

Turkmenistan's Strategy and Policy Regarding Energy Resources

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is based, on the one hand, on the persisting importance and demand for minerals as energy carriers in the context of the global economy, and, on the other hand, on the recognition of the current economic processes taking place in the region of interest (for this study, Central Asia) when building a strategy for the reintegration of the post-Soviet space. The purpose of the investigation is to characterise Turkmenistan's current energy trade policy to anticipate further steps in building a system of strategic cooperation with its immediate neighbours as well as other political actors. The study uses general scientific methods and a range of special methods, such as deduction and induction methods, content analysis, event analysis, systematic approach and historical analysis. The study first outlines major developments in international politics (with a focus on past and current economic processes, specifically in trade and energy production) in the region as a whole and Turkmenistan in particular, and second, it proposes a scenario for the state's likely development in the region of interest, based on historical assumptions and available data. The information set out in this study can be used to adjust actions in building a long-term relationship with Turkmenistan, and to assess and understand the motivations behind the actions of Turkmenistan's officials

Keywords: energy resources, geopolitics, international relations, fuel and energy exports, Central Asia

Received: 25.04.2022, Revised: 22.05.2022, Accepted: 21.06.2022

Suggested Citation: Shukurov, S.I. (2022). Turkmenistan's strategy and policy regarding energy resources. *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Economics"*, 9(2), 38-45.

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Introduction

An inevitable consequence of globalisation is the growing cohesion and indissolubility of the economies of different states. This can take a variety of forms, such as supranational economic and political unions and alliances: the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the European Union (EU), the Customs Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and so on [1]. The role of energy carriers, i.e. combustible minerals, as well as their processed products, which are a source of energy (coal, gas, petroleum products, etc.) remains important. There is a certain disproportion of countries in terms of their availability/inaccessibility to energy resources [2]. Given its substantial natural gas reserves, Turkmenistan, which is of interest to this study, is clearly an important international player and a partner that benefits from cooperation with interested countries and other political and economic actors. In addition to its mineral wealth, Turkmenistan is also an important actor in the global economy due to its access to the Caspian Sea, which automatically provides prospects for long-term cooperation with a number of states, including Iran, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan [3].

With the exception of its immediate neighbours and those states with which there are established and close economic ties, the development of comprehensive relations with Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and China is very promising. Turkmenistan is also at the crossroads of the interests of several states: Turkey (especially in light of a number of important agreements with Azerbaijan in 2020-2021 - the Shusha Declaration, the Memorandum of Understanding On the Supply of Natural Gas to the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, etc.), Russia, China and Iran. All of this has an impact on building a long-term strategy for Turkmenistan's cooperation with the international community, and a proper awareness of these aspects enables the international community to take more effective and pragmatic action to maintain socio-political stability and balance in the Central Asian region [4].

When analysing the available literature devoted to the issue under consideration, it should be noted that Turkmenistan's policy in energy trade has not received sufficient dissemination in domestic historiography. One of the reasons for this has been (and to some extent continues to be) the state's isolation over many years. However, since the accession of incumbent President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov to power, Turkmenistan has begun to reassess its position in the world, both globally and in the Central Asian region in particular. Interest in Turkmenistan increased at the turn of the year 2000-2010, due to the events of the Arab Spring and the growing popularity of radical Islamism in Central Asia, which resulted in the rise of terrorism [5]. Nevertheless, some issues have been addressed in the scientific publications – for example, the studies of A.M. Penjiyev, in particular, his dissertation “Scientific justification of energy technologies use based on renewable energy sources in Turkmenistan” are of interest [2]. R. Satymov studied Turkmenistan's transition to a sustainable energy system [6], pointing out that Turkmenistan is a

country completely dependent on fossil fuels, and that the development of a renewable energy system will be more profitable for the country than permanent dependence on fossil fuels.

Also of interest is V.A. Avatkov's study “Turkey and the Arab Countries”, which devotes considerable attention to the aspect of energy resources [1]. The current trends in the energy sector in Turkey are investigated in the studies by S. Erat et al. [7]. In this context, the key problem is the shortage of in-country reserves of oil and natural gas and the need to use them efficiently. F.V. Bekun [8] drew attention to the links between foreign direct investment and income levels, electricity production and income levels, and between urbanisation and economic growth. H. Zhang [9] studied the specifics of Chinese overseas energy investments financed by Chinese development banks going into fossil fuel and coal-fired power plants.

The above-mentioned studies only partially address the issue of Turkmenistan's foreign policy, which justifies the need for a more detailed study of this topic. *The purpose* of this study is to provide a descriptive description of Turkmenistan's current foreign policy in energy trade. Furthermore, a forecast regarding the future actions of the Turkmen authorities towards building a system of international strategic cooperation should be calculated.

Materials and Methods

The current system of cooperation of Turkmenistan in the area of energy trade was reviewed using both general scientific and specialised methods of examining international relations. Through the general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, it has been possible to identify key aspects that influence the preservation of Turkmenistan's current position in the international arena, to identify the existing international treaties and agreements that determine the state's economic and political course, and to predict future steps for building mutually beneficial cooperation with third countries. A descriptive overview of Turkmenistan's foreign policy from its independence in the early 1990s to the present day was drawn up by using the deduction method. The induction method made it possible to summarise the available information, describe key features of Turkmenistan's foreign policy (including in the economic sphere) and draw conclusions about the extent to which regional processes influence the country's foreign policy.

The historical study methods made it possible, on the one hand, to indicate the key preconditions and motivations of the state leadership for certain political acts, including certain international agreements, and, on the other, to recreate a chronologically substantiated picture of Turkmenistan's foreign policy during its years of independence. This study also employed such methods as content and event analysis. Event analysis allowed identifying a number of elements of the process under study, such as the historical characteristics of the country's current foreign policy and the claims of other actors in the international arena to

strengthen their position, both in the state in question and in the Central Asian region.

The content analysis used in the study allowed for the formation of conclusions about Turkmenistan's foreign policy, based on the systematisation of voluminous material (in particular media publications and official speeches by the country's highest authorities). The combination of methods used in the study has offered a holistic picture that, firstly, describes the current situation in Turkmenistan's foreign policy and, secondly, allows conclusions to be drawn about the Turkmen government's next steps.

The study was conducted in three stages:

1. The first stage involved an analysis of the available historical sources and materials to identify the characteristics and role of both the region of interest and Turkmenistan in particular (in retrospect). The historical background and sources of the current political processes, the role of other countries in these processes, as well as the cultural, geographical and political features of this state are determined.

2. The second stage consisted of a content and event analysis of Turkmenistan's current system of relations with other countries on the basis of international relations and treaties, along with a review of the current political regime.

3. In the third stage, a forecast of the Turkmenistan government's next steps in establishing cooperation with third countries was drawn up, conclusions were drawn and the results were summarised and systematised.

Results and Discussion

The main stages in the development of Turkmenistan. Key foreign policy and economic events

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in a brief political vacuum in the Central Asian region. Despite Turkey's renewed ambition to infiltrate the region with Pan-Turkic ideas of uniting all Turkic-speaking peoples in a single international political entity (the so-called "Turan") and to impose its own model of the socio-political structure, the influence of Russia remained very strong during Central Asia's early years of independence (1). This was conditioned both by the preserved unified economic system and the interconnections between the "centre" and the former republics of the USSR and also by the persistence of the Russian-speaking population and the migration (of various nationalities) to the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, Russia's political influence was gradually declining. Taking measures to preserve national sovereignty, the Constitution was adopted in Turkmenistan on May 18, 1992. Regulating the fundamentals of state power, secularism and neutrality were also defined as the foundations of the constitutional order. The neutral status of the state was reinforced by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/80A [10], which expressed the hope that Turkmenistan's current status as a neutral state would contribute to peace and security in the region. The country has embarked on a neutral course of policy aimed at establishing a system of strong and mutually beneficial relations with the countries of the region,

which have the qualities of good-neighbourly relations and mutual understanding [11].

As was the case in the first phase of the state's foreign policy development, the declared status of neutrality of Turkmenistan was challenged, by its regional specificities. As early as late 1991, a civil war broke out in Tajikistan between the politically moderate leaders of the republic and a radical Islamist insurgency; an extremist organisation, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, was founded in Uzbekistan; and in 1996 an Islamist organisation, the Taliban, which proclaimed Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate, assumed power in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Turkmen government refused to participate in an emergency consultative summit that had been convened on the initiative of Russia and the Central Asian republics to deal with the situation in Afghanistan, arguing that the nature of these events was a domestic political issue [12].

However, further developments suggest that this conclusion is hasty and underestimates the impact of intra-Afghan affairs on the Central Asian region. For example, the migration of ethnic minorities into the region in question increased, a humanitarian catastrophe was looming, and the prospect of the Taliban invading the Central Asian republics in order to spread the ideas of radical Islamism gained more and more attention [13].

The declared status of neutrality of Turkmenistan has also predetermined the information policy of the government. M. Kumukov [5] analysed the publications in the media and speeches of the Turkmen leaders at the turn of the 1990s-2000s and concluded that while the neighbours in the region feared aggravation of interethnic relations, separatism and the rise in popularity of radical Islamist trends, the Turkmen leadership preferred to ignore this topic and avoid public responses and high-profile statements directed against the Afghan leadership. The aspirations of the then ruler of Turkmenistan, S. Niyazov was motivated, among other things, by the fact that the construction of a gas pipeline through Afghan territory remained an urgent issue for the state [5]. As a consequence, the territory of Turkmenistan has become a transit route for narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan. In addition, by the late 1990s, the situation had started to deteriorate and ethnic relations had worsened, with Turkmen persecution being documented in Afghanistan. As a result, a stream of refugees rushed to the territory of Turkmenistan. Despite the relations with Afghanistan turning sour and the termination of discussions on joint transit and energy projects, the Turkmen leadership has continued to refrain from criticising the Taliban regime [11]. The declining stability both in Afghanistan and along its border with Turkmenistan has prompted the freezing of the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) gas pipeline project.

Other challenges include the Caspian Sea issue, which remains relevant. Thus, between the 1990s and 2000s, the issue was not only related to the use of biological resources and ecology (i.e. protection of the environment) but was also directly linked to national security and the fight against

organised crime, including drug mafia and drug trafficking [4]. The list of countries whose interests were affected by the Caspian issue was not limited to those with direct access to the Caspian Sea. Turkey, along with countries of the European Union and the United States, were also concerned about the matter. They were motivated by an interest in Caspian energy supplies and in preserving regional stability. For example, Turkey sought not only to realize its energy transit potential, but also to gain access to Turkmenistan's energy potential through the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline [14].

The other interested party was the United States of America. Along with growing suspicions about Iran building nuclear weapons, the issue of the US using the Caspian Sea as a launching pad for a hypothetical military attack on Iran was widely discussed in the 2000s. It is also worth noting that the US presence in Central Asia increased after the establishment (with Russian consent) of a military base in Kyrgyzstan in 2001 for intervention in Afghanistan, which eventually took place, and the Taliban regime was overthrown, but the military base remained thereafter. The situation that unfolded around the Islamic Republic of Iran and its (hypothetical) nuclear programme, on the one hand, posed a threat to regional security, and also had a significant impact on international relations, including due to the above-mentioned properties of the Central Asian region as a place of intersection of interests of a number of states.

As for Turkey's role in the region, the importance of pipeline construction to Ankara's support for Ashgabat is equally important [2]. The meeting between Turkmen

leader Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in November 2014 was a significant milestone. During the meeting, the leaders agreed on the importance of developing further cooperation in support of regional security. Furthermore, in terms of Turkey's support for Turkmenistan in resolving the current difficulties caused by the ongoing economic, political and military instability in Afghanistan, a characteristic trend in Ankara-Ashgabat relations should be noted: throughout the years of independency of Turkmenistan, the idea of close rapprochement and cooperation between Turkey and Turkmenistan in various fields, including the development and functioning of the Fuel and Energy Complex (hereinafter referred to as FEC), remains relevant. There are other initiatives aimed at enhancing cooperation with Central Asian countries. For example, the prospect and practice of interaction with these countries within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organisation is of great importance to the Turkish leadership.

The current status and trends in the economic and political development of Turkmenistan

Having considered a number of political events that have occurred in Turkmenistan since its declaration of independence (October 2, 1991) and influenced its foreign policy, and analysing the economic sphere, it is possible to draw certain conclusions characterizing the development of the fuel and energy complex (FEC) in Central Asian states, based on the statistics that were presented at the second meeting of the SCO Forum [15] (Tables 1-3).

Table 1. Oil production, including gas condensate, per capita, kg

Year	1991	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Country								
Kazakhstan	1567	1232	1666	2018	2375	2073	3182	3449
Kyrgyzstan	31.9	19.6	16.4	15.8	15.7	15.3	15.1	13.8
Russia	3110	2071	2065	2086	2224	2406	2645	2927
Tajikistan	19.6	4.7	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.7
Turkmenistan	1431	1000	1478	1532	1875	1970	1970	2005
Uzbekistan	133	333	337	333	304	322	338	342

Table 2. Natural gas production per capita, m³

Year	1991	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Country								
Kazakhstan	465	356	511	666	776	783	950	1089
Kyrgyzstan	18.5	7.9	3.8	5.1	6.6	6.6	6.0	5.4
Russia	4329	4020	4026	4044	4011	4016	4145	4307
Tajikistan	16.9	6.7	5.3	5.8	6.5	8.2	5.0	5.0
Turkmenistan	22144	7132	2890	4872	6250	7920	10600	10620
Uzbekistan	1975	2133	2278	2277	2279	2286	2263	2215

Table 3. Coal production per capita, kg.

Year	1991	1995	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Country								
Kazakhstan	7686	5015	4482	3911	5035	5336	4964	5686
Kyrgyzstan	774	103	91.9	85.7	86.5	95.9	85.9	82.4
Russia	2376	1774	1579	1705	1775	1863	1782	1911
Tajikistan	56.8	5.8	3.0	3.1	3.6	3.8	5.5	7.1
Uzbekistan	280	135	123	121	101	121	123	126

On the basis of the above information, a conclusion can be drawn about the dynamic development of the fuel and energy sectors in these states (including Turkmenistan), even in comparison with their neighbours in the post-Soviet space. However, it is possible to note a certain trend to which they were subject (Tables 1 and 2): production of all types of energy resources experienced a certain decline from 1990 until the mid-1990s, after which rapid growth occurred in a number of countries in the region under consideration.

Analysis of current trends in the functioning and development of the fuel and energy complex [16] shows that, as of the early 2020s, states such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have an economy-beneficial disproportion: states extract significantly more minerals than they use for domestic consumption [16]. As a consequence, a substantial part of the production is exported. Turkmenistan produced 83,772.9 million cubic metres of natural gas in 2021, while its exports for the year amounted to about 45 billion cubic meters [17]. The oil industry in Kazakhstan was estimated to produce 85.7 million tonnes in 2021 and export 67.6 million tonnes [18]. The region's resource-poor neighbours, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, are currently unable to fully cover their oil and gas consumption needs. Kyrgyzstan exports surplus electricity production, while Tajikistan's hydropower potential is less exploited. As for the level of development of pipeline transport, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan show great potential, whereas in Uzbekistan the gas pipeline infrastructure is highly developed. In countries with few hydrocarbon resources, pipeline transport is not developed [19].

The existing cooperation and coordination system between Turkmenistan and the People's Republic of China is therefore rather interesting. Whereas for Turkey the Pan-Turkism and the unity of the Turkic peoples are used to infiltrate the Central Asian arena, similar arguments can be heard in the case of China, in particular given the presence of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region within the People's Republic of China (PRC), whose indigenous population (the Uighurs) is also Turkic and practising Islam, the geographical and natural conditions of which are close to those of Central Asia, and all information attacks against China regarding the possible oppression of the Muslim Uighur population are countered and denied. Of all the existing areas of cooperation between China and Turkmenistan, the one that stands out most prominently compared to the others is the gas industry. This can be traced back to an increasing

number of precedents in bilateral relations. In recent years, for example, there have been a number of high-level meetings between Ashgabat and Beijing representatives. Cooperation in the area of energy trade, in particular natural gas, was the main topic of discussion [20].

The foundation for this cooperation is the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline. Turkmen gas was transported to the PRC via three lines, while the decision to open a fourth line was announced in May 2014. A visit by President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov to the Chinese capital, Beijing, took place at that time. Both parties stressed the importance of increasing cooperation in this area and accelerating the construction of a new, fourth line of the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline. The current gas pipeline runs from the border of Turkmenistan, passes through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, then crosses the border of China in the northwest, then is distributed across the territory of the PRC. Currently, the length of the pipeline is about 10,000 km, and the creation of a similar energy and infrastructure interdependence of the PRC in the Central Asian region aims to strengthen and maintain stability in the existing economic relations between these states in the long term [5].

However, an analysis of the system of relationships built by Beijing, and a detailed consideration of Beijing's motives, leads to the conclusion that China has more far-reaching political ambitions and that building economic relations with neighbouring countries is only an element of these objectives. Central Asia is gradually becoming not only a source of energy resources for the PRC but also its strategic rear [2]. Examining China's increasing investments in the transport infrastructure of Central Asian states through the prism of Chinese geopolitical interests, it can be concluded that they are justified - Beijing's desire to strengthen its position in the region politically as well as economically link all Central Asian states can be clearly identified. Moreover, it is evident that if the current course of Central Asian states continues into the 2020s, China will be capable of meeting its increasing consumption needs and of strengthening its own geopolitical dominance in the region by manipulating the position of economic dominance in the region and the dependence of Central Asian republics on China [5].

Prospects for the development of the FEC and international cooperation in energy trade

In making predictions about the future steps of Turkmenistan's government in the sphere of energy trade, it should be

noted that the specificity of the current political regime in Turkmenistan excludes the possibility to consider separately political and economic factors, as well as factors directly related to the functioning of the Turkmen energy sector. During the presidency of Saparmurat Niyazov (titled "Turkmenbashi", the head of Turkmenistan), funds flowing into the state budget from the export of energy resources were under Niyazov's direct control. There were precedents for channelling most of the money received through various private foundations rather than the national budget), and these funds were also used primarily to consolidate the régime of personal power. This type of economy included corruption, social programmes, reinforcement of state propaganda and role of the intelligence services within the state. Turkmenistan's energy export policy has also been influenced by this objective [19].

The consequence of this system of interaction between state institutions was the construction of a specific architecture for Turkmenistan's international relations in which the main tasks of the state were, on the one hand, to maintain the maximum possible distance from other states (this was achieved by maintaining the agitation and competition for Turkmenistan's resources) and, on the other hand, to completely isolate the state from all possible outside influences [21]. The president of Turkmenistan also maintains a considerable degree of control over the state. Another point worth consideration is that, given the nature of the current political regime, there is a total ideologisation of all spheres of public life, which aims to glorify the role of Turkmenbashi (the first president of Turkmenistan, S. Niyazov). This has led to statistical data being critically unreliable in the analysis of Turkmenistan. There are complications in calculating the population, estimating the actual scale of the economy and even the volume of available gas and oil reserves. For example, it is very challenging to verify the statements of state officials claiming that Turkmenistan has the world's third-largest (by volume) reserves of natural gas. Since Turkmenistan rejected a programme of radical market reforms in the early 1990s (unlike some post-Soviet states, including the Russian Federation), the entire Turkmen energy sector is under direct state control [5].

A specific feature of Turkmenistan's energy trade policy is the near-total export focus of gas production. Turkmenistan aims at establishing gas exports as the main item for generating export revenues. At the same time, export opportunities are limited, primarily due to the insufficient level of development and technical condition of the transit infrastructure. A number of geopolitical factors also play a role. These include, for example, the position of the Russian Federation as a subject that has the ability to monopolistically dictate prices, as well as the volume of extraction and sale of resources. Russia is also a major buyer and also a transit country for resources. Turkmenistan's past disagreements with the Russian company Gazprom, and with a number of CIS gas buyers (primarily Ukraine), have repeatedly led to precedents for stopping gas transit via the northern route altogether.

When reviewing the main milestones of cooperation on this issue, one can mention, for instance, the agreement signed in May 2007 on the construction of the Pre-Caspian gas pipeline (contracted by the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan) and, with the integration of Uzbekistan, the quadrilateral agreement on the reconstruction of the Central Asia-Centre gas pipeline system. Analysing the political situation in the region, it can be concluded that it is the northern route for the transit of energy resources that is of greatest interest to the Central Asian states. The economic, military and political instability in Afghanistan, which is cutting off Central Asia from South Asia, also plays a significant role. Also relevant are international ambiguity and the regularly escalating tensions around Iran and its relations with the US - for example, in addition to the aforementioned suspicions about Iran's nuclear programme, there was an international scandal in January 2020 over the death of Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Suleimani following a US army missile strike on Baghdad airport.

All this makes it impossible to build a mutually beneficial system of oil and gas transit through the Islamic Republic of Iran. Concerning the divide of the Caspian Sea into spheres of influence, there are difficulties arising from the overlapping interests of several states in the region, as well as other economic concerns – such as the 2001 bankruptcy of the US company Enron Corporation, which was actively developing the trans-Caspian gas pipeline. All of these factors complicate attempts to export gas to Europe via the Caspian Sea. Despite the perception that transporting gas to China is a resource-intensive and costly undertaking, shortly before the termination of his presidential term due to passing, President Saparmurat Niyazov signed an agreement to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to the PRC. Moreover, his successor, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, did not denounce the treaty, and in August 2007, Chinese President Jian Zemin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed an agreement under which the construction of part of this gas pipeline through Kazakhstan was launched [22].

Given all of the above factors, including the ones preventing the researcher from forming an objective analysis of the internal political, foreign policy and economic situation in Turkmenistan, national development programmes, as an object of examination, it is worth paying attention to national development programmes ("Strategy of Economic, Political and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan" [23]), as well as public speeches by the Presidents of Turkmenistan (Saparmurat Niyazov and Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov). They formulated such strategic objectives:

1. Increasing the volume of production and export of energy resources (in particular, oil and gas).
2. Using revenues derived from the export of the above-mentioned energy resources as the main source of funds, which will be directed to finance the activities of state institutions, the implementation of active social policy, industrial and infrastructure development.
3. Maximum cooperation with all interested gas buyers

and mitigation of possible supply risks through diversification.

1. Reducing dependence on traditional energy traders (above all, the Russian Federation). The purpose of such a policy is to bring energy prices (especially gas) to the world level.

2. Being cautious of economically integrative projects set up in the post-Soviet space, given the potential for these to limit cooperation with other buyers of natural resources. This policy was manifested in the refusal to participate in the Eurasian Economic Union, the Joint Collective Security Treaty, GUAM, OCA and other integration structures. Other examples include the termination of cooperation within the CIS and Turkmenistan's transition to associate membership, the abolition of dual citizenship with Russia, the introduction of a visa regime (for CIS countries), and so on [24-28].

3. Achieving full self-sufficiency in electricity, primarily through the use of natural gas in CHP.

It is worth noting that Turkmenistan's energy trade policy cannot be seen as separate and disconnected from the context of its national security strategy, which is directly linked to the maintenance of its formal status as "positive neutrality". The consequence here is non-participation in military blocs and alliances. Such a policy is seen as facilitating multi-vector contacts with all interested gas buyers [4: 29-30].

Conclusions

Summing up, a number of pertinent points can be made based on the body of material that has been studied and analysed. These include political stability (Turkmenistan's location in a region characterised by a high degree of political and economic instability), and the state's possession of significant energy resources. For instance, the state extracts more mineral resources than it uses for domestic consumption,

thus developing energy exports. The energy trade, provided that the country has a favourable geographical and geopolitical position, that it remains a neutral state, and that it has a competent and unique foreign policy strategy for Central Asia (which, as noted, is expressed in its refusal to participate in alliances and blocs), significantly elevates Turkmenistan's importance and interest among other Central Asian states for major political players, placing it in the spotlight. Economic relations between Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China and Turkey are of considerable interest, with the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Kazakhstan-China gas pipeline playing an important role. Within the framework of this study, Central Asia was characterised as a region that attracts the foreign policy activities of a number of world and regional powers - being in this region, Turkmenistan seeks to build relations with these countries in a way that maintains their strength and focus on long-term cooperation.

The material presented in this study may be of interest to experts in geopolitics and international relations, and to political consultants who, by the nature of their work, have a direct impact on government decision-making. This investigation will also be of interest to a wide audience interested in the states of the Central Asian region.

The findings of the study raise a number of questions and issues that must be addressed by researchers in the future. Thus, it is necessary to develop detailed methods that would allow a holistic picture of the economic and political situation of Turkmenistan to be constructed and, on the basis of the data thus obtained, to create the most holistic and realistic forecast of the further development of the state in question, since, in view of the current political regime in Turkmenistan, it is very difficult to access objective, unbiased data that would be free of any ideological influence.

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Стратегія і політика Туркменістану в контексті енергетичних ресурсів

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Анотація. Актуальність теми дослідження обумовлена, з одного боку, важливістю і використанням корисних копалин, які виступають у якості енергетичних носіїв у контексті функціонування світової економіки, з іншої – важливістю урахування актуальних економічних процесів, що протікають в цікавому нам регіоні (в рамках дослідження – Середня Азія) при виробленні стратегії реінтеграції пострадянського простору. Ціль статті полягає в характеристиках реалізованої нині політики Туркменістану в аспекті торгівлі енергетичними ресурсами для створення прогнозу щодо подальших кроків у виробленні системи стратегічної співпраці з сусідніми країнами, а також іншими політичними суб'єктами. В рамках дослідження використовуються загальнонаукові методи, а також ряд спеціальних методів, таких як методи дедукції та індукції, контент-аналіз, івент-аналіз, а також системний підхід та історичний аналіз. В рамках дослідження надано, по-перше, опис основних подій у міжнародній політиці (особлива увага при цьому приділяється саме процесам, які відбувалися раніше і продовжуються зараз в економічній сфері, зокрема – у сфері торгівлі та видобутку енергетичних ресурсів), як у регіоні в цілому, так і в Туркменістані, зокрема. По-друге, на основі історичних передумов і наявних даних, запропоновано сценарій ймовірного розвитку держави в царині, яка осліджується. Інформація, викладена в цій роботі, може бути використана з метою корекції дій при створенні довгострокової системи відносин з Туркменістаном, а також для оцінки та розуміння мотивації щодо цих чи інших дій керівництва Туркменістану

Ключові слова: енергоресурси, геополітика, міжнародні відносини, експорт палива та енергії, Середня Азія