

US works out plan for gas deliveries to Europe

The US announced developing a new plan for pumping gas to Europe. The project is being worked out jointly with Turkish officials; around 8% of crude oil is transited via Turkey at present.

The USA believes that Europe should diversify gas supplies away from Russia's control. Central Asian gas can reach Europe via the Turkey-Greece-Italy and Nabucco pipelines dubbed a 'south corridor'. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project – expected to convince the EU in the offered strategy being efficient - evidences the reliability of the alternative route.

Apparently, the US pursues its own interests, but does Europe realize that it will depend on the US if it favors the US-supported projects?

First, Central Asian gas fields hold considerably less gas than those in Russia, and there is no proven data about the Turkmen gas reserves, ostensibly vast.

Second, all pipelines from Central Asia (bypassing Russia) are routed via Turkey, one of the US' closest allies, that is aspiring to become the global transit corridor. Thus, reducing its dependence on the reliable gas supplier holding the world's largest natural gas reserves, Europe will fall under pressure of the US-led policy and depend on unreliable Central Asian partners.

Also, it is not yet clear whether Turkey is able to handle those large gas volumes that can be transited via its territory. Any failure at this energy hub's facilities would entail energy shortage throughout the EU - which is hardly in line with the energy security Europe is striving for.

Putting politics aside, partnering with Russia that has already started constructing North Stream and is about to start South Stream is economically expedient for Europe.

The pipelines will link the exporter, holding the world's largest gas reserves, and Europe - eliminating transit risks present in the new US plan.

By Kirill Lebedev