

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CONCLUSION**

Probing on the trend of Ukraine-Belarus Relations with the EU-NATO Alliance and Russia, oftentimes, when Ukraine and Belarus sides with one of the two (Russia or the EU-NATO alliance), its ties with the other would be strained – usually validated through the application more aggressive measures, for instance by the more frequent deployment of sanctions and bans. This implies that closer ties with the EU-NATO alliance would cost Ukraine-Belarus relations with Russia and vice versa.

Moreover, the condition between Russia and its Eastern European counterparts fulfills the four enabling parameters of energy geopolitics. First, on the geographical concentration of infrastructure, this condition was supported by the intricate and connective pipeline network owned by Russia since the reign of the Soviet Union era. Second, on the parameter of import-export dependency, Belarus and Ukraine's trend of large energy import percentage from Russia justifies the claim. Third, on low market diversity, though there are other energy players such as Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, they were proven unable to meet the capacity of Russia. Lastly, on the parameter of regional market vulnerability of disruption, the evidence suggests that Eastern Europe will very less likely survive the total discontinuation of Russia's energy supply (especially gas) due to the availability of other immediate resources that can be transported in due time, reflecting on the current state of dependency and how these states cope with similar past occurrences before.

If contextualized to the asymmetrical interdependence assumptions, Russian high degree of control towards valuable resources for Ukraine and Belarus, the two's intensive and hardly replaceable needs for Russian energy commodity, and the fact that both's cost of compliance to Russia's will is less than the cost of doing without the commodity supply from Russia explained enough that though both Kyiv and Minsk contributes to Russia's national income and serves as a gas transit state, their interdependence is asymmetrical. Such implies that Russia if the relations reached a stall, Russia is more likely to survive without Ukraine and Belarus, than vice versa.

In answering how does Russia implement its energy statecraft in Ukraine and Belarus, it was carried out through three main means: price alteration, supply halt, distribution rerouting, and construction of new pipeline. The aforementioned were carried out to achieve two things: positive and negative inducement. It is noticeable how Russia became more accommodative (e.g. by giving price discount and rising transit fees) when the two states comply to its request, demonstrating the usage of positive inducement. Meanwhile, as their ties grew closer with the EU and NATO, Russia would be more stringent (e.g. bringing up debt payment within short timespan and threaten to halt supply if it is not fulfilled, and constructing new pipeline routes), depicting the usage of negative inducement.

In conclusion, Russia uses energy as a tool of foreign policy due to enabling geopolitical factors bridging its relations with Belarus and Ukraine. These geopolitical factors making the occurrence of asymmetrical interdependence more likely to happen, presenting Russia with significant leverage and burdening Belarus

and Ukraine with exploitable vulnerabilities. This motivates Russia to deploy energy statecraft, making both crude oil and natural gas a tool to exercise power.

The limitation of this research, apart from not extending the timeline due to the currently progressing events between Russia and Ukraine, is that this research only tries to answer the rationale and the method carried behind the energy statecraft without assessing the impact and effectivity of such policies towards Ukraine and Belarus, and whether or not there is a noticeable change of international orientation of the two countries.

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