

THE ENERGY TOOLKIT OF STATECRAFT

THE CASES OF RUSSIA AND THE USA

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Abstract

While employing their energy potentials for advancing their foreign policy interests, Russia and the USA apply a variety of political tools and practices that can be classified as “positive” or “negative”; regulating energy markets, or reinforcing one’s own potential. The author argues that in both cases, the application of energy-related statecraft is largely related either to energy security or to advancing ideologically inspired political interests. These two kinds of incentives can either work together or conflict each other.

To pursue their relevant interests, both Russia and the USA have distinctive potentials, resources, and instruments that to a large extent were developed under the influence of geopolitical and economic shocks: the dramatic growth of global oil prices in the 1970s for the USA, and the centrifugal post-Soviet geopolitical processes in the 1990s for Russia. As a negative tool, the USA most often uses various kinds of sanctions to target their opponent’s energy sectors, while the strongest Russian weapon is energy supply restrictions. To safeguard one’s own energy security and solidify their political influences, both states manage bilateral complementary “producer–consumer” relations, while to stabilize the global oil price, both states participate in international energy alliances. For instrumental purposes, both states also take advantage of purposeful or spontaneous transformations of their energy sectors (e.g. consolidation of the Russian energy sector and the U.S. ‘shale revolution’) for foreign policy purposes.

In most cases, the effectiveness of applying statecraft tools for advancing energy-related interests proved to be limited. Those sanctions, and other ways of pressure that targeted opponents’ energy sectors (especially if applied unilaterally), rarely led themselves to desirable alterations in those opponents’ policies. The results of energy alliances building also have proved to be limited both for Russia and for the USA as those alliances do not secure full-fledged control over global oil prices and are not solid or representative enough.

Keywords:

statecraft, foreign policy tools, energy security, pipeline politics, Russia, USA.

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Russia and the United States are energy superpowers; they are among the global leaders in oil and gas production. Both countries have the most powerful political and military capabilities that can be deployed, if necessary, to defend their interests in the energy sphere. For both countries, the importance of the energy factor goes far beyond economics, often acquiring a political dimension as a challenge to national security, a means of influencing the opponent, or a basis for political blockage.

What tools and techniques do Russia and the United States use to solve politically charged energy problems? How effective are these tools and techniques? What kind of political agenda underlies them? Under what conditions do respective practices begin to take hold in the political repertoire of the two countries?

The volume of both Russian and international publications on international policy aspects of energy issues is quite substantial. Russian works consider, for example, problems of energy security [Kaveshnikov 2015], trends of politicizing the energy sector on a global scale [Borovskii 2008], the role of individual energy resources (primarily oil) in world politics [Simoniia 2005], and trends of energy issues research within the theory of international relations [Borovskii and Trachuk 2015], amongst others. At the same time, the techniques and practices used by individual states to tackle political problems in the energy sphere have not yet received sufficient attention, and the present paper may contribute to filling this gap.

This article consists of four sections. The first section attempts to conceptualize the energy toolkit used by the states in the foreign policy context. The second section compares some of the key parameters of the energy potentials of Russia and the United States. The third and fourth sections examine the tools used by Russia and the United States: "negative" and "positive" tools of influence on partners and opponents, practices of influence on the global energy market, and the instrumental use of transformations of their own energy sectors.

1

Sometimes political elites respond to challenges in accordance with established patterns, including certain patterns of behavior with the use of an established set of tools and techniques [see for example: Jordan et al. 2021a; 2021b, Goddaed et al. 2019; James 2016]. The study of this phenomenon, denoted in the English-language tradition by the term *statecraft*, is important for analyzing recurrent patterns and comparing the political courses of individual states. In the energy sphere, the use of foreign policy tools is associated mainly with two overlapping groups of challenges: the first of them is related to the energy security agenda, and the second one to using energy potential for political purposes not directly related to economic considerations.

Energy security is usually focused not on all energy resources, but only on those that are critical for a given state. Oil and gas are the most important ones: without the former, the transport sector cannot function properly while the latter, in many cases, is crucial for generation of electricity, the functioning of a number of industries, and providing heating. In the case of oil, pricing conditions and supply opportunities are highly flexible: prices are determined by the global market and cost-effective supplies can be provided by various means (e.g., tankers, oil pipelines, railroads). Gas prices are determined at the regional level and, as a rule, depend on the agreement of consumers with a rather narrow circle of suppliers. Cost-effective methods of transportation are limited to gas pipelines and the (usually) more expensive delivery of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The meaning of the national energy security concept is vague because the respective interests of various players are specific. There is a significant difference between the interests of *prominent* net producers and net exporters of critical energy resources (i.e., states that produce and export more than they consume and import) and *obvious* net consumers and net importers of such resources. Countries that are actively involved in the transit of energy resources have a specific interest in receiving transit revenues [Grigas 2017].

For prominent net importers of critically important energy resources, the key interest of energy security is to ensure reliable access to such resources at affordable prices [Parag 2014]. Disruptions in access or spiraling prices can have catastrophic consequences for the importing country's economy. In order to prevent such problems, importing countries are often willing to take extraordinary measures. Depending on the resources at their disposal, these measures can range from changing the energy mix to severe measures targeting those actors who impede uninterrupted access. For large net exporters, the sale of raw materials tends to be one of their most important sources of income, the loss of which can have severe economic, social, and political consequences. Therefore, the significant energy security interests of net exporters are to ensure stable and uninterrupted sales at fair prices. Furthermore, they are interested in the stability and efficiency of production and transportation of their energy resources, which makes it important to have access to investment, cutting-edge technologies, means and routes of transportation, and a favorable legal regime regulating the supply conditions¹.

This does not mean that the interests of producers, consumers, and transit countries are antagonistic. There are interdependencies between these groups of countries, and it is a matter of reaching a mutually acceptable balance of interests. Nevertheless, finding a general long-term compromise is a difficult challenge, not only because of the numerous contradictions between representatives of different groups, but also because of the often fierce competition between representatives of the same group.

Energy-related foreign policy tools can also be used to pursue political goals that go beyond economic considerations, such as punishing "wrong" policies or engaging a partner in ideological alliances. The pursuit of these types of political goals may run counter to economic interests of profit or energy security.

Foreign policy tools associated with the energy sphere are diverse, and the author does not claim to make an exhaustive analysis of these tools. A large part of such instruments fit into the framework used to conceptualize the *statecraft* phenomenon, which divides these tools into "positive" and "negative" ones ("stick" and "carrot") [see, for example, Lalbahadur 2016]. The "positive" tools include, for example, forming alliances and organizing joint projects, while the "negative" tools include sanctions, embargoes, boycotts, price wars, and political and coercive pressure.

The problem, however, is that a number of instruments do not appropriately fit into this dichotomy. In particular, attempts by states to influence global oil prices and strengthen one's potential as an energy power are not always intended to reward or punish partners or opponents. Practices such as seeking compromise, signing cooperation agreements, or acquiring assets can involve both positive and negative incentives. For the convenience of the analysis, this article does distinguish between positive and negative tools, with an understanding of conventionality of this framework, but this classification is supplemented by instruments of influence on global market prices that go beyond the dichotomy, as well as the instrumental use of the internal transformations of one's own national energy sector.

2

This article examines the application of energy-related tools in the foreign policy context emphasizing the cases from Russia and the United States. This choice of these two cases is justified by, on the one hand, their high significance (as already noted, both countries are energy superpowers), and, on the other hand, contrasting differences of some interests and potentials of the two states.

While there are a number of similarities, the energy interests of Russia and the United States and the resources at their disposal vary considerably. Russia is one of the largest net producers

¹ These objectives are reflected, e.g., in the Energy Security Doctrine of the Russian Federation of 13.05.2019, see <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/rssskwUHzi25X6IijBy20D0j88faOQLN4.pdf> (accessed: 02.09.2020).

and net exporters of energy in the world (in 2020, production and exports amounted to 512.7 and 232.5 million tons, respectively)². The United States, being one of the largest global oil producers (in 2018, U.S. oil production reached 742 million tons, while Russia's was 560 million tons)³, was among net exporters until 1949⁴ (however, even after 1949 (until the 1970s), a significant share of oil production abroad was controlled by American companies). From 1973 to the 2010s, the United States was the most influential net oil importer on a global scale, and now this state occupies an intermediate position between exporters and importers. Although the "shale revolution" enabled the United States to overcome its dependence on oil imports and even become a net exporter from the fall of 2020 (with surplus of 651 barrels, or 89 tons per day)⁵, the U.S. economy remains heavily dependent on price fluctuations in the global market. For these reasons, U.S. energy security interests remain largely consumer-driven. At the same time, due to the same "shale revolution," the United States is increasingly asserting itself as one of the world's largest exporters of natural gas, using political leverage to promote its product.

The nature of the political tools and techniques used by the Russian Federation and the United States is largely determined by the organizational specificities of the national energy sectors. Russia, at least since the mid-2000s, has been characterized by "resource nationalism" – ensuring the dominant position of national companies over foreign ones in

combination with the consolidation of major assets under state control. The U.S. energy sector is characterized by "resource liberalism"⁶ with a leading role played by the private sector, the long tradition of anti-trust policies, and the absence of rigid deterrence of foreign presence in the energy sector.

Notwithstanding the noticeably longer pipeline system in the United States (2,225,000 km compared to Russia's 260,000 km)⁷, the U.S. system primarily serves the purpose of domestic oil and gas distribution and plays a limited foreign economic role. Russia, on the other hand, with the world's most developed system of export pipelines, is undoubtedly the key player in Eurasian "pipeline diplomacy". Given these circumstances, Russia has a greater capacity than the United States to use its infrastructure to transport critical energy resources, although the United States has prospects of coming forward to the top position in terms of the number of LNG export terminals.

The history of interaction between Russia/ USSR and the United States in the energy sphere includes examples of both cooperation and conflict. For instance, during World War II, the United States – as the largest net exporter of oil and petroleum products – played an important role in supplying the USSR with aviation gasoline and equipment for its production as part of supplies under the Lend-Lease program. In the 1970s, against the backdrop of the sharp increase in oil prices caused by OPEC policy and the transformation of the United States into an evident net

² Oil production in Russia decreased to 512.7 million tons in 2020. This is the minimum in 10 years. TASS. January 2, 2021, <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/10398187#:~:text=%D0%AD%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%82%20%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%84%D1%82%D0%B8%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%20%D0%A0%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B8%20%D0%B2,%D0%B4%D0%BE%2018%2C58%20%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%BD%20%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BD> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

³ Key World Energy Statistics 2020. IEA. August 2020, <https://www.iea.org/reports/key-world-energy-statistics-2020> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

⁴ Cunningham S. "U.S. Posts First Month in 70 Years as a Net Petroleum Exporter." Bloomberg. 29.11.2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-29/u-s-posts-first-month-in-70-years-as-a-net-petroleum-exporter> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

⁵ Petroleum and other liquids. *U.S. Energy Information Administration*, <https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/hist/LeafHandler.ashx?n=pet&s=mtntus2&f=m> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

⁶ For discussion of the terms "resource nationalism" and "resource liberalism," see, e.g. [Wilson 2021].

⁷ Top 20 Countries By Length Of Pipeline. WorldAtlas, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/top-20-countries-by-length-of-pipeline.html> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

importer of oil, the USSR was considered by the United States to be a potential partner that could influence the reduction of prices in the global oil market [Yergin 1992: 643–644].

In the post-Soviet period, a number of American companies (primarily *ExxonMobil*, *Chevron*, and *ConocoPhillips*) took part in oil and gas projects on the territory of Russia, while Russian companies (for example, *Lukoil*) took part in projects in the United States. This kind of cooperation was not completely phased out in the second half of the 2010s, despite the unfavorable political environment. The difficult political environment did not prevent Russia from remaining one of the main suppliers of oil and petroleum products to the United States: at the end of 2019, it was in third place after Canada and Saudi Arabia⁸.

At the same time, relations between Russia and the United States in the energy sphere periodically are aggravated by economic and geopolitical competition: such competition took place back in the pre-revolutionary period (competition in the global market from the Nobel brothers and Rockefeller), continued in the Soviet period (with the USSR, until the 1970s, being perceived as a price "spoiler" for American oil companies that dominated the world market [Yergin 1992: 515]), acquired a geopolitical character in the 1990s (the United States and American companies lobbied for the construction of oil pipelines from the post-Soviet states to the European Union, bypassing Russian territory), and took the form of competition for gas markets combined with elements of a price war in the global oil market after the American shale revolution. Some of these tensions have had a significant impact on the development of political tools that will be discussed in this paper.

3

In the energy sphere, states have a wide arsenal of "negative" tools to coerce and harm their opponents, including aggressive competition,

economic blackmail, supply interruptions, sanctions, and even coups and interventions.

Interventions and military coups to assert control over critical energy resources in other countries are the most radical response to the challenges of energy security. However, stable and long-term control over energy resources in such cases is by no means guaranteed (resistance may arise in the occupied territories), and there are high risks of being sanctioned for flagrant violations of international law, provoking a sharp deterioration of one's international image, and becoming embroiled in international conflicts.

The widespread perception of the United States as a state trying to establish control over oil resources in various regions of the world through interventions and coups is rather simplistic. The history of Washington's relations with "inconvenient partners" demonstrates its ability to take a flexible stance, make substantial concessions, and reach compromises that turn an opponent into a stable partner. This was the case, for example, in 1938, when the United States accepted Mexico's expropriation of U.S. oil companies' property in order to keep the country as an ally and a reliable oil supplier. By doing so, they prevented its transformation into a geopolitical foothold of hostile Germany [Yergin 1992: 277]. A somewhat similar situation arose in 1973, when Washington considered intervening to take control of the fields of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in response to the Arab oil embargo. In the end, such an idea was considered too risky, partially due to the possible reaction of the USSR⁹. Instead, the United States decided to reach a compromise with Saudi Arabia, eventually agreeing to a gradual nationalization of the *Aramco* oil company. In doing so, Washington ensured that its interests in stable oil supplies at moderate prices were taken into account.

The most prominent example of American "energy interventionism" can be seen in the 1953 Iranian coup d'état organized by the United States and Great Britain to overthrow

⁸ U.S. Imports by Country of Origin. *U.S. Department of Energy*, https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbb1_a.htm (accessed: 03.09.2020).

⁹ See, for example: Frankel G. U.S. Mulls Seizing Oil Fields in 73. *The Washington Post*, 1.01.2004, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/01/01/us-mulled-seizing-oil-fields-in-73/0661ef3e-027e-4758-9c41-90a40bbcf4d> (accessed: 03.09.2020).

the government of Mohammad Mosaddegh, who was pursuing a policy of nationalization of oil resources. This coup, organized after unavailing attempts at negotiation, was largely related to Washington's and London's concerns about the threat of Iran moving into the Soviet sphere of influence [see, for example: Abrahamian 2013; Yergin 1992: 457–467]. The coup brought considerable economic dividends to the United States: U.S. companies received 40% in the *Iranian Oil Participants Ltd.* consortium established in 1954 to produce Iranian oil.

After the collapse of the colonial system and the nationalization of oil resources by Middle Eastern governments in the 1970s, interventionist "oil imperialism" has largely become a relic, although some critics of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 have seen the main motive for this intervention as a desire to secure control over the country's oil resources [see, e.g., Gamov, n.d.]. Apparently, the motives for intervention seem to have been complex, although they were partly related to oil interests, such as Washington's perception of the seriousness of the Iraqi threat to oil-producing countries in the region and, possibly, its desire to liberalize Iraq's oil policy and use Iraq's resources to lower world oil prices [Bonds 2013]. The United States has not shown significant persistence in pursuing most of the oil interests attributed to it: it failed to privatize the Iraqi oil sector and secure the country's withdrawal from OPEC, or to ensure the dominant position for American companies in the projects initiated by the Iraqi government to develop the largest fields in Iraq.

As a softer instrument of influence on an opponent as compared to intervention, economic sanctions or equivalent actions (e.g., abrupt interruption of supplies) are applied to the opponent's energy sector. In both U.S. and Russian practice, the application of such measures is most often associated with the desire to revise disadvantageous conditions of energy supplies, undermine the position of competitors, or obtain political concessions from the opponent. Some of these sanctions (for example, restric-

tions on gas supplies or access to one's own energy market) are relatively effective even when applied unilaterally, while the effectiveness of other types of sanctions (such as restrictions on access to investment and technology) particularly depends on the ability of the sanction initiator to use a "stick" or a "carrot" to bring in countries that can help the sanctioned country minimize the consequences of the sanctions.

As a consumer and importer, the United States objectively has few economic motivations to resort to formal sanctions that prevent oil from certain countries from entering the U.S. market. Nevertheless, the United States has repeatedly used such sanctions to exert political pressure, for example, on Libya (in the 1980s–2000s), Iran (since the 1990s), and Venezuela (since 2017).

U.S. sanctions were not only about closing its consumer markets to opponents, but also about preventing political opponents from gaining access to investment, credit, and advanced energy production technology. For example, such goals were related to the sanctions imposed by Washington against Russia in 2014 in connection with the conflict over Ukraine. According to Elena Sidorova, the effectiveness of these sanctions is relatively low in the short term, but in the long run they may have a negative impact on the supply of high-tech equipment for new field development in Arctic and Western Siberia (Sidorova, 2016).

Internationally supported sanctions are more effective in comparison with unilateral sanctions, because in the latter case the sanctioned countries can reorient themselves to other partners or intermediaries. It is only natural that the United States seeks to involve allies and other countries in its sanctions, as well as to create serious risks for those companies that continued cooperation with sanctioned opponents. As part of its sanctions policy toward Iran (especially after U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018), the United States has resorted to financial sanctions and threats to impose them on companies in third countries that were cooperating with Tehran in the energy sector¹⁰. At the

¹⁰ See e.g., "Iran sanctions: Trump warns trading partners." *BBC*. 07.08.2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45098031> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

same time, as can be seen from the history of U.S. energy sanctions against the USSR and Russia, Washington has not always succeeded in involving European allies in its sanctions policy; in many cases, these countries prioritized their own economic interests [Borovskii 2019]. While the United States insisted on imposing an embargo on large-diameter pipes against the USSR in 1962, American attempts to prevent European equipment deliveries for the construction of the Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod pipeline in the first half of the 1980s were unsuccessful. However, some of the U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia's energy sector imposed in 2014 (with respect to Arctic offshore production projects in July and August and Rosneft and Gazpromneft borrowings from Western markets on September 12) coincided in time and content, which may indicate some degree of coordination between them. Nevertheless, Germany was not enthusiastic about Washington's attempt to curtail the Nord Stream 2 project in 2019 by imposing unilateral sanctions on the companies involved in laying the pipeline. Although the sanctions were officially justified by a desire to support Ukraine and prevent the excessive energy dependence of the European Union from Russia, many observers considered these actions as an attempt to promote American LNG exports to the European market and block the supply of more competitive Russian pipeline gas to that market¹¹.

Not having such a wide range of sanction tools as Washington at its disposal, Moscow most often resorted to temporary terminating gas supply to its opponents: with regard to Ukraine (short-term supply cuts in early 2006

and 2009¹²) and Belarus (threatening to cut off supplies at the end of 2006¹³). In the case of Belarus, by violating the previous status quo in which the Russian side tolerated a low price for its gas, Russia tried to force its opponent either to pay a fair price (in its opinion), to cede control over its gas distribution infrastructure, or to agree to deeper political integration.

Over time, Gazprom gained control over the gas transport infrastructure of Belarus and some other CIS countries (Armenia, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan), but this control was not explicitly used by Russia to exert political pressure on these countries. Ukraine and Georgia chose to pay a sharply increased price without compromising other economic and political interests. The long-standing energy conflict with Kyiv is notable for both sides using a wide range of indirect pressure mechanisms: appeals to international courts (both countries), construction of alternative bypass pipelines, and threats to completely cut off supplies (Russia); the use of reverse gas flows and a powerful gas storage system, integration into the EU energy space, and an appeal to the political solidarity of Western countries (Ukraine).

The construction of alternative pipelines can be partly attributed to the negative pressure tools used by Russia to influence the transit states. Russia began resorting to this tool back in the 1990s, seeking to reduce its dependence on inconvenient partners: first the Baltic States, and then Ukraine and Belarus. From 1997 to 2001, the first stage of the Baltic pipeline system was built, which soon allowed Moscow to retreat from the transit of oil through the ports of Latvia and Lithuania. Russia was compelled to

¹¹ See e.g., Geropoulos K. "Defying US sanctions, EU lawmakers, Russian ship lays Nord Stream 2 pipe in Danish Waters." *New Europe*. 26.01.2021, <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/defying-us-sanctions-eu-lawmakers-russian-ship-lays-nord-stream-2-pipe-in-danish-waters> (Accessed 25.03.2021); Giuli M. "Trump's gas doctrine: What does it mean for the EU?" *European Policy Center*. 26.07.2017, <https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Trumps-gas-doctrine-What-doe~1d888c> (Accessed 25.03.2021); Hessler U. "Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline faces sanctions under US defense bill." *Deutsche Welle*, 12.12.2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/nord-stream-2-gas-pipeline-faces-sanctions-under-us-defense-bill/a-51641960> (accessed: 03.09.2020).

¹² See e.g., Istorija gazovih konfliktov Rossii i Ukraini. [History of gas conflicts between Russia and Ukraine]. RIA Novosti. 13.12.2019, <https://ria.ru/20191213/1562318504.html> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

¹³ See e.g., Timirichinskaia O. "Chernoye proklatie: kak neft' rassorila Rossiju i Belorussiju [The Black curse: how oil divided Russia and Belarus]." *Gazeta.ru*. 18.05.2019, <https://www.gazeta.ru/business/2019/05/16/12358003.shtml> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

build the second stage of the pipeline, launched in 2012, by periodic conflicts with Belarus that repeatedly threatened to impose high transit duties on Russian oil. Following the escalation of the energy conflict with Kyiv, Moscow, together with its European partners, accelerated the implementation of the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline project, which became operational in 2011. In the context of the escalating conflict surrounding Ukraine, agreements were signed in 2015 and 2016 to build the Nord Stream 2 and the Turkish Stream pipelines¹⁴, the latter of which was commissioned in early 2020. Nevertheless, the new pipelines are subject to unfavorable changes in the political environment. For example, the South Stream pipeline project was halted in 2014 due to the new EU antitrust regime [see, for example: Bunik 2016]; the fate of the Nord Stream 2 project was also called into question due to deteriorating relations between Russia and Western countries, and the effectiveness of the Turkish Stream project is similarly uncertain due to political contradictions between Russia and Turkey.

In those cases where Russia itself acts as a transit state, it wields a number of other negative tools to counteract its opponents. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia initially was trying to maintain its monopolistic position as a hub for oil flows from the former Soviet republics, which allowed it to dictate the terms of transit supplies. Over time, post-Soviet net oil exporters managed to build alternative routes: Azerbaijan via Turkey to the EU, and Kazakhstan to China. However, Russia still has significant opportunities to counteract alternative pipelines, for example by buying

significant amounts of hydrocarbon fuel from exporters, which undermines the profitability of competing pipeline projects¹⁵.

In contrast with gas, it is much more difficult for Russia to use oil as a negative tool. The 2020 price war, which resulted from disagreements between OPEC+ members (primarily Russia and Saudi Arabia) and led to a collapse in global prices¹⁶, is a controversial example, as it is difficult to draw clear conclusions about its main initiators and targets, as well as about the acceptability of its results for Moscow based on open information. A year earlier, Russia resorted to an embargo on oil and oil products to Ukraine in response to Ukrainian sanctions; however, Ukraine reoriented to other suppliers and began to buy Russian oil through intermediaries¹⁷. This example illustrates the flexibility of the oil market, which makes it relatively easy to compensate in the event of supply interruptions with other sellers and alternative means of delivery (e.g., by tankers instead of pipelines). In this case, the sanctioned state can suffer only some damage, but nothing critical.

4

For both Russia and the United States, the main positive tool in the energy sphere is building partnerships and alliances. Bilateral partnerships with Russian and U.S. participation are, as a rule, relations between the supplier and the energy consumer, secured by the presence of common political interests. Multilateral alliances are aimed at ensuring collective energy security and maintaining the price situation in the global oil market acceptable to the participants. However, in practice,

¹⁴ The Turkish Stream agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Turkey, <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/420381060> (accessed: 25.03.2021).

¹⁵ See e.g., "Zakupki gaza v Azerbajdžane: ekonomija i strategičeskie zadachi [Gas purchases in Azerbaijan: savings and strategic objectives]." *Vesti.ru*. 3.09.2010, <https://www.vesti.ru/finance/article/2107658> (accessed: 03.09.2020).

¹⁶ See e.g., Hestanov S. "Shatkii sgovor [Shaky collusion]". *Novaya Gazeta*. 5.06.2020, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/06/05/85716-shatkiy-sgovor> (Accessed 26.03.2020); Calhoun G. "The Saudi/Russia Oil Price War: Historic Blunder #1." *Forbes*. 03.06.2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgecalhoun/2020/06/03/the-other-epidemic-a-cluster-of-historic-blunders---exhibit-1-the-saudirussia-oil-price-war> (accessed: 26.03.2021).

¹⁷ See e.g., Narozhnyi D. "Eksperty rasskazali, kak Ukraine snizit' zavisimost' ot postavok nefteproduktov iz RF [Experts explained how to reduce Ukraine's dependence on supplies of oil products from Russia]." *Delo.ua*. 4.06.2019, <https://delo.ua/economyandpoliticsinukraine/eksperty-rasskazali-kak-snizit-zavisimost-ot-354058> (accessed: 26.03.2021).

such alliances are unable to control certain key supply and demand factors (the "spoiler" behavior or demand dynamics of giant economies such as China¹⁸) or, in some cases, to force their participants to pursue a common course in a disciplined manner.

In terms of U.S. energy interests, at least two alliances with oil suppliers are of particular importance. The alliance with Saudi Arabia allows stable access to enormous oil reserves and prevents destabilization of the region that might lead to dramatic increases in oil prices. The alliance with Canada also provides access to huge (though not cheap) oil resources, partly insuring the United States from severe economic consequences in the event of destabilization in the Middle East region.

The key multilateral energy alliance for the United States is the International Energy Agency (IEA), created in 1974 at the American initiative (the idea belonged to Henry Kissinger). It is the most influential club of energy consumers and importers, including the United States and EU member states. The creation of the IEA substantially strengthened the position of consumers in the dialogue with exporters thanks to well-designed coordinated policies, including the creation of 90-day strategic reserves and the coordination of investment, technological, and information potentials [see, e.g., Scott 2015]. The organization's ability to develop a coordinated global policy of net energy consumers is weakened by the fact that the largest consumers – China and India – are not full members, but only observers.

As a supplier of energy resources, Russia (like the USSR) seeks to establish stable and pragmatic relations with consumers or to use energy supplies to strengthen political alliances. Examples of the first approach can be found in the relations with a number of EU member states (at least until the second half of the 2010s), and the second approach can be illustrated by the USSR's relations with members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and Russia's relations with net importers from the Eurasian Economic Union

(Armenia and Belarus), the strategic alliance with China, and attempts to induce Ukraine to join the Eurasian Economic Union. In a number of cases, pipeline politics played a significant role in building such partnerships and alliances. The construction of Soviet and Russian export pipelines was intended for the needs of members of the socialist bloc, and later other European countries; the Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean oil pipeline and the Power of Siberia gas pipeline are aimed at strengthening the strategic alliance with China, and the Turkish Stream pipeline is needed to build an alliance with Turkey. The politicization of a large part of such projects (for example, with the CMEA countries, Belarus, China, and Turkey) in some cases questioned their economic viability.

Compared to the United States, Russia has had a shorter history of taking advantage of close cooperation with global energy alliances. As one of the world's largest net exporters, the USSR and Russia have long been reluctant to work closely with OPEC, trying to play their own game in the global oil market. Nevertheless, mindful of the lessons of the most severe consequences for the USSR and Russia of the collapse of oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s, Moscow opted for such cooperation taking into account its interests after another collapse of global oil prices in 2014. Not having joined OPEC in 2016, Russia became a member of the enlarged OPEC+ alliance, whose efforts contributed to a partial rebound in oil prices [see Beck 2019; Ulatowski 2020]. In 2020, however, the effectiveness of OPEC+ was jeopardized by the conflict between Russia and Saudi Arabia, which led to another plunge in prices. Although this conflict was partially resolved, the viability of OPEC+ remains in question.

Even less effective was the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), established in 2008 with Russia's extremely active participation. This organization was conceived as the equivalent of OPEC in the gas sphere: it united the owners of almost three quarters of gas reserves produced at the time. However, the GECF failed to make a significant impact on the for-

¹⁸ On the influence of the Chinese factor on global energy markets, see e.g. [Mastepanov and Tomberg 2018].

mation of world gas prices, because, unlike oil prices, they are determined not at the global but at the regional level [Hallouche 2006].

The relationship of dominance and subordination is evident in most energy partnerships and alliances, albeit to varying degrees. From the 1940s to the 1970s, the U.S. government actively supported the efforts of its oil companies to build unequal relations with the governments in the Middle East and other oil-producing regions [see, e.g., Vivoda, 2010; Yergin, 1992]. In the second half of the 2010s, Washington made efforts to establish network infrastructure to support its LNG export to Europe and to expand its presence in European energy infrastructure projects. For example, the European Energy Security and Diversification Act came into force in 2020; this provided for, among other things, large-scale investments in LNG terminals, interconnection pipelines, and gas storage facilities. In the preamble, the desire of the United States to contribute to promoting the European energy security was declared; this was apparently combined with the desire to expand the presence of American energy companies in the European market.

Russian efforts to "vertically integrate" gas transmission and distribution infrastructure in other countries have intensified since the 2000s. In the 2000s-2010s, Gazprom, controlled by the Russian government, was proactive in pursuing a "vertical integration policy" by establishing control over the transport and distribution infrastructure in post-Soviet and European transit and consumer countries in order to ensure stability of supply at desirable prices and, possibly, to expand opportunities for political influence. The EU perceived Gazprom's "vertical integration" as a threat to its energy security, and in 2009 it adopted the Third Energy Package, which approved the principle of decoupling control over production and transportation of energy resources [for more details see Murgash, 2018]. The practical implementation of the package in the 2010s forced Gazprom to sell some of its assets in EU countries, and the Russian government to announce its refusal to build the South Stream gas pipeline. This example demonstrates that the strategy of "vertical integration" does not always achieve its goals and

that consumers (especially influential ones) who perceive it as a threat to their energy security have their own opportunities to confront it.

5

Tools and practices designed to regulate global markets and optimize the domestic capacity of one's own energy sector can be divided into specific groups. Neither of the two countries has sufficient capacity to control the global oil market on its own over the long term. For achieving a short-term price effect or in coordination with other major producers within the OPEC+ framework, Russia can reduce or increase oil production, while the United States has the ability to sell oil from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (as it did during the military operation against Iraq in 1990–1991 and during the social and political protest activities in the Middle East and North Africa in 2011) or reduce the rate of its replenishment to stop global price increases. These measures have a short-term effect, as the global supply and demand equilibrium stabilizes over time.

The national energy sector has the potential to grow or transform, and instrumentalizing this plays an important role. After the collapse of the USSR, the gas industry remained largely under state control; this made it easier to use it as a foreign policy tool, which has been happening intentionally since the 2000s. In the export policy of the state-controlled Gazprom, some Western policymakers and experts see the use of "energy weapons" to blackmail opponents, while other experts and politicians either deny the use of such "weapons" or consider them ineffective [see, e.g., Stegen 2011: 6506–6507].

Furthermore, in some situations, excessive centralization can be detrimental to Russian economic interests, since state-controlled energy companies tend to be less efficient compared to private ones [see, e.g., Al-Mana et al. 2020]. Besides, Gazprom's vertically integrated structures have become an easier target for EU regulators than the totality of independent Russian gas companies would have been [Bogatova 2019]. As far as the oil sector is concerned, after privatization in the 1990s, it was partially reconsolidated under state control during the next two decades. Moscow uses the strengthening of the

position of state-controlled oil companies to enhance political relations with friendly countries (joint projects with Belarus, Venezuela, China, and Libya) and to build relations with OPEC+. As Russia's largest oil producer, Rosneft has played the biggest role in implementing the agreement by reducing oil production¹⁹; at the same time, it strongly advocated for Russia's withdrawal from the agreement in March 2020. In many cases, the effect of consolidating the energy sector for political objectives has been limited, and the economic cost-effectiveness of consolidation has been questionable.

In the United States, a key milestone in the relationship between the federal government and private companies was the antitrust case against the Standard Oil Company, which used to dominate the oil sector and was eventually forcefully broken into independent companies in 1911 [see e.g. Bringham 1979]. Subsequently, preventing the monopolization of the energy sector became a top priority of state policy. Due to the high efficiency of the private sector, the United States has more opportunities to apply both positive and negative tools: it can use the investment and innovation-technological capacity of the American energy sector, as well as the influence on the global formation of oil and gas prices that such institutions as (for example) the New York Stock Exchange and, in part, the biggest Henry Hub gas distribution center have. At the same time, the federal government retains its own leverage over energy companies, including tax policy, government subsidies, or foreign policy support. For example, the 1926 legislation, which exempted U.S. companies from taxes paid on overseas income, encouraged the international expansion of oil companies and gave them a significant advantage over competitors from other countries [see e.g. Yergin 1992].

The highly competitive and business-friendly environment with government support for technical innovation defined the nature of the "shale revolution" (in the 2000s–2010s). Although the level of American state involvement in this success is a matter of debate²⁰, the result was a significant strengthening of U.S. energy security, as its dependence on imports of critical energy resources was reduced to a minimum. The ensuing changes in the global oil market have not only opened up new political opportunities for the United States, but also led to new challenges to the country's energy security, since the relatively high cost of shale oil makes the industry vulnerable to price wars initiated by countries where the cost of oil is lower.

With a strong anti-monopoly element in domestic politics, the U.S. government has traditionally been more tolerant of the "offensive" overseas activities of U.S. oil corporations. On several occasions, U.S. diplomacy acted as a conduit for U.S. companies' interests abroad, including their expansion into the Middle East in the 1920s and 1950s and attempts to establish themselves in the post-Soviet space. Nevertheless, the threat of antitrust prosecution of corporations operating overseas appeared occasionally on the American domestic political agenda [Yergin 1992: 537, 556, 600].

Officially, Washington has at times sacrificed the interests of U.S. oil companies for broadly understood national interests; these companies have not always willingly supported the foreign policy of their government. For example, Washington's attempt to encourage oil companies to be active in Iraq in the 2000s was not successful [Bonds 2013], and in the late 2010s, American sanctions forced Exxon Mobile to curtail its projects in the Russian Arctic²¹. In general, the U.S. government often supports foreign activities of energy companies; however,

¹⁹ See, e.g., Samedova E. "Slovo neftianika: kak Rossiya vipolniaet dogovorennosti s OPEK [Oil worker's word: how Russia complies with OPEC agreements]". *Deutsche Welle*. 20.03.2020. <https://www.dw.com/ru/слово-нефтяника-как-россия-выполняет-договоренности-с-опек/a-37597498> (accessed: 26.03.2021).

²⁰ Giberson M. "Did the Federal Government Invent the Shale Gas Boom?" *Knowledge Problem*. 20.12.2011, <https://knowledgeproblem.com/2011/12/20/did-the-federal-government-invent-the-shale-gas-boom> (accessed: 03.09.2020).

²¹ Krauss C. "Exxon Mobil Scraps a Russian Deal, Stymied by Sanctions". *The New York Times*. 28.02.2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/business/energy-environment/exxon-russia.html> (accessed: 02.02.2021).

Washington can hardly be considered a consistent promoter of their international interests.

In general, the effectiveness of the tools at the disposal of the two countries to influence the global energy markets is limited: both Russia and the United States alone (and even acting within alliances) can achieve only partial and time-limited results. Both states have been able to strengthen their energy potentials to some extent by supporting the transformation of their national energy sectors, but such transformations (consolidation under state control in Russia and the "shale revolution" in the United States) have brought with them not only opportunities but also new challenges and risks. In the case of the U.S., it should be noted that the state does not play a dominant role in the transformation processes, mostly able to contribute to them indirectly.

* * *

In both of the analyzed cases, the use of political tools in the energy context can be linked either to the provision of energy security or to the promotion of often ideologically defined political interests and attitudes (the restoration of the geopolitical role of a Eurasian power or the promotion of democracy). These two groups of motives may coincide, but they can also contradict each other; strict adherence to an ideological course sometimes has a negative effect on energy supplies.

U.S. and Russian resources and tools are largely asymmetric. The United States has the world's largest consumer market for oil, maintains a strong military and political presence in the Middle East, has the ability to subject its opponent to complex and painful sanctions, and is a leader in innovative technology. Russia remains a key supplier of gas to the EU and a number of post-Soviet countries, has a low cost of oil and gas production, and owns the world's longest system of export pipelines, which gives

it a powerful trump card in pipeline policy. The emergence and development of this toolkit was in no small measure the result of geopolitical and economic shocks: for the USA, it was a sharp rise in oil prices and awareness of the critical importance of oil supplies in the 1970s, and for Russia it was centrifugal geopolitical trends after the collapse of the USSR. In the long run, the shale revolution may give impetus to the formation of new practices for the United States, whilst for Russia such impetus may be in a sharp drop in oil and gas prices after 2014.

In most of the examined examples, for both Russia and the United States, the effectiveness of using political tools to pursue their interests in the energy sphere has been limited; it is also too early to speak of a pronounced advantage of either country in this case. The analyzed tools can be used to achieve mainly temporary and tactical successes (for example, the realization of profitable projects or damaging specific opponents), but not to change the long-term situation in their favor on the global and regional energy markets, which is dynamically changing and which neither Russia nor the United States can control alone (or even with the help of alliances). Even in terms of achieving short-term goals, the effectiveness of the political tools under consideration seems limited. Targeting an opponent's energy sector with sanctions and other pressure techniques – especially unilateral ones – has rarely led to the desired result. Moreover, the use of negative tools motivates the opponent to build alliances that are undesirable for the initiator of sanctions. The effectiveness of positive tools, in particular alliances, is also ambiguous: their influence on global oil prices is limited, and serious disagreements on critical issues periodically arise between participants. In general, energy-related political practices are rarely self-sufficient, and are therefore used in conjunction with practices related to other areas.

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ЭНЕРГЕТИЧЕСКИЕ РЫЧАГИ ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКИ

ОПЫТ РОССИИ И США

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Резюме

Используя свои энергетические ресурсы для решения внешнеполитических задач, Россия и США задействуют разнообразные политические инструменты и практики, которые можно условно подразделить на «позитивные», «негативные», регулирующие рынки и усиливающие собственный потенциал страны. В статье делается вывод о том, что применение таких инструментов Россией и США связано либо с обеспечением энергетической безопасности, либо для достижения идеологически заданных политических целей. Эти две группы мотивов могут как совпадать, так и противоречить друг другу.

Для реализации соответствующих интересов Россия и США располагают разными инструментами, развитие которых в немалой степени стало результатом геополитических и экономических шоков: для США – резкого роста нефтяных цен в 1970-х, для России – центробежных геополитических тенденций после распада СССР. В качестве «негативного» инструмента США чаще всего используют санкции в отношении энергетических секторов оппонентов, тогда как наиболее сильнодействующим российским оружием становились ограничения поставок углеводородного сырья. Для обеспечения энергетической безопасности и усиления политического влияния обе страны выстраивают двусторонние взаимодополняющие отношения по линии «производитель–потребитель», а для стабилизации глобальных нефтяных цен в своих интересах участвуют в международных энергетических альянсах. В инструментальных целях также используется происходящая целенаправленно либо стихийно трансформация национальных энергетических секторов (например, консолидация под государственным контролем в России или «сланцевая революция» в США).

В большинстве рассмотренных случаев эффективность применения политических инструментов оказалась ограниченной. Нацеленные на энергетический сектор оппонента санкции и другие приёмы давления (особенно односторонние) сами по себе редко приводили к желательному изменению его политики. Ограниченные результаты для России и США принесло и выстраивание энергетических альянсов, которые не обеспечивают полноценный контроль над глобальными нефтяными ценами и не отличаются представительностью и прочностью.

Ключевые слова:

государственное управление; внешнеполитический инструментарий; энергетическая безопасность; трубопроводная политика; Россия; США.