



Executive Summary

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THE HOUR OF TRUTH: THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE—IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE’S ENERGY SECURITY AND THE LESSONS FOR THE U.S. ARMY

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Natural gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine have occurred repeatedly since the breakup of the Soviet Union, when Kyiv became independent from Moscow. However, the 2014-15 wave of these conflicts was also coupled with a Russian military intervention in eastern Ukraine. These conflicts, together with Gazprom’s shortsighted attitude to its customers’ needs and concerns, have made Russia’s natural gas supplies unreliable in the eyes of the European Union (EU) members. The last instance of this gas conflict happened in late-2014 and early-2015 due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Given the dependence of the Old Continent on outside sources of natural gas, the unreliable record of Russia as a supplier has boosted regional cooperation among the EU countries and incentivized the EU as a whole to seek a solution to its dangerous dependence on an unreliable source of gas in the east.

The U.S. Government has been involved in European energy security for over 20 years, with the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations’ support of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Main Export Pipeline and of the Southern Corridor. U.S. forces in Europe, and the U.S. Army in particular, can and should play an important role in promoting energy security, as this monograph demonstrates.

For now, the viable solutions for the EU are a partial diversification of the piped supplies from the Caspian region and potentially North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, coupled with increased amounts of gas available as liquified natural gas (LNG) after the multitude of LNG projects across the world come online. Thus, in the long run, the EU seemingly will have a choice between cheaper but politically

sensitive Russian piped gas – and the more expensive but reliable supplies of LNG from the United States and other sources around the globe, as well as piped gas from Europe’s unstable neighborhoods.

U.S. Armed Forces have played an important role in providing European security since World War II. Today, the U.S. military’s role in European energy security can include a comprehensive assessment of the security of European energy imports, including natural gas, coal, uranium, and oil. The United States and its allies can monitor the threats to pipelines and to the natural gas balance through the U.S. intelligence community and their counterparts in Europe, Turkey, and the Middle East by sharing intelligence where possible.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can develop, in cooperation with European Command and Central Command, a system to monitor threats to critical energy infrastructure, including monitoring threats to the intra-European gas network. Interconnectors will become the key component of European gas independence from Russia. In particular, the U.S. Army should develop joint threat assessment and emergency planning and response protocols as they relate to threats to individual gas fields, pipelines, gas processing facilities, storage facilities, pumping stations, and other crucial infrastructure components.

NATO and individual European, Middle East, and North African countries have interoperability standards and joint tactics, techniques, and procedures which would allow them to coordinate and interact in case of threats to the natural gas infrastructure as recently seen in Algeria.¹ The U.S. Army deployed in Europe is a crucial component to NATO providing

regional security, interacting with NATO and non-NATO allies, and assisting with the training of allied militaries.

The U.S. Army should:

- Cooperate with NATO, national militaries of NATO members and non-NATO allies, their intelligence services and law enforcement, as well as with energy companies, to ensure security of pipelines and other gas facilities. The crucial infrastructure components of the EU natural gas energy security include the main export pipelines coming from Russia/Ukraine and North Africa, the system of gas hubs (such as Baumgarten in Austria), pipeline interconnectors between the European countries, as well as LNG import terminals.
- Prepare for energy crisis-related disaster relief in Europe in cooperation with European militaries in the NATO framework and the EU and national emergency responders. The U.S. Army should build on its experience in developing infrastructure protection plans in the United States and around the world to outline similar plans, programs, and procedures in Europe. In case of a future disruption of Russian gas supplies to Europe, Europe would better weather the crisis if it had a joint plan with the United States, instead of trying to find an ad hoc solution.
- Train forces for critical energy infrastructure protection. The United States has developed an effective system of critical infrastructure protection at home and can share its expertise with its European allies. The U.S. Army should use its expertise and capacity to help the allies in Central Europe protect the interconnectors. In particular, the emphasis needs to be put on training and equipping our Central and Eastern European NATO allies, as well as Ukraine and Moldova.
- Train and equip local militaries and other forces for energy infrastructure protection and actively pursue those who are trying to destroy energy infrastructure. Thus, the struggle against violent religious extremists is directly connected to U.S. efforts to keep oil and gas infrastructure, the electricity grids, ports, and airports secure. The U.S. Army can and should cooperate in the designing of local military and security components and units, as well as the

strategy and tactics necessary to ensure both intelligence gathering and hard security aspects of critical energy infrastructure protection. In particular, this should apply to energy-rich countries of North Africa and Sahel, including Nigeria, Chad, Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. The United States should also evaluate the needs and capabilities of the Kurdish forces, which already are cooperating with the United States in fighting the “Islamic State” (Daesh).

- Temporarily protect critical energy facilities and infrastructure. When the United States is in the process of training the European forces to protect the intra-European gas infrastructure, the United States should use its own capabilities to ensure proper protection of the infrastructure until European forces are capable to perform these tasks on their own.

ENDNOTE

1. “Al Qaeda’s North African wing claims two Algerian attacks,” Reuters, June 8, 2015, available from www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/08/ozatp-us-algeria-security-idAFKBN0000GZ20150608, accessed June 20, 2015.

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