

# NATO's Energy Security Agenda and its Possible Applications in the South Caucasus

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Over the past decades and in the course of a complex discourse, NATO has decided to undertake a role in energy security. From one perspective, the Alliance has already reached a kind of 'acquis' related to energy security, based on three strategic priorities: political consultation and intelligence sharing; projecting stability; and protection of nuclear and non-nuclear critical energy infrastructure. On the other hand, NATO's current activities suggest that it will not take on a leading role, but rather a limited and complementary one. After analyzing the theoretical discourse around the emerging NATO agenda on energy security, the article addresses its practical implications for the South Caucasus. The article explores NATO's possible contributions to the regional energy security. First, it examines the potential of a traditional deterrence-based approach, before assessing the forms of preventive approaches developed by NATO. The article concludes that cooperation in the framework of partnership programs has been developing in line with the functional security concept, increasing the partner states' capability to respond to emerging energy security challenges, while also contributing to the security of NATO member states.



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Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has been undergoing a constant self-redefinition process. A significant part of this process can be linked to the emergence of new security challenges in the post-Cold War era. Therefore, the Alliance is focusing on these new threats – such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, and energy security – and on implementing new types of responses.

After 1991, NATO's involvement in the post-Soviet region was unavoidable. The Alliance had to develop relations with non-NATO countries (energy producers, transit states, etc.) without confronting Russia. What role could former Warsaw Pact and post-Soviet states play in connection with the Atlantic Alliance? Some of the Central European countries, like Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, joined NATO in 1999, and seven more shortly before the Alliance's 2004 Istanbul Summit. Ukraine and Georgia applied for membership, but they did not yet have a Membership Action Plan (MAP). At the Istanbul Summit in 2004, special emphasis was placed on Central Asia and the Caucasus, though it is important to mention in that respect that 'there is [only] a limited cooperation between NATO and these states and such as there is mainly on a bilateral project basis between some states in NATO and the partner.'<sup>1</sup>

The 1949 Washington Treaty that established NATO ensures the collective security of the members of the Alliance, via the mechanism set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. Expanded membership entails risks for current members, due to their requirement to defend the new member under Article 5. In this regard, NATO should favor partnership over membership for states such as Georgia and the Ukraine, given that 'NATO willingness to risk Article 5 defense of these states is small if not nonexistent.'<sup>2</sup> It is not surprising that the Alliance has found 'soft' cooperation mechanisms preferable in their dealings with post-Soviet countries. Partnership programs for non-candidate states along the eastern and southern borders of NATO can be of mutual benefit.

### *Partnership for Peace: A Framework for Cooperation*

In 1991, NATO created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) encompassing NATO members, former Warsaw Pact countries and former republics of the Soviet Union. At the Brussels Summit (1994), NATO launched a more individualized Partnership for Peace (PfP) program open to all European and former Soviet countries. The Partnership seeks to expand and intensify political and military cooperation throughout Europe, increase stability, diminish threats to peace, and build strengthened relationships. While the PfP focuses in particular on practical, defence-related and military cooperation activities, the NACC provides a forum for broad consultations on political and security-related issues as well as for practical cooperation on security-related economic questions, information and scientific and environmental matters. In 1997, NACC was transformed into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) to accommodate the fact that not all PfP countries were members of the NACC.<sup>3</sup> Each PfP partner develops an Individual Partnership Program with NATO (IPP), listing specific cooperation activities drawn from the Partnership Work Program. At its Prague summit in 2002, NATO reinvigorated the IPP process by launching a new practical mechanism, the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).<sup>4</sup> IPAPs are designed to ensure that the dialogue and the cooperation are specifically tailored to the state's individual needs, enabling the Alliance to adopt a clearly focused approach with regard to the various cooperation and assistance activities (such as defence, security and military issues; public information; science and environment; civil emergency planning; and administrative, protective security and resource issues).<sup>5</sup>

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### *NATO's Emerging Energy Security Agenda*

Energy security is one of the most important challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Following a brief discussion of the definition of energy security, we will consider the development of the concept within NATO discourses, through the examination of documents generated at NATO Summits.

1 Moore, R, *NATO's Partners in Afghanistan: Impact and Purpose*. Madrid: Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation, UNISCI Discussion Papers, 2010, No. 22, pp. 100.

2 Matlary, J. H, 'Partnerships to the East and South: A 'Win-Win' Policy', in: Edstrom, H., Matlary J. H. and Petersson M. (eds.) *NATO: The Power of Partnerships*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, pp. 68.

3 Sloan, E, 'NATO approaches to energy security: Future options, challenges and directions', *Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection Policy Research Series*, 1, 2007, pp. 4.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 7.

5 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: Individual Partnership Action Plans*, available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49290.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49290.htm)

*NATO first referred to energy security in its 1999 Strategic Concept. In this document, while the Alliance noted its core function was still to deter and/or respond to armed attacks on the territory of any of the Allies, it also emphasized that NATO's security could also be affected by other factors, such as the "disruption of the flow of vital resources."*

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has a broad definition of energy security, whereby energy security equates to the "adequate, affordable, and reliable access to energy fuels and services, it includes availability of resources, decreasing dependence on imports, decreasing pressures on the environment, competition and market and market efficiency, reliance on indigenous resources that are environmentally clean, and energy services that are affordable and equitably shared."<sup>6</sup> In the much shorter definition of the United Nations, energy security is "protection against shortages of affordable fuel and energy resources."<sup>7</sup> NATO first referred to energy security in its 1999 Strategic Concept.<sup>8</sup> In this document, while the Alliance noted its core function was still to deter and/or respond to armed attacks on the territory of any of the Allies, it also emphasized that NATO's security could also be affected by other factors, such as the "disruption of the flow of vital resources."<sup>9</sup>

Energy security is a very complex issue. International cooperation in this field is based on the logic of realism; oil and gas supplies are so vital for states that problems may arise even among likeminded allies. As Rühle states, even "If they chose multilateralism, they chose institutions through which they can best meet their concerns."<sup>10</sup> Departing from this, it is not surprising that NATO kept energy security off its agenda for a long time. Although the topic was mentioned at the 1999 Washington Summit, there followed a long period of silence, up until 2006.

In 2006, the Russia-Ukraine gas dispute raised serious concerns about energy security. The dispute reached a climax on January 1, 2006 when Russia cut off supplies to Ukraine. After that, Poland put forth a proposal suggesting that NATO members commit themselves to help one another during energy crises.<sup>11</sup> U.S. Senator Richard Lugar, a high-ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, went even further, arguing

that energy security should be a commitment under the Article 5 mutual defense clause of the North Atlantic Treaty. At the Riga Summit (29 November 2006), Senator Lugar argued that, 'Because an attack using energy as a weapon can devastate a nation's economy and yield hundreds or even thousands of casualties, the Alliance must avow that defending against such attacks is an Article Five commitment. This does not mean that attempts to manipulate energy for international political gain would require a NATO military response. Rather, it means that the Alliance must commit itself to preparing for and responding to attempts to use the energy weapon against its fellow members.'<sup>12</sup>

Although Lugar was cautious not to suggest a military response to Russia's political move, his expressions clearly show the seriousness of the situation back in 2006. However, it was not NATO's interest to apply Article 5 commitments to the field of energy security. There was a fundamental concern about putting additional pressure on the NATO-Russia relationship, and 'degenerating energy security debate in NATO into a Russia-bashing exercise.'<sup>13</sup>

The Riga Summit Declaration (2006) highlighted the importance of infrastructure security and directed the member states to consult on most immediate risks in the field of energy security<sup>14</sup> and 'define the interests, where NATO may add value to safeguard interests.'<sup>15</sup> In general, NATO has set three main targets concerning energy security. First, NATO should provide clearer definitions of the threats in question. Secondly, while it has to support a coordinated international effort, the Alliance should have a complementary role, instead of a leading one. Third, NATO must prevent the 'disruption of vital flow of resources,'<sup>16</sup> thus the Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection (CEIP) will be essential.<sup>17</sup>

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6 Sovacool, B.K., (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Energy Security*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2011, pp. 4.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 5.

8 Sloan, E., 'NATO approaches to energy security: Future options, challenges and directions', *Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection Policy Research Series*, 1, 2007, pp. 2.

9 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1999) The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Paragraph 24.

10 Rühle, M., 'Energy Security: From Philosophy to Implementation,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10(4), 2012, pp. 388.

11 Sloan, E., 'NATO approaches to energy security: Future options, challenges and directions', *Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection Policy Research Series*, 1, 2007, pp. 4.

12 Quoted by Chifu, I. and Medar S., 'NATO and Energy Security', in: Chifu, I., Suliuc, A. and Nedea, B. (eds.) *Energy Security Strategies in the wider Black Sea Region*. Bucharest: Editura Curtae Veche, 2010, pp. 36.

13 Rühle, M., 'Energy Security: From Philosophy to Implementation,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10(4), 2012, pp. 390.

14 Monaghan, A., *Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role*. Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2008, pp. 4.

15 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2006) Riga Summit Declaration, *NATO Press Release*, No. 150, Paragraph 45.

16 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1999) The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Paragraph 24.

17 Monaghan, A., *Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role*. Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2008, pp. 5.

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The Bucharest Summit (2008) was the next step in defining common interests and articulating a NATO *acquis* in the field of energy security. The Allies have identified the principles which will govern NATO's approach in this field, and outlined options and recommendations for further activities.<sup>18</sup> Based on these principles, "NATO will engage in the following fields: 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>19</sup>

The 2010 Lisbon Summit was a significant step forward, as it resulted in the adoption of a new Strategic Concept. The Strategic Concept noted that in the emerging new security environment, terrorism, "failed states" and cyber-attacks will pose the most serious challenges in the future. The Concept also addressed the importance of energy security: "some NATO countries will become more dependent on foreign energy suppliers and in some cases, on foreign energy supply and distribution networks for their energy needs. As a larger share of world consumption is transported across the globe, energy supplies are increasingly exposed to disruption."<sup>20</sup> The most important result of the Summit is that the Declaration requires member states to integrate energy security considerations into NATO's policies and activities.<sup>21</sup>

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Thus over the course of the past decade's summits, NATO has not only included the notion of energy security into its framework step by step, it has also developed a kind of *acquis* for energy security. This *acquis* has three main pillars: political consultation and intelligence fusing and sharing; projecting stability; and Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection.<sup>22</sup>

Beside the traditional forms of political consultations, information sharing has already been institutionalized to

a certain extent in terms of energy security. NATO established an Energy Security Section inside the Emerging Security Challenges Division, and also has a NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence (ENSEC COE).<sup>23</sup> Training programs have also demonstrated considerable results.<sup>24</sup> Partnership programs such as the PfP contribute to the broader strategic environment in the field of energy security.

Critical Energy Infrastructure can be defined as "systems and assets so vital to the basic operations of a state that its incapacity or its destruction would have a negative impact on national security, national economy security, national safety, or any of those combined."<sup>25</sup> CEIP intends to reduce the vulnerability of energy infrastructure - e.g. facilities and pipelines - against external threats. An external threat could be the disruption of a supply chain by physical attack, such as terrorism or any other violent act.<sup>26</sup> Multinational approaches are also of great importance in this dimension, as energy infrastructure links NATO allies with non-NATO countries.

New security challenges have on multiple occasions required NATO to reassess its methods. The field of energy security is a good example, demonstrating that the traditional military approach used during the Cold War era is not always appropriate.<sup>27</sup> In this case, the classical retaliation-based approach and the notion of geographical security may prove inadequate in addressing competing energy interests. In relation to pipeline protection, preventive cooperative measures such as political consultations and partnership building may be much more efficient than classical deterrence policies.<sup>28</sup>

To sum up, the above analysis indicates that NATO has chosen to undertake a role in the field of energy security. However, this role will be limited and complementary, rather than leading one. As Michael Rühle, the Head of the Energy Security Section in

23 NATO Energy Security: Centre for Excellence, <http://www.enseccoe.org>.

24 Dessard, I., *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4., 2013, pp. 8.

25 NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2008) *Energy Security: Co-operating to Enhance the CEIP* (157 CDS 08 E rev. 1). Available at: <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1478>

26 Dessard, I., *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4, 2013, pp. 9.

27 Rühle, M., 'NATO and Emerging Security Challenges: Beyond the Deterrence Paradigm', *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, 33(6), 2011, pp. 278-282.

28 Ibid., pp. 282.

18 Chifu, I. and Medar S., 'NATO and Energy Security', in: Chifu, I., Suliuc, A. and Nedea, B. (eds.) *Energy Security Strategies in the wider Black Sea Region*. Bucharest: Editura Curta Veche, 2010, pp. 37.

19 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2008) Bucharest Summit Declaration, *NATO Press Release*, No. 49. Paragraph 48.

20 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2010) Active Engagement, Modern Defence, Paragraph 13.

21 Rühle, M., 'NATO and Energy Security: Toward a more coherent approach,' *IP Journal, Global Edition*, 3, 2011, pp. 7.

22 Rühle, M., 'Energy Security: From Philosophy to Implementation,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10(4), 2012, pp. 390.



NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division, stated, "While energy security is not going to move to the center of NATO's agenda, it is bound to get growing attention.<sup>29</sup> Threats to energy security are real and imminent, but preventive measures could generate satisfactory solutions.

Following this introduction to the theoretical discourse around energy security and pipeline protection, the article intends to outline the potential practical consequences and the application of the accepted theoretical guidelines.

### *The South Caucasus: Pipeline Protection in Practice?*

In geostrategic terms, the countries of the South Caucasus are highly important. The South Caucasus has been a transit region between East and West, North and South from time immemorial. In present times, its geostrategic relevance has increased even further thanks to its proximity to the Middle East and to the key oil and gas transit routes which cross the region.

For the past decades, energy importers have become increasingly concerned about the diversification of energy sources, in order to reduce their dependence on a single major exporter. Russian control over energy transportation to Europe, based on the former Soviet energy infrastructure, has been reduced by the construction of South Caucasian oil and gas pipelines, which deliver hydrocarbons from the reserves of Azerbaijan through Georgia,

bypassing Russia. Armenia is excluded from this pipeline system due to its occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh (internationally recognized Azerbaijani territory) for more than two decades. The process of establishing a new, extended pipeline system has imposed burdens as well as benefits for these countries. As a source and transit region for oil and gas, the countries of the South Caucasus need to ensure the security of their energy infrastructure.<sup>30</sup>

That regional priority has become intertwined with the dialogue around NATO's role in energy security. As such, the issue of providing security for the South Caucasian pipeline infrastructure has emerged at numerous points throughout the debates. The issue of energy security and pipeline protection in the South Caucasus was highlight-

ed following the 2008 Russian-Georgian war, when the bombardments from the Russian side could have affected the transit routes, and with the suspension of energy shipment through the Georgian pipeline system.<sup>31</sup> It was obvious that there was no direct intention to destroy the pipeline system, as the Russian rhetoric did not include threats of the use of force against the energy infrastructure. However, given the risk of 'collateral damage', the transit routes proved to be highly vulnerable in such situations, leading Azerbaijan to decide to suspend the flow of oil in the case of the Baku-Supsa pipeline.<sup>32</sup> Another concerning incident was the PKK Kurdish terrorist organisation's attack on the Turkish section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. The attack, which exploded part of the pipeline, resulted in the shutdown of the BTC, leading to a loss of 300,000 USD along the pipeline.<sup>33</sup>

Although the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has not led to similar consequences, the "frozen conflict" between the two states remains a looming threat to the pipeline system. As for terrorism, although there have been no recent terrorist attacks against the South Caucasian pipeline system, in 2004, al-Qaeda publically noted the significance of the Caspian hydrocarbon reserves and the transport system, when Osama bin Laden explicitly called for attack against the energy markets in the region.<sup>34</sup>

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Renewed conflicts between Georgia and Russia, or Azerbaijan and Armenia, or a terrorist attack in this conflict-prone region, all pose potential threats to the pipeline system. NATO support could contribute to the protection of the infrastructure, as the theoretical NATO discourse indicates. The fact that Azerbaijan and Georgia are both NATO partners and have a similar history in terms of the dialogue and cooperation with the organization supports this possibility. In 1992, both countries became members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), and then in 1994, they joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative.<sup>35</sup> They par-

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<sup>29</sup> Rühle, M., 'Energy Security: From Philosophy to Implementation,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10(4), 2011, pp. 389.

<sup>30</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: NATO's partners in the South Caucasus*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CACD7214-555FFC66/natolive/news\\_89866.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CACD7214-555FFC66/natolive/news_89866.htm?selectedLocale=en) (Accessed: 26 February 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Tsereteli, M., *The Impact of the Russia-Georgia War on the South Caucasus Transportation Corridor*. Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2009, pp. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Sokov, N., *The South Caucasus Corridor after the Russian-Georgian War*. Washington: PONARS Eurasia, Policy Memo, No. 49, 2009, pp. 1-4.

<sup>33</sup> Tsereteli, M., *The Impact of the Russia-Georgia War on the South Caucasus Transportation Corridor*. Washington DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2009, pp. 13.

<sup>34</sup> NATO Parliamentary Assembly (2008) *Energy Security: Co-operating to Enhance the CEIP* (157 CDS 08 E rev. 1). Available at: <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1478> (Accessed: 2 February 2014).

<sup>35</sup> See more about NATO-Azerbaijan relations here: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: NATO's relations with Azerbaijan*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49111.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm)

ticipate in the Planning and Review Process (PARP), and signed Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP) on security, defence and military issues and even democratic reforms on a two-year basis.<sup>36</sup> Beyond these cooperative frameworks, Azerbaijan and Georgia also contribute to NATO missions.

However, they pursue different foreign policy trajectories, and this has consequences for their relations with NATO. Azerbaijan's significant hydrocarbon reserves contribute to its relative independence, and thus Baku is able to maintain a multi-vectored foreign policy between Russia and the West.<sup>37</sup> Although it does not aspire to NATO membership, Baku maintains a closer relationship with the West than with Russia – but not at the expense of losing its partnership with Moscow. Azerbaijan also has a significant ally in Turkey, which binds the connection with NATO even tighter. Although Armenia is also involved in the cooperation with NATO, it tends to prioritize relations with Russia.

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As for Georgia, Tbilisi maintains the closest relationship with NATO among the South Caucasus states, as it has declared its membership aspiration. Since 2008, a specific NATO-Georgia Commission has been in operation, to manage bilateral communication and cooperation. Tbilisi also, however, has hostile relations with Russia, which culminated in the 2008 war. The continued occupation of the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia shows that NATO does not intend to destabilize the very sensitive NATO-Russia relationship via a direct intervention.

On the whole, the South Caucasian pipeline system presents a typical situation for the application of NATO's energy security and pipeline protection approach. However, if NATO intends to take a role in the field of energy security in the South Caucasus, it also needs to clarify whether this role is being developed in line with the traditional deterrence and retaliation-based military approach, or in the context of a preventive, limited and complementary framework.

and Georgia-NATO relations here: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *ATA Bilateral Brief on Relations between NATO and Georgia*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49111.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49111.htm)

36 See more about IPAPs: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: Individual Partnership Action Plans*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49290.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49290.htm)

37 Freire, M. R., *Security in the South Caucasus: the EU, NATO and Russia*. Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2013, pp. 2.

### *When Traditional Deterrence-Based Security Fails: NATO's Energy Nexus Dilemma in the South Caucasus*

The traditional military approach in this case would mean preparing detailed plans to protect energy supplies and pipelines against military threats, such as terrorist attacks or organized operations.<sup>38</sup> These measures would involve the use of movement sensors, satellites and radars, as well as setting up fences and patrols at interconnections and compressor stations in order to minimize attacks.<sup>39</sup> It could even lead to sending NATO troops to protect the critical energy infrastructure.

Azerbaijan has made clear its disapproval of the classical military approach, following speculation that NATO might send troops to secure the pipeline system. As the leading power of the region, Azerbaijan claims that its capabilities, resources and active foreign policy enable it to respond appropriately to any threats. Moreover, as noted by Abid Sharifov, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister, there is a belief among Azerbaijani government officials, that NATO 'does not have experience in protection of oil pipelines and communications running via the countries which do not belong to the organization.'<sup>40</sup> Others have emphasized the fact that it is Azerbaijan's national responsibility to protect the pipeline system, and that it is already well-protected.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, these claims have a solid basis. In Azerbaijan, a special institution named the Special State Protection Service (SSPS) is responsible for the protection of the pipeline system.<sup>42</sup> It runs a constant patrolling system along the pipelines, and controls access. The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), the company operating the pipelines and terminals, shares this responsibility with the SSPS by ensuring stationary security at pumping stations.<sup>43</sup> Private companies also take responsibility for providing pipeline security. Both Georgia and Azer-

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38 Monaghan, A., *Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role*. Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2008, pp. 2.

39 Dessard, I., *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4., 2013, pp. 11.

40 Quoted by Monaghan, A., *Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role*. Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2008, p. 8.

41 Ibid, p. 8.

42 Dessard, I. (2013) *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4. p. 11.

43 Ibid, p. 12.

baijan have developed an efficient protection system with the contribution of BP. This system contains both physical and technological monitoring, with patrolling forces along the pipelines. These systems rely significantly on the commitment of local communities.<sup>44</sup>

Georgia also maintains closer relationship with NATO in terms of classical security approaches,<sup>45</sup> and as it pursues membership in the Alliance, Tbilisi could be more willing to accept the theoretical possibility of a NATO force helping to protect its pipeline system. However, in practice, Georgia has a state pipeline protection system that functions in addition to the one developed by BP, similarly constructed to that of Azerbaijan. This enables Tbilisi to ensure the protection of the transport routes without external intervention. The Strategic Pipeline Protection Department operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for pipeline protection. As an exception, the security of the Baku-Supsa line is maintained by the Special Task Force Police, which is quite similar to Azerbaijan's SSPS.<sup>46</sup>

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It is evident that Azerbaijan and Georgia draw upon a spectrum of resources to protect their pipeline systems. There are certain niches in energy security where NATO can add value to this work; however, these niches do not belong to the realm of classical military security.

On the other hand, Tbilisi and Baku could see a greater stability in the region because of the engagement of NATO, which could serve as a security guarantee. However, it is also clear that a radical, classical deterrence-based commitment to the region could lead to counter-productive consequences. Specifically, the South Caucasus has long been as a traditional zone of interest for Russia, which has remained a key regional actor even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Post-Soviet history, infrastructure and institutions like the Commonwealth of Independent States and its umbrella organizations still bind these countries to Russia, although Georgia withdrew from the CIS in 2008. Russia treats the region as an area of strategic relevance in its main foreign policy

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: Georgia: now the top non-NATO troop contributor in Afghanistan*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_101633.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_101633.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>46</sup> Dessard, I., *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4., 2013, pp. 12.

documents.<sup>47</sup> For these reasons, Moscow is uncomfortable with the initiatives of Western-based organizations like NATO in the region, and has on many occasions perceived them as a threat to its influence. For NATO and its partners, it is crucial to avoid any accusations of anti-Russian aims in the South Caucasus. In relation to energy security, the situation is especially sensitive. In 2008, Vladimir Putin explicitly stated that he considers it highly 'unfriendly' that NATO seeks to take a role in energy security, while Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov condemned the politicization of energy security issues.<sup>48</sup> A greater military engagement in a classical sense would clearly attract attention from Moscow, which could damage NATO-Russia relations as well as negatively affect the security of the South Caucasus.

Last but not least, the Alliance itself does not have significant interest in pursuing a classical deterrence-based approach to protect the South Caucasian pipeline system. The organization claims that, "[...] 'energy security and the security of installation and transportation routes are a national responsibility', the Alliance should be 'looking to offer advice and help rather than putting boots on the ground.'"<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, in connection with the protection of Azerbaijani and Georgian pipelines, NATO itself has admitted that "NATO could analyze and learn from those developments in the process of contributing to Energy Security through cooperation with partners and consultation with allies in order to enhance global security."<sup>50</sup>

All things considered, it can be concluded that the classical deterrence-based military approach is not popular among the concerned member and partner states, and, taking into account the sensitivity of NATO-Russia relations, it could also have negative impacts across the region. Therefore, NATO is not pursuing a policy of direct intervention to protect the uninterrupted flow of energy in the region. Instead, it tries to support the work of other international organizations and seeks to maintain dialogues and cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus in the spirit of the Partnership for Peace.<sup>51</sup> After all, the standpoint of the Al-

<sup>47</sup> Freire, M. R., *Security in the South Caucasus: the EU, NATO and Russia*. Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2013, pp. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Monaghan, A., *Energy Security: NATO's Limited, Complementary Role*. Rome: NATO Defense College, Research Division, 2008, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8.

<sup>50</sup> Dessard, I., *Energy Security in South Caucasus: Effective Cooperation in the Protection of Critical Energy Infrastructure*. Vilnius: NATO Energy Security: Centre of Excellence, Energy Security: Operational Highlights No. 4., 2013, pp. 10.

<sup>51</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (n.a.) *NATO A-Z: NATO's partners in the South Caucasus*. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CACD7214-555FFC66/natolive/news\\_89866.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-CACD7214-555FFC66/natolive/news_89866.htm?selectedLocale=en)



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#### *Finding the ‘Added Value’ on Energy Security-Related Cooperation*

Linking the preventive approach and energy security, at the 2008 Bucharest Summit the Allies summarized the most important guiding principles for further practical activities in the field of energy security in five points.<sup>52</sup>

The following section is based on these points and on the further options, recommendations and possibilities sketched out by Michael Rühle, the Head of the Energy Security Section in NATO’s Emerging Security Challenges Division.<sup>53</sup>

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The first way that NATO can contribute to pipeline protection in the South Caucasus is through information and intelligence sharing. Under this heading, several methods can contribute to pipeline protection. NATO offers different types of consultations for its member and partner states, including regular meetings on energy security and 28+n format on various levels.<sup>54</sup> During these consultations, NATO can act as a facilitator on energy security and pipeline protection planning, on sharing concerns, expectations and best practices, and developing cooperation.

When the interests of the member and partner states significantly differ and cannot be efficiently dealt with in a common meeting (this may occur in the field of energy security, as member and partner states have very different roles in energy production, transport and consumption), NATO offers bilateral consultations as a forum for information sharing. Bilateral meetings may lead to the signature of documents concerning cooperation between NATO and the certain country, tailored to the needs of the latter. IPAPs are particularly appropriate for this aim in the South Caucasus, considering that the current internal conflicts prevent an overarching approach, and given that, the countries of the region have different roles in relation to energy issues. Moreover, IPAPs are individual and flexible; therefore they can quickly be adapted to potential

changes in the situation of the conflict-prone region.

In addition to these possibilities, intelligence sharing is highly relevant to energy security and pipeline protection issues. Now, 28 member states and partner countries draw upon various sources of intelligence and expertise, and the Alliance has special capabilities that can serve the aims of pipeline protection. Through intelligence sharing, NATO members and partners can compile and access well-founded analyses, prognoses and risk assessments concerning the security of pipelines, the vulnerability of transit routes or even the probability of terrorist threats, facilitating the development of the local security system or the preparations for a possible crisis or attack.

The second area in which NATO can play a role in energy security and pipeline protection lies in projecting stability. This role is also relevant in the conflict-ridden region of the South Caucasus, where the engagement and assistance of the Alliance can help maintain stability within the region and against the theoretical scenario of increasing Russian influence. Advancing regional cooperation is closely linked to this aim. As all three countries in the South Caucasus are involved in NATO-led partnerships, the commitment to the Alliance can help ease the existing tensions and enhance regional cooperation.

Besides facilitating regional cooperation, NATO can play a significant role in international cooperation and dialogue among the international organizations operating in the region. NATO pursues a complementary role in this sense, and it aims to avoid duplication of and infringement on other organizations’ tasks and processes. The Alliance can also engage with private actors interested in energy security and pipeline protection, and initiate dialogue with them.<sup>55</sup> In this way, NATO could bring private expertise and know-how into its approach towards assistance in the South Caucasus.

Following the more indirect fields of possible assistance, the fourth and fifth points of the Bucharest Summit list refer to tangible pipeline protection roles that NATO could undertake without interfering in national security concerns. NATO has the capabilities to support the direct protection of the critical energy infrastructure against risks. The Alliance identifies four main types of such risks: natural disasters, technical failures, political instabili-

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<sup>52</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (2008) Bucharest Summit Declaration, *NATO Press Release*, No. 49.

<sup>53</sup> Rühle, M. and Grubliauskas, J., ‘NATO and Energy Security: Infrastructure Protection and Beyond’, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 11(3), 2012, pp. 66-73.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68.

<sup>55</sup> Rühle, M., ‘Energy Security: From Philosophy to Implementation,’ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10(4), 2012, pp. 393.



ties or conflicts and man-made attacks.<sup>56</sup> Upon the request of the concerned states, NATO can support the relevant authorities in these cases with technical tools, communication services, technology transfer, or training and education facilities. For example, NATO has provided special courses focusing on CEIP since 2006 in the South Caucasus, and it plans to set up a Partnership Training and Education Centre (PTEC) in Azerbaijan. In case of a worst-case scenario, NATO can support consequence management as well, for example, with damage assessments or with providing tools and expertise for the rapid restoration of the energy supply.

### Conclusion

The article has sought to illuminate the ways in which NATO can contribute to ensuring energy security in general and specifically in the South Caucasus. It provided a perspective on NATO-South Caucasus relations, including within the scope of the Partnership for Peace and other forms of partnerships. It also analyzed the developing discourse on energy security within the Alliance, emphasizing the intertwined nature of the parties' interests along with the possibilities for cooperation and applying theoretical approaches.

Before summarizing the conclusions, we must reiterate that NATO is not an independent energy security provider, and it needs the consent of its members and partners in order to make a contribution in this respect. Meanwhile, among other international organizations, NATO has to choose its aims in terms of energy security carefully, in order to avoid overlapping competences and to be able to "add value" to ongoing processes.

Despite these various limitations, the notion of energy security within NATO has evolved significantly over the past decade, and has become an acknowledged part of NATO's agenda. Beside the theoretical development, the practical aspects of energy security and pipeline protection also suggest a positive outlook in the case of the South Caucasus. Although the traditional deterrence-based security approach could be unacceptable to many actors in the region, including NATO member states themselves, cooperation in the spirit of partnership, following the preventive approach, is already a reality.

As the article shows, the three pillars of NATO energy security *acquis* and the five principles of the Bucharest Summit are clearly present in the Alliance's approach towards the region. In the meantime, partner countries in the South Caucasus have also recognized the intertwined nature of energy security interests, and seem willing to not only accept, but also actively engage via soft cooperation mechanisms. Cooperation in the framework of partnership programs has been developing in line with the functional security concept, increasing the partners' capability to respond to emerging energy security challenges. Moreover, NATO can also benefit from cooperation with the South Caucasus. As a relative newcomer in the world of energy security, it can make use of the shared energy security experiences of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

<sup>56</sup> Rühle, M. and Grubliauskas, J., 'NATO and Energy Security: Infrastructure Protection and Beyond', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 11(3), 2012, pp. 71.