



“Turkey-Russia Rapprochement” Continues

OE Watch Commentary: Talks during Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Turkey on 3 April 2018 were dominated by three issues: breaking ground for the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, the purchase of S-400 Triumf anti-aircraft weapons systems, and a bilateral gas pipeline project. The author of the accompanying excerpted article from *Hurriyet* expands on these topics and notes that without a doubt, Russia will play an important role in Turkish foreign policy in upcoming years.

According to the author, the visit will be remembered by the groundbreaking ceremony of the \$20 billion Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in a town on Turkey’s Mediterranean coast. The nuclear power plant will be the biggest bilateral cooperation project contributing to Turkey’s economic development and energy security. Another major project the two leaders announced was the purchase of Russian S-400 Triumf anti-aircraft weapons systems. They agreed to move up the delivery of the weapons to July 2019, ahead of the previously agreed-upon date of 2020. The two countries are already cooperating on construction of the Blue Stream natural gas pipeline, and, in addition, they will also work together to build Turkish Stream. The author notes that this pipeline will stream natural gas to Turkey and on to southeastern Europe. The natural gas will flow from Russia and pass through the Black Sea in two parallel pipelines to the Turkish and European markets.

The author notes that all these agreements and cooperation indicate development of strong ties between Moscow and Ankara. As such, Russia will play increasingly in Turkish foreign policy. According to the author, by building cooperative ties with Russia, President Erdogan is signaling a more independent foreign policy. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gunduz)**

“Turkey hasn’t finalized the approval of the land transit of this project [natural gas pipeline]. Knowing Russian eagerness of wanting to finalize this project, Turkey wants to use this approval as bargaining chip with Russia.”

Source: Sedat Ergin, “Türkiye - Rusya yakınlaşması tarihi önemde, ancak...(Turkey – Russia rapprochement has a historical importance, but...),” *Hurriyet*, 5 April 2018. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sedat-ergin/turkiye-rusya-yakinlasmasi-tarihi-onemde-ancak-40794936>

Turkey’s purchase of S-400 air defense system is an important project. Despite of being a NATO member, Turkey entering into military cooperation with Russia, in terms of foreign policy, means a significant challenge to the Western World.

In terms of natural gas... by bypassing Ukraine, Russia will have the opportunity to transfer its natural gas through an alternative route to the southern Europe.

Turkey hasn’t finalized the approval of the land transit of this project [natural gas pipeline]. Knowing Russian eagerness of wanting to finalize this project, Turkey wants to use this approval as bargaining chip with Russia.

While Turkey is approaching to Russia for its own interests, it should refrain itself from resembling to Russia domestically.



Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant groundbreaking ceremony.

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