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ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЕ СТАТЬИ

THE REALIST PARADIGM OF ENERGY DIPLOMACY IN THE RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC TRADITION AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY

Roman O. Reinhardt, Sergei V. Pronichkin

Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) MFA Russia
Russian Academy of Sciences

Nowadays energy diplomacy tends to be one of most relevant and important fields of applied research in International Relations. It is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach being an intersection of political and economic theory, international law, energetics, theory of diplomacy, as well as other fields. Still, numerous research works in the given area both in Russia and abroad are characterized by a number of controversies, such as absence of a common theoretical, methodological basis and conventional terminology, as well as lack of consistency in the choice of scientific paradigms, which leads to divergence of research results and hinders the comparability of the latter. Along with that, in terms of scientific policy it is worth mentioning the absence of a common scientific space in the above field of research, which tends to be shaped by national research cultures and traditions. Throughout the 2000-2010s representatives of the MGIMO scientific school have accumulated experience in dealing with problems of energy diplomacy. However, most of the existing works do not specify the selected political theory paradigms, such as, for instance, realism, liberalism or constructivism. With no intention to conduct a comparative analysis of the aforementioned concepts, the authors of the article outline the key theoretical findings of political realism as the most suitable paradigm for explaining, analyzing and eventually forecasting the recent trends and phenomena given the current geopolitical and economical juncture. They prove the applicability of the proposed model to the OPEC case study and demonstrate its potential practical usefulness for policy-makers in foreign affairs and international energy relations.

Ключевые слова: political realism, energy diplomacy, theory of diplomacy, scientific policy, MGIMO scientific school, OPEC.

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Nowadays there tends to be no shortage of special science literature on theory of diplomacy and diplomatic practice. Research traditions of such outstanding scholars as J. Hotman, G. Bragaccia, A. de Wicquefort, F. de Callières, H. Nicolson, E. Satow and others invoke substantial changes in order to satisfy the demand not only of the academic community, but also of MFA civil servants as well as the general public interested in the respective problems. Still, whilst working with these abundant research works scientists may come across a number of difficulties.

First, it is worth mentioning that the modern diplomatic system is undergoing a permanent transformation and hence cannot be described by fixed terms. Due to objective and natural reasons both definitions and concepts tend to lose relevance and become out of date. Thus, they have to be revised on a regular basis in order to reflect geopolitical changes. Unfortunately, not all contemporary scholars are eager to actively contribute to the above revision, while some of them, both in Russia and abroad, continue thinking in mostly traditional categories [20, p. 8-10].

Second, many investigations in this field have quite a high degree of specialization. On the one hand, focusing on an aspect of the topic and elaborating it might ceteris paribus provide a deeper analysis. On the other hand, such an approach may hinder seeing the gist of diplomatic processes with the considered phenomena being dealt with out of the general context. As a result, the holistic picture of modern diplomacy tends to get blurry. Working from the premises of already existing subfields, e.g. public, economic, energy diplomacy etc., some experts make a point of further parceling the subject and outlining its idiosyncratic forms. It appears questionable whether it makes sense to make 'diplomacy' a universal tag, adding it to any type of international cooperation. Probably, one could as well do without 'sports diplomacy' or 'celebrity diplomacy' [20, p. 530, 617]. At the same time, drawing attention to this kind of problem seems to be relevant and potentially useful with regard to the development of the theory.

Third, not all research works apply an interdisciplinary approach. While some of them, as H. Nicolson would put it, stray 'into the sands of foreign policy', others stray 'into the marshes of international law' [15, p. 20]. In the current scientific discourse, there are islands of economics (especially when dealing with foreign economic affairs and economic diplomacy), political sciences, history of international relations etc. Building bridges between them can be considered a complex but absolutely necessary task of today's diplomatic theory.

Fourth, globalization tends to have an impact on both the research subject (the diplomatic system) and on those who examine it (transnational scientific contacts, multinational research groups etc.). However, it would be untimely to talk about a common scientific space. This can be basically explained by two main factors i.e. language and methodology. Even taking into account the fact that English is increasingly gaining ground as the academic lingua franca, most research papers dedicated to diplomatic service issues are still being written in the languages of the respective countries. As far as methodology is concerned, it still tends to be shaped by traditions and specifics of national scientific cultures [11, p. 4-6].

Fifth, with regard to the variety of modern forms, models and methods of diplomacy providing comprehensive analysis and description in the framework of the previous century classics, including founding fathers of diplomatic science, it is hardly possible. XXI century diplomacy is a complex multilevel system with interaction of numerous actors (State, private, supranational etc.) coping with a wide range of issues – from disarmament and maintaining international security to protecting consumer rights and fighting certain diseases [23, p. 8-11]. Casting light on just one dimension and putting aside all the others would mean giving a fragmentary image of the system.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the outlined problems are especially acute in the field of energy diplomacy. The analysis of the existing works on this issue reveals several weak points and controversies in foreign and Russian studies. One can mention the absence of a common conceptual framework and universal terminology, point to the focus on specific aspects, which go along with underdeveloped interdisciplinary and system approaches, and criticize the overall fuzziness in choosing scientific schools and paradigms [22, p. 10-11]. With regard thereto, prior to an applied examination of the respective practices we reckon appropriate to elaborate a theoretical and methodological basis of energy diplomacy studies with political sciences (alongside economics) as one of its key pillars.

Theoretical basis of the realist paradigm in energy diplomacy

In this context, it is worth referring to geoeconomics, or as defined by a prominent Russian scholar V. Dergachev, new economical geopolitics [6, p. 13]. Its core idea boils down to regarding the foreign policy strategy of a State or a group of States (block, integration group, coalition) as a derivative of its economic power. In other words, geopolitical processes of redistribution of influence spheres of such actors as a result of conflicts amongst them, transcend from the military and political dimension to the economy. Hence the shift in means, since war becomes no longer just a military confrontation, but an economic one with sanctions, embargos, attacks against national currencies etc. and mutual defense alliances projects being brought forward in parallel with regional economic integration.

In general, geoeconomics does not imply the renouncement of 'classical' geopolitics and the substitution of its military elements by foreign trade issues. The economic confrontation goes hand in hand with the traditional one as well as with the so-called geophilosophical, i.e. the third and latest stage of geopolitics according to V. Dergachev meaning the collision of cultures and civilizations [6, p. 15]. The condition of peace or 'peaceful coexistence' in terms of geoeconomics takes shape as a local (restricted by time and space) equilibrium characterized by a denial of direct destructive measures or economic aggression. The latter can manifest itself as trade, 'gas' or 'oil wars', coordinated speculative attacks on strategic resources, manipulating energy sources, food and other valuable products prices.

Thus, geoeconomic warfare can be defined as a set of measures meant to undermine the national economic and, especially, the energetic security of the opponent, whereas peace, sometimes perceived by globalists as *pax mercatoria* [8, p. 2], is a temporary condition determined by tactical reasons for postponing war. The time gained thereby is used for the accumulation economic resources (be it foreign currency, investments, oil reserves etc.) in order to have a more favorable disposition in the future, where a recourse to aggressive measures can never be excluded. To cut a long story short, achieving such a condition and maintaining it, encompasses the mission of energy diplomacy being a subfield of economic diplomacy [21, p. 14].

Considering the scientific schools in International Relations conducive to providing a concise understanding of contemporary energy diplomacy, it seems to be appropriate to opt for the canonic realist paradigm. In line with its key principles, the main actors in international relations (in the given context also world economy) are States. The nature of these relations can be defined as anarchic with no supreme power, even embodied by international political and economic organizations with their competences being restricted by a number of formal and informal factors, and the principle of self-help [14, p. 55].

The ultimate goal of actors on the international scene can be perceived as a complex protection of national interests determined by the endeavor to provide the State's perpetual existence in time and space. Still, this endeavor is by no means taken per se, since the State appears to be a derivative of the social and economic formation, its functional and operational expression. In a nutshell, each State is backed up by interests of social (parties, unions etc.) and economic (corporations, businesses, consumers etc.) groups. However, on the world arena (external environment) the State remains the key provider of internal actors' interests being in charge of harmonizing and consolidating their positions. Consequently, energy diplomacy as part and parcel of the system should serve the interests of citizens and national business.

Obviously, with the advent of globalization, internal political actors have begun to play an increasingly active and autonomous role in international affairs as stakeholders of the latter [14, p. 60]. Notwithstanding this evidence, the role of the State as a link between local and global politics tends not only to remain but to be amplified and strengthened, especially during difficult periods in terms of geopolitical juncture. The fact that the main pillar of virtually each government is secured by the national rather than the world economy should also be taken into consideration. At the same time sticking to this somewhat statist vision, it is crucial to emphasize once again the adherence to the principle 'State for society and economy', and not vice versa.

The primordial task in this context can be defined as maintaining the State's security with national energy security being an integral part thereof. Therefore, the target function of energy policy measures is maximizing the resistance of the national energy system toward exogenous as well as endogenous shocks.

As for the means used to ensure it, without listing them we put an emphasis on force as their main driver. Be it aggression or diplomatic initiatives, the better part of

the respective measures imply pressure leading at the end of the day to a balance of power point. Such a static equilibrium in a constantly changing world with many simultaneously ongoing processes can only be of short-term nature.

As the story unfolds, processes in the realist theory appear as conflicts between States resulting in wars in the worst scenario. The latter can take place in a geographic theater of war, as well as in a geoeconomic one, i.e. on exchanges, financial or commodity markets, whereby their parallel development cannot be excluded. In the XXI century, there is also space for information and Internet wars, confrontation of mass media etc. With regard to the modern military terminology, such cases may be deemed hybrid wars.

In general, apologists of this paradigm assume the unchangeable nature of international relations: notwithstanding any inevitable transformations, the system's core will remain the same, at least in the foreseeable future. Unlike Liberalists or Marxists, Realists do not preview a 'permanent peace' [8, 12] or the advent of an utopist idea (for instance, communism). The main assumption of the whole concept boils down to the permanent existence of national interests.

The choice of this paradigm is justified by the fact that it allows to analyze the contemporary international relations phenomena as well as links between them in the most clear-cut and straightforward way. The main remarks to this formula are 'ceteris paribus' and 'hic et nunc'. Among the most representative cases in this regard can be considered the latest events of world politics and especially the confrontation between Russia and the West [17, p. 40-41].

We stress that in terms of science studies the choice of the theoretical and methodological basis, especially as far as human sciences are concerned, can only vary. Moreover, it encompasses the author's stance on the problematics, which has to unique, i.e. different from previous results of scientific procedures.

The perception of the topic proposed in the present article is far from being a universal one. Neoliberalism, neomarxism or constructivism could also constitute a fair theoretical basis for applied research in the field of energy diplomacy, as it implicitly or explicitly results from other cited works. [21, p. 87-90].

The appliance of the above approaches would by no means undermine the theoretical consistency of the research papers, but, in our humble opinion, could have a negative impact on their practical applicability. The latter appears to be a volatile category subject to middle-term changes on the world arena. According to A.Kireev, all models 'are wrong, but some of them are useful' [10, p. 371]. In line with this idea, we consider the practical usefulness of the theoretical paradigm.

In this regard, even in the early 2000s energy diplomacy could have been described in terms of the neoliberal or constructivist approaches. Nowadays (in the second decade of the XXI century) such a traditional attitude appears to be somewhat outdated and methodologically useless, even if the links between globalization and energy policy are still relevant. Increasing confrontation between the key stakeholders on the international scene, i.e. USA, EU member States, Russia, China, Japan, OPEC

members etc., tends to shape the newest changes of the geopolitical landscape. This is no longer about the rivalry of certain participants of the global market in the framework of the world economy's internationalization, but a real geopolitical and economical confrontation.

Conflicts of specific economic interests consolidated on the national level should be considered the subject of contemporary energy diplomacy studies [18, p. 80-82]. Drastically decreasing oil prices (since 2014 onwards), Middle East and Lugansk/Donetsk crises demonstrate the usefulness of the aforementioned conflictological approach. Conflictogenous by its nature, this interaction fits the theoretical discourse of the nationally oriented economical realist paradigm, brought forward by foreign as well as Russian scholars, including the representatives of the MGIMO scientific school. In order to illustrate the consistency of the proposed approach, it seem appropriate to look into the recent developments of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the context of its international relations and interaction with other global energy market stakeholders.

OPEC case study: applying the paradigm

The creation of OPEC in 1960 was an important step in terms of the influence of countries on energy markets through cooperation. However, in recent years, attempts to stabilize energy prices are becoming increasingly problematic. The volume of oil production in non-OPEC countries has increased, just like the competition of hydrocarbon suppliers with alternative energy sources providers. It appears that the future of OPEC will depend on its cooperation with other organizations, as well as on its internal coherence. Historically and in line with the above paradigm, OPEC established the interstate regulation in the energy sector and the world oil market: a group of countries formed an official international organization, by means of which they combined efforts in energy policy in order to raise world average prices and increase revenues from oil sales, which was the beginning of a global confrontation between energy producers and consumers [4].

It may seem that such a commodity as oil with a high degree of monopolization and low production costs in most OPEC countries should be fairly stable, however, oil prices, after a sharp increase in 1973-1974, experienced fluctuations repeatedly [3]. Nowadays most OPEC economies are still facing serious challenges, while they are fully aware of their dependence on consumers. An inconclusive embargo on oil supplies to Europe and the formation of strategic oil reserves (about three months of their import requirements) by countries belonging to the International Energy Agency made OPEC members abandon application of straightforward political pressure. Now there exists an informal agreement between oil importers and OPEC in order to maintain stability, as there are enough reasons for concern, like riots and strikes in Nigeria and Venezuela, the terrorist chaos in Iraq, the tension in the Israeli-Palestinian relations, and now in the Israeli-Lebanese-Syrian relations, the growing concern about the situation in Iran and its allegedly aggressive behaviour [16].

Russia and Norway also have a considerable share in exporting energy resources: their economic interests embrace relatively high oil prices, which often leads to an aggravation of political tension. Nevertheless, the consequences of exacerbations may exceed economic benefits, a fact that policy-makers in the respective countries cannot neglect. Therefore, they often meet the proposals of OPEC and importers to maintain stability in oil markets, and in some cases, to achieve a modus vivendi in political conflicts.

The natural concerns of exporters about relatively high oil prices have their bounds, so they are interested in the so-called fair price, which guarantees long-term stability in the consumption of their goods. A fair price is a price conducive to satisfying the reasonable economic needs of the exporter and, at the same time, not exceeding a level which could cause negative consequences for both exporters and importers. The concept of a fair price for oil, and, accordingly, for natural gas and other forms of energy, is normally set by the oil price corridor, which OPEC countries are trying to fulfil with quotas for oil production supplied to the world market.

Thereby, too high prices can cause a significant reduction in the growth rates of the economy in net energy importing countries and, accordingly, a decline in the global economy as a whole, thus hitting the interests of the countries that are net exporters of hydrocarbons. In the long run, Russia and some other net exporters of hydrocarbons are in fact not interested in excessively high prices for energy resources, because they have a negative impact on the development of the domestic economy, increasing the share of the energy in the national industry, and cause fast depletion of subsoil, which can ultimately lead to the reduction in oil production and export [5]. In addition to price interests (high for exporters, low for importers) there is another significant and sticky point, i.e. the access to the most preferable markets. On the one hand, it determines the development of the corresponding transport infrastructure - a network of trunk pipelines, appropriate transport, terminals and refining plants. All this requires huge investments that usually involve high risks for the private sector, which in turn seeks to compensate and reduce them with support from the State. The latter implies a wide-range strategic public-private partnership, which can be considered a feature of the modern realist paradigm.

Talking about the coincidence of the exporters' and importers' interests one may go as far as to affirm that it definitely does exist ensures a stable growth of the global economy. By and large, a relative stability of oil production and consumption constantly remains under the destabilizing (not always negative) influence of weak nodes in the existing infrastructure and emerging new infrastructure projects that change the overall picture of the world's energy flows. For example, the first include areas with a high density of shipping (Turkish, Danish, Strait of Hormuz and Malacca), with transit problems, politically unstable from an inter-ethnic and interstate point of view.

The second group of reasons that change the direction of energy flows can be associated with new transport projects, such new pipelines as Baku-Ceyhan, the North Pipeline, the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline etc. For instance, the increase

in the oil supply from Russia to the Asia-Pacific and China in the amount of up to 80 million tons per year in the initial period can withdraw tens of millions of tons of oil a year from the Russian supply market to Europe (depending on the success of geological exploration in Eastern Siberia) [5]. On the other hand, the opening of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline will significantly affect the reduction of transit volumes of Azerbaijani oil via the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline and the cargo turnover of the Novorossiysk terminal. In this context, the significance of the aforementioned political risks in addition to economic risks is also growing. Therefore, minimizing both risks alongside developing an appropriate risk management system can be considered as one of the most important components in ensuring international energy security. Risk management as such has both economic and political significance. In the economic dimension, there is a reduction of costs for a country's energy market, in the political one - the prevention of socio-political crises within a country and the prevention of conflicts between States.

International energy security has been traditionally considered from the point of view of the leading net importers of energy resources (consumers), from the standpoint of providing them with hydrocarbons on a stable basis and at relatively moderate prices. At the same time, the countries-net exporters (producers) have to maintain a significant level of reserve capacity, which would allow them, in times of oil supply crisis in case of reduction in supplies from one country (region) to get supplies (or produce alternative energy) from others. All these things can only complicate things for suppliers. After all, their business is connected with significant risks that include a cyclical development of the world economy, falling demand for energy resources, the desire of consumers to switch to alternative energy sources, the efforts to ensure the safety of routes for the transportation of energy resources. In turn, producers have the same dependence on consumer They must ensure budget revenues, as energy resources export often makes up a significant share of the income of OPEC countries and other oil producers. In addition to fluctuating demand, producers are also influenced by inflation of the US dollar. With regard thereto, speaking about energy security, it seems fit to introduce the notion of a "fair economic interdependence" [2].

After the significant fall in oil prices, that took place in 2014, OPEC countries along with those not-members struggled to stabilize the prices of crude oil and develop a plan to freeze the level of production, even though they knew it would be a long and thorny path. Many experts tried to explain the collapse of oil prices and why OPEC and non-OPEC countries could not come to an agreement to bring stability to the market immediately. According to some experts, Saudi Arabia started a price war to increase its market share [4]. Others said that it was an initiative undertaken by Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members to drive out US oil shale producers from the market [16]. It was also suggested that this was a part of the regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Others argued that this was part of the political game of Saudi Arabia and its Western allies in order to exert pressure on Russia supporting President Bashar al-Assad in the ongoing conflict in Syria [19]. It was assumed that lower oil

prices would force Russia to stop supporting the Syrian government. At any rate, such a conflictogenous perception of the phenomenon would surely correspond to the offensive realism paradigm.

Despite the conjectures about the reasons for the fall in oil prices, the situation at the end of the day changed fundamentally. OPEC and non-OPEC countries reached an agreement to reduce oil production by 1.8 million barrels a day, even though Russia continues to support the Syrian government and Iran has not taken any responsibility to cut its oil production [16]. Moreover it continues to enhance its oil production since the lifting of sanctions in early 2016. Anyway, in order to influence the oil market, OPEC countries have to coordinate with either non-OPEC exporters, or with importers. Taking this into consideration, it seems necessary to analyze the interaction of OPEC with two groups of countries: firstly, with other major oil exporters, such as, Russia, the US, Norway, etc, and secondly, with the countries on the list of the largest oil importers, such as China, India and others.

OPEC's interest in Russia and some CIS countries may be explained by the fact that these countries have significant oil and gas reserves and can influence the global markets. In addition, Russia and the CIS countries need significant investments, which can exacerbate competition on the world market of loan capital. OPEC has repeatedly raised the issue of developing cooperation with Russia and the oil and gas countries of the CIS. Russia's economic and energy security is largely related to the state and intensity of its interaction with OPEC. It is especially important now, when Russia's energy diplomacy is actively pursuing a line for simultaneous cooperation with countries - exporters and importers of energy resources. At the same time, considering national interests, Russia makes a significant contribution to ensuring international energy security at the global and regional levels, which strengthens its political position in the world.

Since 1998, Russia participates in the sessions of the Conference of OPEC member countries as an observer. Moreover, meetings of high-level experts from Russia and the OPEC member countries are held regularly. The deepening of cooperation demonstrates mutual interest in getting reliable information concerning the state of affairs in the world oil markets, forecasts of their short- and medium-term development. Possession of such information allows coordinating joint actions to stabilize the markets. Russia also works with the leading members of OPEC in the framework of bilateral cooperation. Since the establishment of OPEC, Russia's relations with this organization have always been somewhat complicated.

It is worth mentioning that attempts to build constructive relations between Russia and OPEC have been made several times. Since 1991, the development of Russia's relations with OPEC has passed a number of stages that were directly related to periods of recession of the world economy in 1997-1998 and 2008-2009, when there was a decline in demand in the world market and, consequently, the price of oil fell. Russia, recovering from the 1998 crisis, began to increase exports, which caused OPECs discontent, as at that time the price was about 10 USD per barrel and the OPEC countries were reducing their production [2]. It came to the point that OPEC threatened Russia

to crash oil prices (coercive diplomacy or menace of economic warfare). In order to have the possibility to resolve such conflicts, since 1998, Russia has started to participate in the sessions of the OPEC Conference, as well as in expert meetings.

In 2002, the "oil war" between the OPEC and Russia broke out again. Against the backdrop of the fall in oil prices, OPEC demanded that Moscow reduce its production and sales of its energy resources to the foreign market. Representatives of OPEC began to threaten that they could significantly reduce the price of oil again. Formally, Russia accepted OPEC's request. However, according to official statistics, oil exports from Russia were growing steadily. The conflict was settled with the increase in oil prices in early 2003 on the eve of the US-British invasion in Iraq. At the meeting in October 2004 in Moscow, Russia's readiness to continue consultations both in multilateral and bilateral formats was reaffirmed.

In recent years, the relationship between OPEC and Russia has improved. Russia, as stated above, constantly participates in OPEC ministerial conferences as an observer and is open to further dialogue. At the height of the global economic recession of 2008, when oil prices fell from 140 below 50 USD per barrel, Russia and OPEC significantly increased mutual cooperation and coordination of their actions. 2016 was marked by a breakthrough in Russia-OPEC relations. Officials from OPEC noted that it occurred due to the consistency and perseverance of the Russian side. Negotiations and the achievement of an agreement between the OPEC countries and states outside the cartel in December 2016 contributed to a serious increase in oil prices during the past year, from about 30 USD to 55 USD per barrel, which, according to some estimates, brought to the Russian budget 1.5 trillion roubles.

The document, signed on December 10, 2016, on the cooperation between the OPEC countries and the oil-producing states that are not members of the cartel, was unprecedented. For the first time, it was possible to reach an agreement on a voluntary reduction in the volume of oil production, which goes well beyond OPEC. The efforts of the OPEC countries aimed at restoring and rebalancing the world oil market were supported by 11 more world producers, the largest of which is Russia. This agreement appears even more significant because it comes more than a decade since the last one was struck between OPEC and non-OPEC countries. However, an increase in production was noted in a number of countries that did not sign the agreement, for example, in Canada and Brazil. Nevertheless, the main focus is on the United States, which can become a fount for the next "shale recovery".

Commodity stocks of oil in the US have recently increased, reaching 528 million barrels, which exceeds January figures by more than 49 million barrels. Oil reserves traditionally grew at the beginning of the year, but the current level is historically unprecedented. This record became possible due to the reduction in refining at American refineries (in early March, this figure fell to 15.47 million barrels per day - in early January 2017, processing fluctuated between 16.5-17 million barrels) and an increase in imported oil supplies. However, the concerns of the participants in the Vienna agreements are primarily related to the increase in production in the US itself.

American oil companies have made good use of the situation on the oil market. In March 2017, after a year of falling, for the first time oil production overcame the mark of 9 million barrels a day. The cost of production in the US has been declining for three years, reaching 35-40 USD per barrel for such major fields as Bakken, Permian, Niobrara and Eagle Ford (this figure is not yet market price, since the extracted oil should be transported). The improvement of technological parameters for horizontally drilled wells, as well as the reduction in maintenance costs in times of the crisis (the cost of drilling or well construction) have become the basis for the current recovery, but the important role is played by the beliefs of American oilmen that the administration of Donald Trump (himself a firm realist) will stimulate the oil industry in the spirit of the pre-election slogan "Make America energetically independent".

Given the situation in the Middle East, Riyadh cannot ignore what is happening. Recently, high-ranking Saudi politicians, including Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih, have hinted that the country may refuse to extend the regime for reducing production recorded in the framework of the OPEC summit in late November 2016. They tend to be concerned that US oil companies are enjoying an improvement in the overall oil market situation and are not going to put up with the fact that some oil and gas exporters, not limiting themselves to anything and not binding themselves, derive substantial benefits from the Vienna arrangement.

The Vienna agreements per se, being voluntary obligations of the States, are not legally binding. They are not underpinned by enforcement mechanisms. OPEC countries are interested in fluctuation of the oil quotes in the range of 55-60 USD per barrel, and almost everyone wants to avoid a return to oil quotes below 50 USD, when most of the US shale deposits will become unprofitable. Excessive drop in quotations will affect the solvency of Riyadh itself. Therefore, in the mid-term, Saudi Arabia would probably "push out" carefully shale oil by bringing its reserve capacity to the market (up to 12 million barrels per day). For oil shale companies range of 40-45 USD per barrel can be considered unacceptable. Still, in order to keep prices at this level steadily, the country would have to work hard and make real steps to reduce government spending and diversify the economy.

China increasingly turned to Persian Gulf, African, and Latin American producers within OPEC to satisfy its burgeoning domestic oil needs after becoming a net oil importer in 1993 when its domestic demand began to outstrip its crude output. At current volumes, Saudi Arabia accounts for approximately 20 percent of China's total crude imports [13]. Another OPEC member Angola is a long-standing supplier of China. The country's economic interaction with the Gulf accelerated in the 2000s. Chinese national oil companies spent approximately 15 billion USD in oil and gas acquisitions in 2009 and more than 26 billion USD in 2010 as a means to diversify their energy investment portfolios and benefit from an appreciation in assets in the coming decade [19]. OPEC members situated in the Gulf contributed the majority of China's oil imports.

China continues to stand by Iran, even as international sanctions targeting the OPEC producer have proved hard for both Beijing and Tehran to elude [1]. China

says its long-term dependence on foreign oil imports means it cannot afford to relinquish bilateral energy relations with any major Middle East energy producer, including Iran. But China has paid a geopolitical price for betting incorrectly in and around the Middle East, and its support for Iran and Syria's Assad regime currently puts its improving relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in some jeopardy. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have taken active steps to support the overthrow of Syria's Assad regime and to contain Iran's regional influence. China now runs the risk of damaging its own important relationship with Saudi Arabia and Qatar by backing the wrong side in the brewing regional battle for supremacy between these important Sunni Arab states of the Gulf region and Shi'ite Iran and its satellite regional proxies. US Middle East policy is now perhaps the single biggest inhibitor to China's successful implementation of its "going abroad" strategy. Most recently, US-led sanctions policy against Iran has forced Beijing to pull back on its commitments in the Iranian oil and gas industry. US efforts to sanction Iran for its nuclear aspirations have also prompted China to pressure its firms to slow activities in Iran to minimal tasks such as appraisal studies instead of active drilling and construction related to existing deals.

Another key stakeholder of the global energy diplomacy appears to be India. In 1990 India imported 37% of oil it consumed while in 2012 it imported a staggering 82% of consumed oil, pushing the import bill to 120 USD billion and making it the energy source with the highest import dependency [9]. The reduction in oil production by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries combined with rising prices could pose a threat to India's energy security and will force it to look for alternative suppliers of hydrocarbons.

Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the main oil exporters to India, will cut supplies as part of the OPEC + pact, while shipments from Iran fell due to a conflict between Indian companies and Tehran over the development of the Farzad B gas field, which forces Delhi to look for new sources of raw materials. In search of new sources of oil, India drew attention to Urals, close in quality to many near-Eastern varieties. Indian refineries have already purchased a record volume of Urals since the beginning of 2017 and, according to the traders, will buy more. Until now, supplies of the Russian oil to India were irregular and did not exceed 500,000 tons per year [9]. Currently, India ranks third in the world in terms of consumption and import of oil after the US and China, while approximately 86% of the oil supplied from abroad comes from OPEC countries. With regard thereto, Indian higher officials fear that restrictions on oil production in the OPEC countries and outside the cartel may lead to insufficient investments in exploration and new facilities, which in the long term will reduce supplies from these States.

To conclude, the above case study demonstrates the consistency and proves the applicability of the outlined realist paradigm in modern energy diplomacy. Its further elaboration and adjustment to the challenges of the contemporary international relations and shifts on the global energy market remains a key precondition for strengthening the link between theory and practice in the respective field and forecasting scenarios of it future development. In terms of science diplomacy, further studies of the

subject with eventual modifications of the suggested model may not only be of theoretical value for scholars but also useful for policy-makers in the process of decision taking in foreign affairs.

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About the authors:

Roman O. Reinhardt – PhD in World Economy, Senior Lecturer at the Department for Diplomatic Studies, Russia MGIMO-University, Russia, 119454, Moscow, Vernadsky Prospekt, 76. E-mail: don.reinhardt@mail.ru.
Sergei V. Pronichkin – PhD in Technical Sciences, Senior Researcher, Federal Research Center "Computer Science and Control" of Russian Academy of Sciences. Russia, 117312, Moscow, Prospect of the 60th Anniversary of October, 9. E-mail: pronichkin@mail.ru.

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РЕАЛИСТСКАЯ ПАРАДИГМА ЭНЕРГЕТИЧЕСКОЙ ДИПЛОМАТИИ В РОССИЙСКОЙ НАУЧНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ И ЕЁ ПРАКТИЧЕСКАЯ ПРИМЕНИМОСТЬ

Р.О. Райнхардт, С.В. Проничкин
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Московский государственный институт международных отношений (университет) МИД России
Федеральный исследовательский центр ‹‹Информатика и управление››, РАН

В настоящее время энергетическая дипломатия представляется одной из наиболее важных и значимых областей прикладных международных исследований. Данный раздел отличается междисциплинарностью, находясь на стыке политической и экономической теории, международного права, энергетики, теория дипломатии, а также других смежных сфер. При этом множественные исследования, посвящённые указанной проблематике, как отечественные, так и зарубежные, характеризуются рядом спорных моментов, а именно: фактическим отсутствием единой теоретико-методологической базы и общепринятой терминологии, недостаточной четкостью и ясностью в выборе научных парадигм, что приводит к существенным расхождениям при формулировке выводов исследований и снижает сопоставимость их результатов. Помимо этого, с точки зрения научной политики допустимо говорить об отсутствии единого научного пространства в рассматриваемой области знания, которая в большинстве случаев определяется национальной научно-исследовательской культурой и соответствующими традициями. Научной школой МГИМО и отдельными ее представителями за последние десятилетия накоплен богатый опыт изучения и анализа проблем энергетической дипломатии. Вместе с тем во многих из имеющихся трудов напрямую не обозначены выбранные политико-теоретические парадигмы, такие как, например, реализм, либерализм или конструктивизм. Не ставя перед собой задачи сравнительного анализа

перечисленных концепций, авторы настоящей статьи подробно описывают основные теоретические посылы и положения парадигмы, которая в условиях наблюдаемых в настоящее время геополитических и геоэкономических реалий способствует их наиболее адекватной трактовке, прикладному анализу и последующему прогнозированию – политический реализм. Авторы обосновывают применимость предлагаемой модели на эмпирическом материале, исследуя кейс ОПЕК, и демонстрируют её потенциальную практическую полезность для лиц, принимающих решения в области внешней политики и международных энергетических отношений.

Key words: политический реализм, энергетическая дипломатия, теория дипломатии, научная политика, научная школа МГИМО, ОПЕК.

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Об авторах:

Роман Отмарович Райнхардт – к.э.н., старший преподаватель кафедры дипломатии МГИМО МИД России. 119454, Россия, Москва, пр. Вернадского, 76.
E-mail: don.reinhardt@mail.ru.
Сергей Васильевич Проничкин – к.т.н., старший научный сотрудник, Федеральный исследовательский центр «Информатика и управление» Российской академии наук. Россия, 117312, Москва, пр-т 60-летия Октября, 9.
E-mail: pronichkin@mail.ru.

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