already set in motion by modern approaches.

Critical geopolitics, which undervalued the role of geography, invited growing attention after the 1980s. Derridean deconstructionism became effective in the textual deconstruction of geopolitics to reflect theoretically the following three questions: 1- the meaning of geopolitics; 2- the purpose of critical geopolitics; 3- the problem of the geopolitical gaze.<sup>12</sup> The search for answers to these questions created two intellectual elements which distinguished critical geopolitics from classical and spatial ones: “The first was an explicit suspicion of

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<sup>9</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> John Agnew, “Disputing the Nature of the International: Geographies of Sameness and Difference”, Neil L. Waters (Ed.), *Beyond the Area Studies Wars: Toward a New International Studies*, Hanover, UPNE, 2000, p. 142.

<sup>11</sup> Francis P. Sempa, *Geopolitics: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2002, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics*, p. 19.

state power, particularly that of the most powerful states, such as the United States (US). The second was a joint focus on language and practices of state elites and their supporting as not only suggestive, but determinative of activities carried on in the name of the state.”<sup>13</sup>

A diversification of geopolitics took place along with systemic and structural changes. During the Cold War, it was the American policy makers who defined the framework of geopolitics in terms of containment policy as an instrument for blocking Soviet expansion towards the south. So while labeling the Cold War a geopolitical conflict with its predominant feature the US-Soviet rivalry over ideology and economic dominance as well as over territory, maritime and airspace, the term geopolitics became a substantial element in defining the struggle between the so-called East and West.<sup>14</sup> The Cold War ended after the collapse of the Soviet Union through the temporary undervaluing of geopolitics, which would split around conflicting arguments.

Those who emphasized a transition from modern to post-modern suggested that geopolitics would soon lose its sense.<sup>15</sup> They put forward the term “deterritorialization” to point out how systemic and structural changes (such as the rising speed of transportation, wide ranging spread of information and the detachment of perception from reality through a variety of means of communication) would undermine geopolitical implications. Deterritorialization assumed that the rearranging and restructuring of spatial relations as a consequence of the technological, material and geopolitical transformations of the late twentieth century should bring us a new perspective as territory has lost its significance and power in every day life, leaving its place to culturally contextual and technopolitically contingent territorialities.<sup>16</sup> Expectations for the demise of geopolitics and the rise of economics as a means of mutual gains among the concerned actors were also fed by Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History*, which put forward Western type of democratization and Western understanding of capitalism as the end product of the course of whole history.<sup>17</sup> In the meantime a unique understanding of geopolitics emerged as “neo-geopolitics” which, while activating psychological and cultural dynamics among nations, would arouse sentiments, perceptions and aspirations concerning group

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<sup>13</sup> Agnew, “Disputing the Nature of the International”, p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> Susanne Peters, “The West Against the Rest: Geopolitics After the End of the Cold War”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Winter, 1999, p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> See, Gearoid O. Tuathail, “Borderless Worlds? Problematising Discourses of Deterritorialization”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Autumn 1999, p. 139-140.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, Free Press, 1992.

identity and lifestyle, as well as memories of cross-national and cross-cultural experiences.<sup>18</sup>

“There is considerable intellectual danger in assimilating all geopolitical discourse into an overarching continuity flowing from the Renaissance to the late twentieth century and arbitrarily selecting themes or linguistic forms without attention to contexts (historical and geographical) in which they have arisen.”<sup>19</sup> However, both changing and constant dynamics of the concerned interval take place within a contextual zone corresponding to what appears as *zeitgeist*. Although the geography of a country may appear as a constant factor, the geopolitics of that specific territory varies in time. Therefore, the argument states that there are both permanent/continuing and temporary/changing dimensions within the geopolitics of a given geography.<sup>20</sup> While the permanent characteristics stem from the durable historical experiences and sustaining heritages of the territory itself, the temporary characteristics are cyclical and short-lived.<sup>21</sup>

As to continuing dynamics, which have a symbiotic relationship with contemporary *zeitgeist*, an obvious continuity running through current geopolitical understanding emerges in a number of ways:

1- One is the continuing use of a language of spatial difference expressed in terms of a temporal metaphor (modern/backward); 2- another is the world visualized as a whole as a field of reference for inter-state relations; 3- a third is the exclusive role of territorial states as the actors in the world politics; 4- finally there is the pursuit of primacy by Great Powers as the motivating force behind the world politics.<sup>22</sup>

As to changing dynamics, which have different levels of influence on the concerned actor at a given time and place, fuzziness appears because of the different levels of importance attributed to selected factors. In today’s new world order, specifications of the post-Cold War relationship among geography, power and world order vary considerably as geopolitical visionaries vie with each other to delimit a new geopolitics gathered around three distinct perspectives<sup>23</sup>:

<sup>18</sup> See, Graham Fuller, “The New Mediterranean Security Environment: Turkey, the Gulf and Central Asia”, Ian Lesser and Robert Levine (Eds.), *The Rand Institute Conference on the New Mediterranean Environment: Conference Proceedings*, Santa Monica, Rand, 1993.

See, Deniz Ülke Arıboğan, *Terör: Korku Hali*, İstanbul, Profil Yayıncılık, 2007, p. 112-113.

<sup>19</sup> John A. Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> Deniz Ülke Arıboğan, *Re-visioning Turkey’s Geopolitics: The Determinants of Continuity and Change*, Ortadoğu ve Balkan İncelemeleri Vakfı (OBIV) Yayını, 2003, <http://www.obiv.org.tr/2003/AVRASYA/Uaribogan.pdf>, (Accessed on 24 December 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Agnew, *Geopolitics*, p. 85.

<sup>23</sup> Gearoid O. Tuathail, “Thinking Critically About Geopolitics”, Gearoid O. Tuathail, et. al., (Eds.) *The Geopolitics Reader*, New York, Routledge, 1998, p. 2.

1. For some, the end of the Cold War has allowed the emergence of a new geopolitical order dominated by geo-economic questions and issues, a world where the globalization of economic activity and global flows of trade, investment, commodities and images are re-making states, sovereignty and the geographical structure of the planet.
2. For others, the new geopolitics describes a world dominated no longer by territorial struggles between competing blocs but by emerging transnational problems like terrorism, nuclear proliferation and clashing civilizations.
3. For yet others, the relationship of politics to the Earth is more important than ever, as states and people struggle to deal with environmental degradation, resource depletion, transnational pollution and global warming.<sup>24</sup>

Conflict still exists, however, and will continue to be a significant reality under the given circumstances which obscure clear distinctions between the above-mentioned three perspectives. Mutual economic gains through trade and trans-national cooperation against common environmental threats are likely to increase means of global cooperation. Transnational problems like terrorism, nuclear proliferation and clashing civilizations maintain their influence on spatial power politics. Environmental degradation, resource depletion, transnational pollution and global warming drastically affect the priorities and capabilities of the actors and call for urgent common action. Geopolitical struggle is increasing among the actors that cooperate in certain trans-boundary issues which *per se* become a means of geopolitical maneuvers in many cases. As a matter of fact, permanent/continuing geopolitical factors should be taken into account in addition to temporary/changing dimensions.

Recently, the American financial crises, which boosted in late 2008, revealed how history would go far beyond the limits set by Huntington, and brought out the patent and concealed potential of geopolitics as a means of security, power and wealth. For instance, countries such as China, India and Russia, which ask for a multi-polar world rather than the supremacy of the USA as the dominant super-power, search for ways to recover the negative consequences of the American financial crises to energize economic activity and global flows of trade, investment and commodities. In the meantime, political conflicts and geopolitical moves also characterize the competition among these countries.

Due to many factors, including the break up of the Soviet Empire, large supplies of oil and natural gas in the Caspian Sea region, the nuclear dimension

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



to the India-Pakistan conflict, and the rise of China, this huge region has once again become what Alfred Thayer Mahan called the 'debatable and debated ground': Russia, Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, China, Japan, Korea and the United States have interests that collide in one or more areas of this region.<sup>25</sup>

The New National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation for the period through 2020, prepared under the guidance of the Secretary of the National Security Council Nikolay Patrushev, points out the high likelihood of struggle and military confrontation for the hydrocarbon resources of the world, including the Middle East, the Barents Sea, the Arctic Region, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, this region, which is being conceptualized in terms of European neighborhood, has great significance for the security of the EU not only regarding the expansion of its democratic ideals spotting its will of becoming a global soft power (which again refers to a geopolitical expansion through ideals, namely *geo-identification*) but also regarding its energy security (which for this article takes place within *energeopolitics*).

### From Geopolitics to *Energeopolitics*

The geopolitics of energy will sustain a territorial connotation as long as the need for oil and natural gas maintains its spatial characteristics of conflict and cooperation among concerned state or non-state actors. The relationship among major powers, energy resource countries and other demand-side countries has been characterized by an overwhelming dominance of the first on the second, leaving few rooms for the rest. Daniel Yergin, depicts how oil played a primordial role in shaping power politics and the search for wealth between the 1850s (the era started with the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania) and the 1990s (the era started with the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam's Iraq) and the subsequent intervention by a coalition of international forces led by the USA.<sup>27</sup>

In almost all historical cases, the common interests between great powers, mainly the UK followed by the post-War USA, and multinational companies (MNC) characterized not only the energy regime at the time, but also how power and wealth have been consolidated through oil politics. "The fundamental point is that while the public image of MNC in the *Third World* has remained virtually

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<sup>25</sup> Sempa, *Geopolitics*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Interfax, "New National Security Strategy Coming", *Kommersant*, 12 November 2008, [http://www.kommersant.com/p-13551/r\\_500/national\\_security\\_strategy/](http://www.kommersant.com/p-13551/r_500/national_security_strategy/), (Accessed on 24 December 2008); APA, "Russian National Security Strategy Until 2020: Main Rival is the United States Again in the Next 12 Years", *APA News*, 25 December 2008, <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=94381>, (Accessed on 25 December 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1991.

static...the reality has changed: In the 1950s, the common assumption was that most MNCs were American-owned expressing the US postwar economic and political hegemony throughout the world.”<sup>28</sup> The rise of OPEC showed first the destructive capacities of the major producers (as in the cases of 1973 and 1979 oil crises), then a growing regulatory capacity effective in international prices of oil.

The crime charged against the OPEC members consists in nothing other than their attempt to hold their own in this market, to make money on the energy demand of the capitalistic powers as well, to have a share in the oil conglomerates’ final retail prices and obtained speculative gains, and to draw influence from the economic trends of the worldwide oil business for this purpose.<sup>29</sup>

It is indeed possible to talk about OPEC’s regulatory mechanism which succeeds in determining the prices in a certain range with the partial exception of highly speculative influences that were effective in the first half of 2008 but have lost influence since then. Along with OPEC’s pressure for higher oil prices, how the revenues were used affected the status of certain producer countries. “Western Europe achieved rough parity with the US as the source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); and in the Third World the focus of MNC activity has shifted decisively from “exploitation” of “irreplaceable” reserves of oil and minerals... to investment in manufacturing for re-export or for local consumption.”<sup>30</sup> Having benefited from FDIs and other investment means, producer countries began searching for ways to cope with the pressures evoked by the paradox of plenty.<sup>31</sup>

This picture shows a great shift from the conventional political economy of oil the dominant elements of which, as set by Tanzer’s 1970 study, included:<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> David Fieldhouse, “A New Imperial System? The Role of Multinational Corporations Reconsidered”, Jeffrey A. Frieden and David A. Lake (Eds.), *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*, Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 2000, p.176.

<sup>29</sup> “On the Political Economy of Oil: A Strategic Good and its Price”, *GegenStandpunkt: Politische Vierteljahreszeitschrift 1-01*, Gegenstandpunkt Verlag, Munich, 2002. (English translation available at: <http://www.gegenstandpunkt.com/english/oil.html#ref9>), (Accessed on 20 December 2008).

<sup>30</sup> David Fieldhouse, “A New Imperial System? The Role of Multinational Corporations Reconsidered”, Jeffrey A. Frieden and David A. Lake (Eds.), *International Political Economy: Perspectives on Global Power and Wealth*, Bedford, St. Martin’s Press, 2000, p.176.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, Claudio Bravo-Ortega and Jose de Gregorio, “The Relative Richness of the Poor, Natural Resources, Human Capital, and Economic Growth”, Daniel Lederman and William F. Maloney, *Natural Resources: Neither Curse nor Destiny*, Washington, The World Bank and Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 71-102.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Tanzer, *The Political Economy of International Oil and the Underdeveloped Countries*, London, Temple Smith, 1970.

1. International oil companies.
2. Western home governments of the companies.
3. Oil exporting under-developed countries.
4. The Soviet Union.
5. World Organizations.
6. The oil importing under-developed countries.

The characteristics of these elements are in constant flux, which jeopardizes the will of the USA to sustain a hegemonic order based on its norms and values on the one hand, and the dollar as the major currency of energy trade on the other.

It is critical to start with the role of international oil companies, which increased in number and origin by challenging the privileged status of the USA, which had managed to pursue a common way between MNCs and its vital interests. Today, Western home governments' geopolitical and security interests do not totally coincide with the economic interests of MNCs. In many problematic cases, such as Libya, Iran, Nigeria, Sudan and Latin America, MNCs are keen to develop their energy business with host countries despite the political pressures of their home countries. Consequently, oil exporting countries have more options and advantages to build reciprocity with more advantages when compared to previous hegemonic eras. In the meantime, the disintegration of the USSR did not only introduce the Russian Federation as a major energy actor but also created a further split in the world energy supply system by bringing the Caspian back to the heart of geopolitics.<sup>33</sup> The Russian Federation and Caspian together constitute the second and third pillars of an energy system based at the center of the new geopolitics, which includes the first pillar, the Middle East. "Russia, China and the US all have a stake prospective hydrocarbon reserve (in and around Caspian) to either offset their current Middle East imports, as in the case of China and the US, or control the pipelines needed to move oil and gas from this region as in the case of Russia, China and the US."<sup>34</sup> The need of Western countries for energy not only boosted geopolitical maneuvers (varying from civil society mobilizations as in the cases of Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan to actual use of force as in the cases of Iraq and Georgia) but also increased the costs of keeping resource owner regions

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<sup>33</sup> Mert Bilgin, *Avrasya Enerji Savaşları*, İstanbul, IQ Yayınları, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Rouben Azizian and Elizabeth Van Wie Davis, "Islam Oil and Geopolitics in Central Asia After September 11", in Elizabeth Van Wie Davis and Rouben Azizian (Eds.) *Islam Oil and Geopolitics: Central Asia After September 11*, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield, 2007, p.5.

within the control of one great power. World organizations effective in energy business also increased in number with diversified goals. In addition to OPEC, a wide ranging number of institutions and organizations related to nuclear energy, sustainability and environment became more effective and influential compared to the past. Regarding the status of the oil importing under-developed countries, there is one thing that deserves to be emphasized above all. Their ability to balance energy supply and demand- side pressures with environmental concerns is leading to a new map of under-development.

Despite these changes, one fact —as had been argued by Hans J. Morgenthau— remained constant: that the functional relationship between political military and economic power continues to be disturbed by the use of oil as a political weapon because it is still the indispensable raw material for the economy and the military.<sup>35</sup> In fact,

The US military fuel consumption (395,000 barrels per day, almost as much as daily energy consumption of Greece) makes the Department of Defense the single largest consumer of petroleum in the United States. The Army calculated that it would burn 40 million gallons of fuel in three weeks of combat in Iraq, an amount equivalent to the gasoline consumed by all Allied armies combined during the four years of World War I.<sup>36</sup>

Soon after the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US, daily oil expenses of 160,000 US soldiers in Iraq reached 14 million dollars (5.1 billion yearly), showing how military attacks to take more stake from oil could actually create more oil expenses.<sup>37</sup>

In the meantime, declining oil production, energy security, environmental restraints and new forms and uses of energy have become hot issues in the energy sector. The rise of natural gas owing to security and environmental reasons may drastically challenge the significance of oil. Natural gas, however, is either associated with oil or found independently in countries which already participate in the international political economy of oil. In other words, the rise of natural gas as a primary energy product will create drastic consequences in terms of the market. The geopolitical implications of hydrocarbons, mainly the

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<sup>35</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, (with Kenneth W. Thompson), New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p.133-135.

<sup>36</sup> *Sohbet Karbuz*, “The US Military Oil Consumption”, *Energy Bulletin*, 26 February 2006. <http://www.energybulletin.net/node/13199>, (Accessed on 24 December 2008).

<sup>37</sup> For the invasion of Iraq by the USA, with regard to oil issue, see, Mert Bilgin, “Küresel Bölgesel ve Yerel Eksende Irak Petrollerinin Ekonomik Siyasi ve Stratejik Anlamı”, *Akademik Orta Doğu*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2007, p. 21-55; Mert Bilgin, “ABD’nin Irak’taki Stratejik Açılımları: Petrol, Rejim, Güvenlik ve Ötesi”, *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2006, p.153-184.

embrace of oil and gas, will tend to accelerate. The main problem arises from the vagueness on which principles and means will designate the upcoming age of energy characterized by multiple actors rather than one hegemon or two superpowers.

As stated in a recent study by Paul Roberts, the current world map of energy politics is being dominated by five major players each with its own agenda; in fact, each has its own role in the building of the next energy economy<sup>38</sup>:

- 1- The USA.
- 2- The EU.
- 3- Developing World.
- 4- Energy Producers including companies and countries.
- 5- Anti-status-quo and regulative non-state actors.

The motives, intentions, capabilities and challenges that define the horizons and limits of these actors deserve further elaboration by moving on from Roberts' categorization.

1- *The USA*: The significance of oil for the USA will dominate its strategic power politics.<sup>39</sup> The USA does not appear as a hegemon which is extensively and simultaneously capable of dominating production and flow of energy resources, trade terms and used currency. It will, however, continue to be the most active actor with its energy thirst, high carbon emissions, and its ability to affect the global energy system. The future role of this ex-hegemon will be characterized by its ability to obscure the rise of challenging powers in the developing world (mainly China and India) and producers (mainly Russia and Iran) while coping with European demand to diversify suppliers (which might even include countries such as Iran, Libya and Nigeria) and the growing influence of environmental criteria mainly coming from anti-status-quo actors. Shortly, the US will have to confront most of the actors and changing dynamics of world energy to sustain its power as much as possible.

2- *The EU*: Europe is looking for common policies to benefit from hydrocarbons found in its far neighborhood, including the Caspian region, the Middle East and Africa, along with the Russian Federation in order to consolidate security while decreasing costs. Thorny issues such as global responsiveness to climate change are appearing as a main, and for some as a

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<sup>38</sup> Paul Roberts, *The End of Oil*, New York, Mariner Book, 2005, p. 285-289.

<sup>39</sup> See, Oystein Noreng, *Crude Power: Politics and the Oil Market*, London, I.B. Tauris Co, 2006.

common, concern.<sup>40</sup> Both issues have already instigated incompatibility between European and American points of view on energy and environmental security. The EU, however, suffers from a lack of a common energy policy. Although more shares are attributed to renewable energy and natural gas due to environmental reasons, it is not clear to what extent the EU will manage to diversifying its suppliers (Russia, the Caspian and Middle East via Turkey, North Africa).<sup>41</sup>

*3- Developing World:* Nations in Africa, Asia and South America vary between being little effective in terms of emerging energy systems despite their consumption, production or reserves, especially certain African countries,<sup>42</sup> but not the least effective due to their vulnerability to energy issues and extremely effective to emerging giants such as India and China,<sup>43</sup> which are soon to be the world's biggest consumers. The ability of India and China to control world energy resources will determine whether they will become superpowers. Regarding medium and small countries with no ability to shape world energy, a new map of underdevelopment is likely to occur according to their ability to optimize energy costs with growth and environmental concerns.

*4- Energy Producers:* (Companies, OPEC members, non-OPEC big producers such as Russia): These producers have abundantly invested in oil, gas and coal, which ensure that they continue to search for new energy economies in which fossil fuels play the most significant role. Another significant fact which remains almost unchanged arises from the absolute significance of a handful of energy companies. The top six oil producers in the world—Saudi Aramco, the National Iranian Oil Company, Mexico's PEMEX, Venezuela's PdVSA, ExxonMobil and Shell—together control nearly one third of world consumption.<sup>44</sup> The rise of Gazprom, its affiliates and the possibility of a Gaz-OPEC deserve further attention.<sup>45</sup> The common use of environmental standards appears as a great challenge which leads to common positioning between these competing actors.

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<sup>40</sup> For challenges in European energy policies, see, Filip L. Magnusson and Oscar W. Bengtsson (Eds.), *Energy in Europe: Economics, Policy and Strategy*, Hauppauge NY, Nova Science Publishers, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Mert Bilgin, "New Prospects in Political Economy of Inner-Caspian Hydrocarbons & Western Energy Corridor through Turkey", *Energy Policy*, Vol. 35, No. 12, December 2007, p. 6383-6394.

<sup>42</sup> John Ghazvinian, *Untapped: The Scramble for Africa's Oil*, Florida, Harcourt Books, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Zmarak Shalizi, "Energy and Emissions: local and Global Effects of the Giants' Rise", L. Alan Winters and Shahid Yusuf (Eds.), *Dancing with Giants: China, India, And the Global Economy*, Washington, IBRD and IPS Publications, 2007, p.133-134.

<sup>44</sup> Roberts, *The End of Oil*, p. 286.

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan P. Stern, *The Future of Russian Gas and Gazprom*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

5- *Anti-status-quo and regulative non-state actors*: These include a wide range of actors starting from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), certain international agencies, and environmental groups reaching toward UN official organizations.<sup>46</sup> Most of them favor alternative energy, mainly hydrogen and other renewable energy, by claiming that the fossil age is an artificial regime imposed by the energy producers mentioned above. Their activities help bring to light environmental norms and standards, but confront the interests of developing countries to invest in industry based on fossil fuels. This is why the relations between developing world (1) and energy producers (3) are likely to increase if anti-status-quo actors (4) manage to expand their discourse and affect European energy policy (2).

### ***Neopolitics: New Energy Order Politics***

The USA and the EU are challenged by three significant pressures coming from the developing world, hydrocarbon producers and anti-status-quo and regulative non-state actors:

- 1- The rise of energy demand due to economic growth of certain developing countries.
- 2- The initiatives of OPEC and other big producers to keep prices high.
- 3- The activities of anti-status-quo and regulative non-state actors (mainly NGOs) to switch to renewable energy to decelerate the negative consequences of climate change.

Security concerns, along with these pressures, force the USA and the EU to sustain a balance between different energy types. “Despite the positive ‘green’ talk emerging on the back of the Advanced Energy Initiative announced by the US Administration—the figures in 2006 spoke for themselves—\$44m allocated for wind energy research; \$150m for solar technology research and, in marked contrast, \$1.1bn for a nuclear power initiative.”<sup>47</sup> This might be considered an outcome of Bush and Putin’s common approach to keep fossil fuels and nuclear growth high. The US Administration under Obama might allocate more funds for renewable energy, but this will be limited by outside pressures coming from the developing world. “In the UK too, nuclear came back on the agenda with it appearing that the door is open to a program of new nuclear build in the country.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> G. Bruce Doern and Monica Gattinger, *Power Switch: Energy Regulatory Governance in the Twenty-First Century*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Spencer, “The Energy Security Card”, *Refocus*, Vol. 7, No. 4, July-August 2006, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

If the peak in fossil fuel demand occurs before the peak in supply, the upstream cost of fossil fuels may fall to the point where one of three things may happen:<sup>49</sup>

1- BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) countries may opt for the same cheap fossil fuels that rapidly grew Western economies over the past century.

2- BRIC countries may be persuaded to join the group of clean consumer nations, using technologies from the US, Europe and Japan issued under favorable licensing terms.

3- A decrease in demand from the Western economies (plus the BRIC states) might hurt the economies of producer regions, fueling further political instability and potentially even undermining OPEC, where six of the eleven OPEC countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Venezuela, and Iran) hold two-thirds of the total world oil reserves.

It is likely that BRIC countries will search for resource diversification rather than completely switch to clean energy obtained from the US, Europe and Japan, not only because of geopolitical concerns, but also due to the 2008 global financial crisis. If BRIC chooses the Western way, the USA, the EU and Japan will confront huge pressure from the demand side. This option will definitely provoke resource and energy transport struggle by bringing back the territorial premises of geopolitics. "The United States with only 1/20th of the world's population consumes almost 1/4 of the world's oil, has less than 3% of the world's proven oil reserves and imports more than 60% of the oil it consumes can be found similar to Japan that is even more vulnerable to disruptions in the transport of oil to its shores because it imports more than 90% of the oil it consumes."<sup>50</sup> A decrease in global energy demand, because of a large scale recession, as expected between 2009-2011, will encourage political instability in and around producers such as Russia and some OPEC members by provoking geopolitical manipulations. That is to say, the transition to a new energy order will be characterized by geopolitical implications of energy, formulated as *energieopolitics* within this article.

"No other major power is capable of matching the United States when it comes to the global deployment of military power in the pursuit or protection of

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<sup>49</sup> William J. Nuttall, Devon L. Manz, "A New Energy Security Paradigm for the Twenty-first Century", *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, Vol. 75, No. 8, October 2008, p.1253.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 1248.



vital raw materials.”<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the rise of many powers challenges the privileged status of the US.

A new regional and superpower coalition of China, Russia, India and Brazil, which covers 75% of the world’s population and 80% of its natural resources, is emerging, and attracting the close interest of major oil producers, such as Iran that looks poised to join, after its recent \$200bn (£106bn) energy deal with China, while Venezuela under Hugo Chávez may turn out, even more than Iran, to be the next centre of confrontation for oil supremacy.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, China and Russia are providing arms to oil and gas producers in the developing world and beginning to enhance their military capacity in key energy-producing areas.<sup>53</sup> To begin, consider China, which adopted a ‘going out strategy’, according to which Chinese National Oil Companies (NOCs) began obtaining equity stakes and holding shares in their foreign investments. In 2005, KazTransOil, the biggest oil pumping company in Kazakhstan, and China’s CNPC completed the Kazakhstan-China Pipeline with an actual capacity of ten million tons a year (to be increased to twenty million tons) transported from the Caspian. China’s going out strategy is perceived as a threat to international energy stability by the USA. This threat perception is likely to be doubled by China and Russia’s common initiatives in The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO currently aims at coordinating the interests of energy producers and consumers (The producing countries’ club includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Iran, to be probably joined by Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, and consumers include China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Pakistan).<sup>54</sup> Within this context, the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, which currently confronts political instability in Pakistan, can be extended to China, a country that has already developed good relations with Kazakhstan. China has also agreed with Pakistan to construct terminals in Gwadar to benefit from oil transportation through vessels and obtained production concessions in Africa. Shortly, China, with its huge economic growth and ardent energy policies focused on control of fossil fuels, will be considered a rapidly emerging super power. “The only questions that remain are how other

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<sup>51</sup> Michael T. Klare, “The New Geopolitics of Energy”, *The Nation*, 19 May 2008, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080519/klare>, (Accessed on 24 December 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Michael Meacher, “Now for an Even Newer World Order”, *New Statesman*, 9 May 2005, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Klare, “The New Geopolitics of Oil”.

<sup>54</sup> Vitaly Frolenkov, “China and the SCO Member Countries of Central Asia: Cooperation Over Energy”, *Far Eastern Affairs*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2008, p.78.

countries will adapt themselves to a ‘China century’ and join the bandwagon of making a fortune in this revitalized ancient oriental kingdom.”<sup>55</sup>

In any case, China will continue to challenge the USA’s energy concerns.

Some analysts even hold that as the two energy-consuming powers extreme thirst for oil continues to grow, China and the United States will inevitably run into conflict over this scarce resource as according to them, the fact that China is strengthening political and economic ties with oil-rich countries like Sudan and Iran for the sake of its energy security has infringed on US security policy.<sup>56</sup>

This negative correlation increases the significance of India for the USA, which will need look for geopolitical means to balance China, Russia and Iran’s rise.

India, which has long feared encirclement with Pakistan to the west and China to the north and east, has panicked over future oil supply, and went after international oil assets competing directly with China.<sup>57</sup> India’s Oil and Natural Gas Corporation announced that (in addition to its \$2 billion investment in the Sakhalin-1 field run by ExxonMobil in Siberia and \$40 billion deal with Iran to import liquefied natural gas and join in developing three Iranian oil fields) an Indian company was buying a fifth of Iran’s giant Yadavaran oil field and was about to buy assets of Russian Yukos.<sup>58</sup>

Russia considers oil and gas not only as sources of wealth but also as power. This is why Kremlin, along with Gazprom, uses natural gas as a political tool to keep Russia’s neighborhood under control. “Energy resources have not only become Russia’s new ‘gold reserve’ and made economic enrichment and welfare possible, but they also contribute to the achievement of political grandeur—Russia is rebuilding its lost Great Power status and is on its way toward reintegrating the economies of many of the former Soviet republics.”<sup>59</sup>

The emerging new energy order is leading to discrepancies between the USA and the EU in terms of their priorities. For the USA, dominating the new energy order through geopolitical maneuvers is a matter of hegemonic concerns that might create some security costs, as in the case of Iraqi invasion. For the EU, the new energy order is primarily a matter of security, and is designed to optimize costs and respond to environmental concerns. Even though these actors have

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<sup>55</sup> Wu Guoguang, “The Peaceful Emergence of a Great Power”, *Social Research*, Vol. 73, No. 1, 2006, p.317.

<sup>56</sup> Wu Lei, Liu Xuejun, “China or the United States: Which Threatens Energy Security?”, *OPEC Review: Energy Economics & Related Issues*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2007, p.217.

<sup>57</sup> Martin Walker, “India’s Path to Greatness”, *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2006, p. 22-30.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Bertil Nygren, “Putin’s Use of Natural Gas to Reintegrate the CIS Region”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 55, No. 4, 2008, p.4.

some common interests in terms of the Euro-Atlantic Alliance, their different strategies might create conflicts of interest. Iran is, and will be, one of the thorniest issues that create divergent interests between the US and the EU. The US, along with Israel, desires to isolate Iran.

Israel is attempting to pressure Austria and Switzerland to cancel or postpone two major gas deals they have made with Iran: 1- The Swiss company, EGL, has signed a \$42 billion gas supply contract with Iran, due to begin in 2011; 2- Austria's energy company, OMV, has reached agreement with Iran on a 23 billion euro investment in South Pars in exchange for liquid natural gas.<sup>60</sup>

The Europeans, in turn, remain anxious, knowing that if Iran is prevented from developing its huge gas reserves, said to be the second largest in the world, Europe will be more than ever dependent on Gazprom which already supplies between 25 percent and 50 percent of gas supplies to Germany, France and Italy; between 50 percent and 75 percent to Austria, Turkey, Hungary and Poland; and between 80 percent and 100 percent to Greece, Finland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.<sup>61</sup>

The rise of natural gas will lead to tremendous consequences by shifting power from OPEC to Russia as the biggest reserve holder and producer, whereas the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia, a relatively minor producer of natural gas, would diminish, perhaps to be replaced with new ties with Iran and Qatar, the second and third leading producers of gas.<sup>62</sup> This is why a common interest between the EU and the US would diversify European supplies by including Turkmenistan, Iran and Iraq within the same transport system that passes through Turkey. The Nabucco project might gain momentum, as it is very practical to embrace Turkmen and Azeri gas within a pipeline that reaches Europe via Turkey. Furthermore, it is very reasonable to include Iran within this grid rather than pushing this country toward China and India, both of which seem to be very ardent in their desire to increase their investments in Iran in return for hydrocarbon trade. Concerning Iraq, the US might sustain stability if it manages to reconcile its relations with Turkey through energy trade. Turkey, which has started to develop the Ceyhan port as an energy hub, benefits from the Baku-Tbilissi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, looks for ways to increase oil flow from Kirkuk and is interested in developing gas pipelines from the Caspian and Middle East to Europe.<sup>63</sup> Turkey's strategic significance, for Euro-Atlantic

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<sup>60</sup> Patrick Seale, "Is Undermining Iran an Arab or European Interest?", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 6, 2008, p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> Nygren, "Putin's Use of Natural Gas", p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Rodger Doyle, "Energy Geopolitics", *Scientific American*, Vol. 291, No. 4, 2004, p. 36.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Kuser, "Turkey Boosts Its Role as Strategic Energy Hub", *Business Week Online*, 19 July 2006, p. 3.

interests, is indeed entering a boost era because Caspian and Iranian gas flowing to Europe via Turkey will not only balance Russia's natural gas supremacy in Europe but also might keep Iran within the European grid rather than that of China and India.

## **Conclusion**

Each of the geopolitical approaches, from classical, modern, spatial to critical, might be relevant for different time intervals and geographies. This paper showed that contemporary geopolitics at global and regional levels has already entered a period in which energy issues subdue geopolitical implications and create *energeopolitics*, so to state conceptually. This theoretical shift, in fact, has a practical basis. Our analysis pointed toward a transition period from fossil fuels to an energy mix, which can be best characterized as the New Energy Order (N.E.O.) and new energy order politics (*neopolitics*) of the concerned actors. *Neopolitics*, within this sense, affects not only the security and wealth concerns of the actors, but also shapes their power configuration within the world system by boosting the spatial aspects of geopolitics.

Regarding dominant energy types and environmental pressures, this study moved from: 1- the continuing significance of oil; 2- the rapid rise of natural gas; and 3- environmental pressures that call for more use of renewable sources and nuclear energy.

Regarding the actors, the USA, the EU, developing countries, energy producers (including companies, countries and organizations such as OPEC) and anti-status-quo and regulative non-state actors interact with each other at different levels of cooperation and conflict. Actors, pursuing power, wealth or security, are replacing their conventional approaches by *neopolitics*, which identifies the rebuilding of strategies and foreign policies in terms of cost, security, environmental and long-term aspects of energy.

Regarding big powers, there is a move toward a multi-centered world system. Russia and China have already accelerated energy rapprochement through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which currently aims at coordinating the interests of energy producers and consumers. The producing countries' club includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Iran, to be probably joined by Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, whereas consumers include China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan. The USA and the EU will need the strategic cooperation of Turkey, which appears as *strategic regional power*, to include at least two of the countries of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran within the European energy system. Otherwise, they are likely to lose advantages to Russia, China and India. In addition to the cooperation options

mentioned above, increasing competition to acquire equity stakes and holding shares in hydrocarbon production (in Russia, Arctic, the Caspian, the Middle East, Africa and South America) as well as transportation projects from these regions, raise issues of regional spatiality.

*Neopolitics*, within this sense, leads to strategic policies of conflict and cooperation on the one hand, and different levels of regional clashes on the other. These findings not only point to the boost in competition to control the energy sources found in the Caspian, Middle East, Africa and Arctic but also verify the hypotheses set in the introduction: 1- The shift to post-oil energy regimes has entered a transition period in which oil and natural gas continue to be significant despite increased use of renewable and nuclear sources. 2- It is not possible to harmonize conflicting interests on environmental commitments by convincing Brazil, Russia, India and China to leave fossil fuels aside and completely rely on other sources of energy. 3-

The more the USA and the EU confront the rise of Russia, China, India as global powers on the one hand, and Iran as regional power on the other, the more Turkey gains the characteristic of a *strategic regional power*.

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