

Strategy of Balancing in Russian Energy Diplomacy toward Middle East

Authors : Davood Karimipour

Abstract : Since long ago, Russia has been one of the most influential actors in regional equations in South West Asia. The geographic affinity of its vital interests with Western Asia has caused Moscow to have a high sensitivity to the balance of power in the Middle East, as its role in the Syrian crisis clearly demonstrated the importance. In recent years, Moscow has tried to use the energy diplomacy tool in maintaining the balance of power between the major powers in the region. The paper, based on the qualitative case study method, investigates how Russia's energy diplomacy plays a role in the balance of regional forces in the Middle East, studying the country's conduct towards Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Israel. The hypothesis presented that Russia, using energy tools, is trying to push the regional powers toward cooperation in order to increase the influence in the region, increase power in global markets, and controlling the US to restore power balance in the region. Its cooperation in the Iranian gas industry, the country's relations with Saudis in the framework of OPEC, cooperation with the Turkish Kurds and the presence in the Israeli gas industry are an example of these Russian energy diplomacy initiatives in West Asia, which is the common point of the Moscow approach to South West Asia.

Keywords : Russia, balance of power, energy diplomacy, Middle East

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