

Security challenges within eurasia (caucasus and caspiian basin)



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Security challenges within Eurasia (Caucasus and Caspian basin) The Caucasus region and the Caspian basin both of which are found in Euro-Asia are places that are growing in the level of importance to European and Asia's security. The huge amount of interest that the areas are enjoying is due primarily to their strategic positions geographically and the existence of untapped natural resources¹. South Caucasus particularly borders the Middle East, China, Turkey, Iran, and Russia. The regions are rich in energy reserves in the form of crude oil and natural gas, and provide a natural corridor that can be used in the transportation of oil by land². The corridor is perceived to be important in the transportation of the energy rich products from the Caspian basin to Europe and the Mediterranean Sea. Research shows that the basin holds about 100 billion barrels of gas and oil and stretches about the area of Northern Europe. Considering the size of the basin and its energy potential, the area is a very important for Europe and surrounding countries which are no less interested in harvesting the oil and gas. Furthermore, the region is supposed to be important in the redevelopment of the Silk Road that historically connected Europe and Asia. In this sense, the route to be used in the transportation of energy resources has remained a security challenge as different countries prefer the use of different routes. NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and EAPC (Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council) countries are greatly interested in the Caspian basin and Caucasus region for the factors stated here above. On the other hand, Russia's relationship with Central Asian as well as South Caucasus countries is perceived to be motivated toward the redrawing of former Soviet Union's old lines³. In other words, Russia wants the countries in these regions to get into its circle of influence. The country's military presence is testimony to its

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growing interest in the region although it claims that the presence is meant to deter drug trafficking and terrorism. NATO which includes the United States on the other hand is also interested in expanding its territory through military engagement in the region, against the favour of Russia. 4

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