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THE ENERGY FACTOR AMID MODERN GEOPOLITICAL RISKS: ENSURING RUSSIA'S NATIONAL AND STATE SECURITY**

Russia is among the global leaders in hydrocarbon reserves, energy production volumes, and the development and application of nuclear energy technologies.

The International Energy Agency (IEA), under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has highlighted the growing demand for an evolving level of energy security. According to the Doctor of Economics, Professor, and Head of Sector at IMEMO RAS, Vladislav Stepanovich Zagashvili (*Владислав Степанович Загашвили*), diversification is a crucial risk management tool for ensuring economic security in the context of fluctuating global energy market prices. He notes that the extractive sector creates 12% of the added value in manufacturing and transportation and storage enterprises. However, structural transformation under external financial, technological, and internal demographic constraints and risks is challenging. The primary condition for the success of such a strategy is creating a favorable

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business environment and overcoming the isolation in which Russia has found itself on the international stage (Загашвили 2016, 52–60).

The foundation of Russia's energy infrastructure is generally understood to rest upon three principal elements: the Unified Energy System, the Unified Gas Supply System, and an extensive network of trunk pipelines for the transport of oil and petroleum products, which collectively constitute one of the longest pipeline systems in the world. Russia ranks second globally (after the United States of America [USA]) regarding the number of natural zones it spans. Its territory stretches 4,500 km from north to south. It includes 10 climatic zones: tundra, taiga, mixed and broadleaf forests, steppe, desert, subtropics, the subarctic zone in the northern latitudes, the Arctic zone with extreme cold, permafrost, and deserts (Хромов 2020).

The role of energy and international energy policy in modern geopolitical realities has been thoroughly explored in the works of Professor Stanislav Zakharovich Zhiznin (*Станислав Захарович Жизнин*), of the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy at Moscow State Institute of International Relations MGIMO (MGIMO) and Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas, and President of the Center for Energy Diplomacy and Geopolitics, Doctor of Economics (Жизнин 2006). Zhiznin is a leading Russian expert on international energy security, geopolitics, and energy economics (Жизнин 2010).

His works examine key issues such as the modernization of Russia's fuel and energy complex (FEC) and the multilateral international dimensions of this modernization. Zhiznin emphasizes that modernization must involve the development of public-private partnerships and international cooperation, with consideration of foreign experience. He explores the resource and technological aspects of global energy diplomacy through the lens of national energy security as a component of a state's foreign policy.

Analyzing Russia's energy policy, Zhiznin interprets it within the context of realistically understanding Russia's place in global energy geopolitics and geo-economics, which he sees as defining factors of international energy diplomacy. He considers Russia's national energy security at the regional and global levels through multiple influencing factors.

Delving into core processes in global energy, the scholar evaluates Russia's potential in international energy markets and explores the geopolitical motives behind its energy diplomacy. He reaffirms that

partnership development and international cooperation are necessary during modernization. The national energy security perspective, as part of a country's diplomacy, remains central to his analysis.

Zhiznin also examines Russia's practical relations with major players in global energy policy at both the regional and international levels. In his most recognized work, "Russia's Energy Diplomacy: Economy, Politics, Practice," he details the tools of modern energy diplomacy and the international operations of leading oil giants. He convincingly argues that in contemporary international relations – laden with risks to national sovereignty and trade in oil and gas resources – Russia's sustainable geopolitical status heavily depends on the effectiveness of its diplomatic efforts (Жизнин 2010, 8–21).

In considering Russia's role in global energy geopolitics, Zhiznin notes that "energy geopolitics" is often used in scholarly practice in conjunction with geo-economics, though it lacks a precise definition. He proposes that the term should encompass not only geographic factors tied to energy but also issues of development and transport of energy resources, including expanding pipeline routes. Geopolitical factors increasingly influence the global energy sector (Жизнин 2006, 640).

The overarching issue of multifaceted national security has remained consistently relevant and at the forefront of the Russian state's agenda.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced a geopolitical crisis, facing the risk of becoming a regional power with limited international capabilities and the real prospect of turning into a raw materials appendage – not only of the West but also of the East.

Since March 2022, the United States has imposed a total ban on the supply of all energy carriers (except nuclear fuel) from Russia – oil, gas, and coal – to set an example for other countries. The sanctions on Russian oil exports have caused deficiencies in the countries implementing the restrictions. Under the conditions of geopolitical transformation, Russia's oil industry was reoriented toward the Asian market in response to European anti-Russian sanctions. Unlike the gas sector, which has more complex infrastructure, the shipment and receipt of oil and petroleum products are more straightforward. Russia did not experience a significant decrease in exports due to the technical restrictions imposed by sanctions.

From 2022 to 2023, the largest market for Russian oil transported by sea became India, with trade relations actively developing. Russia also

succeeded in establishing a parallel import system with China, which remains the most significant partner for pipeline-delivered oil. The United States – previously the largest consumer of Russian petroleum products until 2022 – was surpassed by Turkey in 2024. Much Russian oil purchased through the Turkish market is re-exported to European Union countries. According to a leading expert of the National Security Foundation of the Russian Federation Igor V. Yushkov (*Игорь В. Юшков*), "despite claims regarding different origins of petroleum products, the formal volumes of purchase and sale match" (Юшков 2024, 18–32).

Russian oil and petroleum products are also supplied to the Middle East and African countries. Analysts note that "although Arab countries are producers themselves, some – such as Libya – purchase Russian petroleum products for their domestic markets, while exporting their oil and products at higher prices" (Юшков 2024, 27).

The Russian Federation is developing and consistently implementing a geostrategic model of energy sovereignty within the context of a comprehensive system of Eurasian cooperation and integration through formats such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), BRICS, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Шарипов 2016, 197–204).

In the monograph by Sergey V. Biryukov (*Сергей Владимирович Бирюков*), Geopolitical Potential for the Development of Russia's Energy Sector and Its Energy Security Issues, published in 2002, the author explores the theory of global energy challenges and sustainable societal development, geopolitical aspects of the energy sector's potential, and issues of ensuring Russia's energy security. At the start of the 2000s, Russia's foreign economic and foreign policy activities were aimed at seeking strategic partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, Europe, and Asia. To ensure stability on the Eurasian continent, integration processes were activated to form a Eurasian energy space (Бирюков 2002, 228).

In 2013, the Institute for Energy Strategy prepared a collective work on the strategy for the development of Russia's energy sector, spanning 798 pages (Бушуев *и др.* 2013). Three years later, in 2016, a collective monograph was published by a team directly involved in drafting the Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period up to 2035 (developed between 2013 and 2015). The monograph substantiates Russia's energy policy for the foreseeable future. It provides forecasts

for the development of the fuel and energy complex, as well as general plans for the development of individual energy sectors:

"As of today, Russia provides about 10% of the world's primary energy production and holds leading positions in oil, gas, and coal extraction, as well as supplying energy resources to international markets. Russia possesses the world's largest reserves of fossil fuels, though a significant portion remains to be explored. Successful development of the energy complex's geological exploration and processing sectors, combined with a balanced foreign energy policy, enables Russia to strengthen its position in global fossil fuel markets" (Бушуев *и др.* 2016, 53).

The energy sector is a key economic, social, and political industry for many countries. National security depends on the condition of the fuel and energy complex, which is why state authorities place special emphasis on energy security issues. The Russian FEC remains under particularly close attention from the government due to the deepening energy interdependence of countries and the internationalization and globalization of energy (Жизнин 2010, 3).

In 2009, the Russian Federal Law No. 261-FZ on Energy Conservation and Increasing Energy Efficiency came into force. Issues of the Russian FEC are included in the agenda of the Commission under the President of the Russian Federation for Modernization and Technological Development of the Economy.

These issues were discussed during the meeting of the Russian Security Council on December 13, 2010, titled On the Status and Measures to Ensure the Energy Security of the Russian Federation, where a decision was made to draft the Energy Security Doctrine and to develop measures for the modernization of the country's FEC. Two weeks later, on December 27, 2010, the Russian government approved the State Program for Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency until 2020.

On January 30, 2012, in the article *We Need a New Economy*, Russian President Vladimir Putin (*Владимир Путин*) emphasized that Russia's economy must become efficient, with high labor productivity and low energy intensity. In addition to a modern fuel and energy complex, other competitive sectors would be developed. The goal was that by 2020, the share of high-tech and knowledge-based industries in GDP should increase by 1.5 times, and high-tech exports should double (Путин 2012).

The Energy Security Concept of Russia has been developed, reflecting the country's stance on "green energy" and its role in international relations. The green energy concept is based on transitioning to a carbon-free economy, utilizing natural renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, water, geothermal, and others, and is supported by collective international commitments. It must be acknowledged that climate change represents a global challenge that requires coordinated efforts beyond national borders.

By Presidential Decree No. 216 of May 13, 2019, the *Energy Security Doctrine* of the Russian Federation was adopted to replace the outdated doctrine from November 29, 2012. The new doctrine identifies domestic, socio-political, manufactured, environmental, foreign economic, and foreign political threats. It formulates a set of measures and key tasks to ensure the country's and its regions' security.

A foreign policy challenge to energy security is the intensification of international efforts to implement climate policy and accelerate the transition to a "green economy."

Article 10 of the *Energy Security Doctrine* affirms that the Russian Federation expresses support for global initiatives to address climate change and signals its willingness to cooperate internationally in this field. Nevertheless, the document underscores that Russia's engagement in international climate governance is conditional, being pursued only insofar as such policies are compatible with its national interests – namely, the enhancement of citizens' quality of life, the protection of the environment, and the sustainable management of natural resources. "Russia considers it unacceptable to approach climate change and environmental protection from a biased perspective, to infringe on the interests of energy-producing states, or to deliberately ignore such sustainable development aspects as universal energy access and the development of clean hydrocarbon energy technologies" (*Гарант.ру* 2019).

Among the external economic factors influencing energy security are several notable developments: the gradual shift of the global economic growth center toward the Asia-Pacific region; a deceleration in the overall expansion of energy demand accompanied by changes in its structure, partly resulting from the replacement of petroleum products with alternative energy sources, advances in energy conservation, and improvements in energy efficiency; the broadening of the worldwide hydrocarbon resource base; intensifying competition among energy-

exporting states; the steady increase in liquefied natural gas (LNG) production; and the growing proportion of renewable energy within the global energy balance. The production and use of green energy help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, and mitigate the negative impact on the environment and climate change. Through the European Green Deal, the EU and the US have declared their commitment to actively developing "green" energy, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. On December 12, 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted, marking the beginning of the transition to a low-carbon world and a carbon-free economy. Traditional energy sources such as oil, coal, and gas are major contributors to environmental pollution and climate change. A global shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources – i.e., to a low- or zero-carbon economy in line with the Paris Agreement – could be realized by the mid-21st century (*RIA* 2019).

As of February 2023, 194 countries, including the Russian Federation, had joined the Paris Climate Agreement. This issue has not gone unnoticed in Russian historiography and has been the subject of research by several prominent scholars. Russian researchers have developed their perspective on "energy geopolitics – the green path." Russia has always emphasized its commitment to the values of environmental and climate agendas and, at the current stage, actively participates in implementing global climate policy. However, throughout the evolution of international climate policy – especially in recent times – Russia, as a key actor on the international stage and the world's largest exporter of natural gas, has faced resistance from unfriendly nations. While major global players such as the EU and the US are moving swiftly toward green energy development, Russia has been less eager to completely shift its focus away from traditional hydrocarbon exports.

According to Russian scholars, the energy sector will become increasingly diversified and adaptable to rapidly changing conditions. Nevertheless, the overall development trend will point toward transitioning from "fuel-based" energy to an "electric world," the most convenient and efficient form of energy consumption. As energy sources evolve, resource globalization and competition for hydrocarbon energy will give way to regionalization and self-sufficiency among leading energy-importing countries. It is unrealistic to expect the world to fully transition from the hydrocarbon era to one dominated solely by green energy. A more likely scenario, according to Russian experts, is one of diversified development, in which all economically, technologically, and

ecologically viable forms of energy – both traditional and non-traditional hydrocarbons, renewables, biofuels, etc. – will be used for electricity generation, which serves as the final energy source for all consumer categories (Бушуев *и др.* 2016, 90).

In this context, it is deemed necessary to strengthen cooperation with friendly countries within such international organizations as the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), BRICS, and the SCO, which share Russia's stance on climate change issues and support its efforts to develop mutually beneficial strategies for using traditional energy sources amid the energy transition. Russia advocates for international climate initiatives that are advantageous to all parties and for minimizing the negative consequences of the global climate agenda (Серёгина 2023, 116).

Regarding whether nuclear energy can be considered "green," the European Commission classified nuclear power as such. It permitted the construction of nuclear power plants until 2045, stipulating that nuclear reactors must meet high safety standards. According to experts, current global leaders in green energy development include China, Denmark, Kenya, India, and Iceland. China is universally acknowledged as the global leader in investments in clean energy technologies. China, the United States, India, Japan, Russia, and Canada are the top electricity producers. Primary hydropower resources are held by Brazil, Canada, Sweden, and Norway, which together account for over 75% of the world's hydroelectric generation.

In foreign historiography, a recognized expert in resource geopolitics is Michael T. Klare, professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College (Massachusetts, USA), national security correspondent for *The Nation* magazine, and author of fourteen international energy policy and security books. He argues that a new chapter has begun in international politics, in which government control over energy resources becomes a central concern. Klare urges the need for coordinated plans and rational approaches to resource usage. It is hard to disagree with his view – international cooperation is the only path to survival. In today's radically changed world, Klare writes that Russia has "transformed from a battered loser of the Cold War into an arrogant broker of Eurasian energy" (Klare 2008). At the same time, the United States is now forced to compete with the emerging power of "Chindia". As a unique resource for modern industrial society, oil remains the source of 40% of the world's energy supply and 98% of transport energy. The oil

market remains the most critical and influential, with intense competition for dominant positions (Klare 2008).

On the topic of energy geopolitics, the work of French scholar Jean-Pierre Favennec is regarded in historiography as a "comprehensive treatise on the geopolitical influence of energy," offering insights into the political, economic, and social complexities of energy supply and its impact on national governments and NGOs. In his monograph Geopolitics of Energy, Favennec presents an overview of global energy markets through a geopolitical lens. He shares his assessments of the political dimensions of energy in various world regions. Energy is becoming a key issue in geopolitics, generating conflicts between countries and becoming a significant topic on the international political agenda, thereby gaining strategic significance in the historical evolution of the energy market. Favennec's book offers valuable information on energy markets, energy security challenges in the global economy, and future problems facing competing regions (Favennec 2009).

The important role of the Russian Federation in ensuring Serbia's energy security and its position as a guarantor of the country's energy stability amid the crisis engulfing Europe was highlighted during a meeting with Russian Ambassador to Belgrade Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko (*Александар Боцан-Харченко*). Thanks to Russia, "despite the energy crisis affecting all of Europe, Serbian citizens can count on uninterrupted supplies of all petroleum products," stated Serbia's Minister of Mining and Energy, Dubravka Đedović-Handanović. "The Russian Federation is our key energy partner, and in these difficult times, the importance of constructing the Balkan Stream gas pipeline has become evident – it contributes to Serbia's energy stability and security. We have ensured a stable gas supply for both citizens and the economy, and together with our Russian partners, we have commissioned the Pančevo thermal power plant (TE-TO), the country's first combined-cycle power plant for producing electricity and heat from natural gas, one of the cleanest fuel types" (*TACC* 2023).

According to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, Radovan Višković, "if Europe seeks the well-being of its citizens, it must begin a dialogue with Russia and resolve the issue of energy supplies from Russia for the benefit not only of the current, but also of future generations. Europe cannot stabilize its future without Russian energy resources" (*TACC* 2024).

In an exclusive interview with the publication About Serbia in Russian, Serbian politician and Doctor of Technical Sciences Miroslav Parović (*Мирослав Паровић*) spoke about the challenges facing Serbia's energy sector. He believes the "green transition" policy is being imposed on Belgrade. At the same time, Serbia's Minister of Mining and Energy, Dubravka Đedović-Handanović, is "dreaming of the American dream," and "the Chinese are preparing for a proxy war with the U.S. on Serbian territory." He believes the "green transition" should be viewed from two angles: the energy profession and politics. Serbia must transition to so-called "green technologies," given that its accessible coal reserves – currently the primary source of electricity generation – are running out. The "green transition," he argues, is a competition between great powers for dominance in technologies and energy sources. On this basis, the strongest alliances are formed, as it is difficult to turn away from a country that supplies you with strategic goods (Басенков 2023).

The legal framework of Serbia – EU energy relations is discussed by Serbian legal scholars Dragan Divljak and Bojan Nešić. The energy sector is strategic in all countries and affects positive economic and social development. Achieving optimal goals in this area is impossible today without international cooperation and the establishment of bilateral and regional agreements between states. In early December 2015, the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Energy Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2030. The strategy emphasizes that "the development of legal norms in Serbia's energy sector must move toward alignment with European Union legislation and practical implementation of its goals and regulations, with forecasts outlined up to 2030" (Дивљак и Нешић 2018, 91).

In March 2023, Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić, commenting on the sanctions policy of Western countries – which, despite the imposed measures, managed to increase trade with Russia – stated that trade turnover between Russia and Serbia had declined. However, in the long run, "the resilience of energy cooperation between Moscow and Belgrade is highly likely to remain unshakable" (*Georgia Today* 2023). "Even if Belgrade ultimately decides to impose sanctions against Moscow, the energy sector, due to the high level of interdependence between Serbian and Russian businesses (even considering growing logistical challenges), is highly likely to remain unaffected" (*Georgia Today* 2023).

In 2003, the government of the Russian Federation approved the energy strategy of Russia for 2020, and in 2019, Presidential Decree No.

216 dated May 13 introduced the energy security doctrine of the Russian Federation to ensure energy security. The legal basis of the Doctrine includes the Constitution, federal laws, and legal acts of the President and the Government of the Russian Federation. The Decree of President Vladimir V. Putin dated May 13, 2019, states that "Russia's full-scale participation in ensuring international energy security is hindered by restrictive measures introduced by several foreign states against the oil and gas sectors of its energy complex, as well as opposition by some foreign states and international organizations to energy projects involving the Russian Federation" (*Гарант.ру* 2019).

The role of economic and scientific-technical security, as well as international energy policy, remains in sharp focus for the leadership of the Russian state and consistently stays on the agenda of central government bodies. Long-term programs are developed and periodically updated, including: the Environmental Doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved by the Government's order on August 31, 2002; the Energy Strategy of Russia until 2030, approved on November 13, 2009; the Energy Security Doctrine, by Presidential Decree dated May 13, 2019; and the Energy Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2035, approved by Government Order on June 9, 2020 (*Гарант.ру* 2019).

The revised Energy Security Doctrine functions as a key strategic planning instrument within the Russian Federation. Its primary purpose is safeguarding national security by providing a framework for addressing energy-related challenges. To guarantee sustainable economic development, strengthen sovereignty, and ensure state security, openness to the world, fair competition, high efficiency, and technological advancement, President Putin signed a decree on May 7, 2024, titled On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the Period Until 2030 and the Long-Term Perspective Until 2036. The preamble outlines target indicators and tasks that define the achievement of national goals.

Among the 11 key goals, paragraph 5 includes "Environmental Well-being." By 2030, it envisions creating a circular economy that ensures 100% sorting of annually generated municipal solid waste, burial of no more than 50% of such waste, and inclusion of at least 25% of production and consumption waste in the economic cycle as secondary resources. By 2036, the goal is to halve emissions of hazardous pollutants with the most significant adverse environmental and health impacts in cities with high or very high levels of air pollution. Furthermore,

by 2030, at least 50 hazardous environmental damage sites will be eliminated, and by 2036, at least 50% of Class I and II hazardous waste will be processed or neutralized (*Гарант.ру* 2019).

The issue of "green energy" and its role in international relations is also reflected in Russia's Energy Security Concept. It states that the Russian Federation is ready to cooperate in this and other areas with all states and supports international efforts to combat climate change. However, it underscores that Russia's full-scale participation in ensuring international energy security is obstructed by restrictive measures introduced by several foreign states against its energy sector's oil and gas industries and opposition from these states and international organizations to energy projects involving Russia.

The role of Russia's energy resources in the European economy is beyond doubt: coal, oil, and gas account for about 80% of global energy production. In 2022, Russian natural gas comprised 33% of total gas imports, oil – 23%, and coal provided 30% of Europe's imports. Last year, Russia accounted for around 19% of Europe's gas supply (Gross and Stelzenmuller 2024). There has been a noted increase in the share of renewable sources in global electricity production, which reached 14% in 2022 due to the commissioning of solar and wind power plants. Of this growth, 72% was attributable to solar energy. However, fossil fuel consumption as a percentage of primary energy remained at 82% (*WTC Moscow* 2023).

Improving energy efficiency and significantly reducing the energy intensity of the Russian economy are among the main priorities of the Energy Strategy of Russia until 2030, as well as of the country's broader economic and scientific-technical policy. Russia contributes significantly to global energy security as one of the leading suppliers of energy resources to European and Asian markets. At the same time, Russia does not yet play a prominent role in the technological segment of European and Asian energy security. The country's fuel and energy complex and related industries require replacing outdated and worn-out equipment, which demands enormous investments and access to modern energy technologies.

To initiate a process of technological modernization across all sectors of Russia's FEC, effective mechanisms for public-private partnerships and the development of international cooperation are essential. The success of this process will significantly impact the domestic economic situation and the stability of Russia's foreign

economic and geopolitical positions. Accordingly, providing foreign policy support for the modernization of Russia's FEC should become one of the priorities of Russia's energy diplomacy (Жизнин 2006).

The long-term goals for developing Russia's economy include improving its international production specialization, particularly since the Asian countries with expanding economic ties tend to be consumers, rather than producers, of advanced technologies. The economic sanctions imposed by the EU and the U.S. since 2014 have hurt Russian exports, particularly in the oil and gas sector. To mitigate the effects of these sanctions and safeguard the economy, Russia is shifting toward domestic equipment and technology production across all sectors. This process requires both time and investment. Russia's active efforts to diversify its economy are expected to minimize future risks (*TACC* 2016).

Based on its national interests, resources, and intellectual potential, Russia strives for sustainable development and contributes significantly to ensuring international energy security.

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