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Oil Factor in USA Foreign Policy until 2014: the Paradigm of the Perception

Ardak K. Kapyshev*, Saltanat K. Kapysheva
Kokshetau University named after Abai Myrzakhmetov, Kokshetau, Kazakhstan
*E-mail: ard.kapyshev@gmail.com
Tel.: +77027706705

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of a paradigm of influence perception of the oil factor on foreign policy of the United States until mid-2014. Based on the comparative historical and problem-chronological methods is conducted the analysis of various data and research on the place and role of oil in the energy sector in connection with the USA ensuring its national security as a world leader in oil consumption in the era of high oil prices. Based on generalized data available from various studies, we have introduced a common point of view on how the oil factor affects the formation of assertive foreign policy of the United States that can exist independently on the back of changing global oil market. Understanding the shown in the article paradigm of perception of the USA as a global controller of the world oil market allows to outline the typical clichés of the prevalent point of view about the Washington's responsibility for everything that happens in the oil-rich regions of the world, including for the development of ambiguous political and economic processes in the oil exporting countries.

Keywords: The United States, Foreign Policy, National Security, The Oil Factor, International Relations

Introduction

A long-term fall in world oil prices began in mid-2014 – from more than 100 US dollars per 1 barrel of oil in June to less than 33 US dollars in January 2016 (Baffes et al., 2015). This significantly changed the international political and economic situation and led to the formation of a new reality for both the *foreign policy and United States national security*, occupying the first place in the world in consumption and oil reserves (Smith, 2014; BP, 2016) and claiming the world leadership in production (Sidahmed & Kasperkevic 2016), *and the other countries*, exporting and importing the oil.

The threefold drop in world oil prices in 2014-2016, which without prior prediction, is one of the most discussed and studied issues in the international relations. The World Bank Group, World Economic Forum (Michael, 2015), U.S. Energy Information Administration (Short- Term Energy Outlook (STEO), 2016; BP, 2016), Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times (Krauss, 2016) experts are trying to understand the causes and consequences of why it happened, what to do and how it will evolve in the future world oil.

In this regard, no less important is to understand the very recent history of United States foreign policy in the context of the struggle for oil resources in the world from the point pf view of its researchers and the perception of their readers, when the world oil prices in the 2000 were on the one hand also confirmed by fluctuations and on the other – were quite high, sometimes exceeding all imaginable limits and income in June 2008 to US 140 $ and more per 1 barrel of Brent and West Texas Intermediate (WTI), also known as the «(Texas) Light Sweet». At the same time we should

remember that in the last century it was the American WTI that had been a one single marker grade of oil for a long time and up to 2011 WTI usually traded at 1-2 dollars more expensive than Brent, and 3-4 dollars more expensive them the OPEC oil basket (BP, 2016).

In purpose of searching for and finding the structural elements of the paradigm of perception of the process of formation and implementation of the United States foreign policy and national security have been studied the works of the authors mainly of 2000s with the help of comparative historical and problem-chronological methods. (Le Billon and El Khatib, 2004). Particular attention was paid to the investigation of the second half of the 2000s, when they began to sum up the results of the Middle East administration policy of the President of the United States George W. Bush (Yergin, 2006; Noël, 2006; Lubeck, Watts and Lipschutz, 2007; Zalloum, 2007), and also to the works of the beginning of 2010's (Stokes and Raphael, 2010; Weiss, Larrabee, Bartis and Sawak, 2012), but with the involvement of both the earlier studies (Stoff, 1980; Hirsch, 1987; Sohn, 1990; Lieber, 1992) and recently published (Nyman, 2014; Krasner, 2015; Snow, 2016). This has allowed to look at the events of the studied period from 2000 to 2014, with the expert's position both the 1980-1990, and the modern, to compare their views from "top and bottom". That is, long-term perception in the late twentieth century of the foreign policy and international influence of the oil factor relationship at the beginning of the twenty-first century and, on the contrary, a retrospective look at the events of the same time.

Such theoretical-methodological approach made it possible to hold the shortcut immersion into the time period, which is being studied and to trace the dynamics of the widespread idea of the US as the main participants in the struggle for the world's oil resources to ensure its national security. But also to consider the theoretical possibility of the studied works to formation of a certain paradigm of perception of the place and role of the United States in the fight for access to the oil resources in the various regions of the world in conditions of a high oil price in the 2000s.

Methodology

The purpose of this study implied using a set of complementary research methods. In particular, abstract-logical, analytical, concrete-historical, economic and statistical methods were used.

In addition, the authors used comparative-historical and problem-chronological methods, system approach, methods of dialectical cognition and generalization of national and international experience on the matter in hand.

Data, Analysis, and Results

Oil and the energy security of the United States

The United States is the world's largest oil consumer (BP, 2016) for many years and it will remain in the near future. As an example, every fifth barrel, consumed per day in 2012, was consumed by the US. This is despite the fact that the average annual oil price fell below 100 dollars per 1 barrel and the same year began the first deliveries of shale oil in the United States market within that influenced the dynamics of the WTI price, but did not reduce the cost of Brent. Concerning this, the steady flow of oil is vital to the US national security. The projection of US military power abroad is based on the uninterrupted supply of substantial oil volume. Hence, the availability of uninterrupted flow of oil as the basis of energy security forms a prerequisite for the US hegemony in the world.

Historically, Winston Churchill first raised the energy security issue at the national level when the energy source for the British Navy ships changed from coal to oil in 1914 (Yergin, 2006). Since then, the energy security paradigm acquired new dimensions.

Initially, energy security was viewed as simple availability of sufficient energy resource supply at affordable prices (Yergin, 2006). Over time, however, this definition transformed in such a way that energy security issues become an integral part of today's global agenda.

The importance of energy security is determined by the fact that production in general and high technological standard of living in particular highly depend on stable energy supplies. Access to cheap energy has become vital for the modern economy. Even a short outage may do much harm to consumers.

Building and maintaining of a reliable security system requires many resources and a high level of international cooperation, which is determined by two factors.

The first factor implies the fact that that energy security requires ongoing construction of a new electricity infrastructure through replacement of equipment in order to maintain the overloaded and aging energy infrastructure and to provide high-quality and uninterrupted power supply, which in turn will provide additional support to maintain social development.

The second factor implies the fact that different energy sources cannot quickly substitute each other and their quality is important as well. The very uneven distribution of energy resources between the countries has led to significant risks in international relations. Thus, in any case, the US energy security cannot be isolated from the energy security of other states keeping in mind current features of technological development.

This practical difficulty leads to the fact that there is no generally accepted definition of energy security, and the term itself becomes a complex concept, related to several issues: supply policy, consumer policy and technical organization policy. However, OPEC views energy security rather in terms of strong demand for oil exports and control over this strategic asset. Energy security is also considered as a traditional security sphere (McDonald, 2008).

In the US, the "energy independence" issue was brought to political agenda by Richard Nixon in 1973 (Yergin, 2006), thus denoting the vector of Washington's efforts. During the next decade, the modern system of international energy security was formed. Presently, it consists of two subsystems: consumers and suppliers.

The first subsystem includes strategic reserves of each country. The second one includes countries, which supply energy commodities to the market.

The structure of consumer-related subsystem is simple, and its successful operation requires commitment to several principles. The most important principles include diversity of supplies and availability of strategic reserves.

The system of suppliers is much more complicated. Presently, the exact amount of energy reserves on the planet is unknown. Oil exporters overestimated the amount of available resources for a long time, in order to increase production and export quotas. In general, all energy exporters have one common feature – they try to profit from prices, which is caused by several factors.

First, the development of deposits - a task that is solved for years. Such projects involve three groups of countries: the first group provides technology, the second – funding and the third one – mining sites. These circumstances and the long-term nature of such projects create "special relationship" between the participating countries.

Secondly, there is a lack of sufficient transport capacity for rapid energy delivery to consumers. The discovery of free of oil and gas does not indicate availability of relevant infrastructure required for their delivery in sufficient volumes. This is a common feature for all types of resources. Considering the mines, there is a question whether the existing mines or mining processing plants have the possibility to increase the output. A mining processing plant can be built within (at least) 5 years. In reality – within 7−8 years.

Thirdly, there is no certainty that oil terminals will cope with larger volumes (than usual).

Fourth, the increase in oil supplies (for example, from Iran) – implies a decrease in the share of other Arab hydrocarbons. Meanwhile, in this regard gas wars are already underway among exporters. For example, Qatar offered gas supplies to Turkey, provided Ankara will not be able to find consensus with Iran on the question of acceptable gas prices. Exporters are ready to go quite far to prevent expansion of energy export geography of their competitors.

Combating on the world oil market

Structural features of exporting economies imply another difficulty for consumers. Oil exporters are dependent on the world oil prices. For example, oil export to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia provides 90-95% of the total export revenue, which makes about 40% of GDP. Despite all diversification efforts, the economy of Saudi Arabia is highly dependent on crude oil exports. As a rule, political power in these countries rests on social stability provided by relevant social standards. Power creates an image of improved quality of life, due to oil export, and the income provides social budgetary costs. Currencies in such countries are “tied” to the raw material cost. Fiscal revenue is restated in the local currency and the state cares of the barrel price in local currency, rather than in US dollars. Crude oil may cost 150 US $/bbl, but the uncomfortable exchange rate will reduce income to zero. That is why, decline in the world market prices leads to an artificial decline of national currencies (typical for Nigeria, Norway and the Russian Federation) (Mironov and Petronevich, 2015).

A decline of national currencies in the oil-producing countries leads to a decrease in social standards, which is unacceptable in terms of policy stability. Social explosion leads to the fact that the consuming countries begin to suffer from the immigration flows. In addition, decrease in oil prices can lead to protests; the authorities are trying to raise social standards, which is already difficult to implement. For example, due to the high level of unemployment, Iran paid a cash subsidy for bread due to the constant rise in prices. These subsidies create a temporary semblance of stability. It is not easy to overcome this problem. Earlier, the "Dutch disease" did not give the possibility to improve other areas of the economy, and presently, low oil prices hinder investment in exploration and development of new deposits, as well as in the development of unconventional oil sources, such as shale oil.

It is also difficult for these countries to bypass the US on the world energy market. For example, Saudi Arabia possesses 18 per cent of the world’s proven petroleum reserves and ranks as the largest exporter of petroleum. Proven crude oil reserves 266,455 million barrels (*Saudi Arabia Facts and Figures*, 2015).

Oil exporters are also taking additional steps to maintain their monopoly position in the oil market. For example, between 1980 and 2014 in Saudi Arabia state assets were not transferred into private hands. This country does not allow private companies to acquire shares in the state budget maintenance. The only measure included tax reduction for foreign investors from 45% to 30%, as well as the legal protection of investments against expropriation. However, the most important economic sectors remain closed to 100% foreign ownership; these include the extracted oil, pipelines, media, insurance, telecommunications, health care, wholesale and retail trade. Thus, channels for economic pressure on these countries are limited, which predisposes the US to the use of force.

The energy market presents a speculative market, where the price is formed through expectations. Any negative news from the exporting countries affects the price, therefore, it is beneficial for oil-producing countries to create artificial boom of every kind, using menacing rhetoric and going into a huddle.

In this regard, Iran facing up to new sanctions systematically resorted to proactive measures that triggered concern, especially in the neighboring countries of the Persian Gulf. Iran has

repeatedly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, which destabilized the world oil markets. As a rule, Iran causes panic on the oil market by diametrically opposite official statements. In addition, Iran is permanently strengthening its military forces and not only in the Gulf. In 2013, for the first time in its history the Iranian destroyer "Jamaran-2" appeared in the Caspian Sea. This was done in order to avoid the presence of powers that do not have access to the Caspian Sea, above all, the United States.

Other Gulf countries constantly acquire military equipment in the event of hostilities. All Gulf countries regularly conduct military drills near the oil regions. There is a constant exchange of threatening statements in the media. These countries are preparing for war on all fronts: from the drone wars to cyber attacks. There are many places where such conflicts might occur, like "shared" fields. For example, Iran shares the Forouzan field with Saudi Arabia.

These oil fields serve as the reason for charging Iranian neighbors (with whom Tehran has common oil and gas fields) with the actual theft of Iranian resources. The opposite is assumed as well: every Iranian oil barrel extracted in common fields weakens Iran's opponents. This news affects stock exchanges where the price is "pulled up".

Energy security is interconnected with other security dimensions. The above-mentioned escalation affects the prices of the entire world market, along with the directly traceable connection with the Middle East situation. Since the development of new energy sources requires time and substantial capital investments, predictability remains an important factor. Price fluctuations prevented the US government from taking the decision regarding direct investment. Some sources of energy that were considered too expensive can be cheap within a day losing price attractiveness the next day.

Political tensions are of benefit to exporters because it affects the global energy prices. Thus, in 2013 the United States, decided to boycott the UN Conference on Disarmament because of disagreement regarding the Iranian presidency, which had an impact on oil prices. Iran was among the first countries, which started using national currencies of other countries and gold for accounting purposes instead of the US dollar, which also affected the price of oil.

This situation persists also because oil exporters present important financial centers and their problems affect the entire region. In this regard, countries located in the South Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Central Asia experienced severe direct and indirect impact of the economic downturn in Russia and shock due to oil price downturn. This was manifested primarily in the form of reductions in remittances and trade (*Stalling Economic Growth in Emerging Europe and Central Asia*, 2015). This is determined by the fact that the Russian government postpones the implementation of major infrastructure projects and private investors are scaling down their investment programs under the continuing high cost of capital and uncertain demand. This leads to destabilization of the weaker regional countries caused by certain events, such as the social upheaval in Yerevan that in the long term can lead to the appearance of "rogue" states that sponsor terrorism and behave like North Korea.

Another specific factor is that the very pricing policy in respect of energy resources is very different. The increase in oil prices led to the establishment and further replenishment of the Stabilization Fund in Iran, but in the United States, economic slowdown was caused by the rise in prices. At the same time, in many importing countries decline in oil prices will promote economic growth and reduce inflation, external and fiscal burden (*Stalling Economic Growth in Emerging Europe and Central Asia*, 2015).

Obviously, one should add various challenges for the US besides relevant developments in the energy sector. These include issues related to oil delivery from the places where the security

system is still being developed, such as oil and gas deposits in West Africa offshore and in the Caspian Sea (Seitov and Tulegenova, 2007).

Thus, according to the information for February 2007 he West African Oil Triangle daily provides 15% of oil imports to the United States, and by 2015 its share had increased to 25% (Lubeck, 2007), thus taking the second place after the Persian Gulf countries. Vulnerabilities are not limited to terrorism, political unrest, armed conflicts, and piracy. The threat comes from natural phenomena such as Hurricane Katrina or the tsunami, which led to the Fukuyama disaster. Energy can be also used as a weapon, and energy supply deficit is regarded as the main reason for war (Klare, 2008) because global competition determines the relationship between security and economics.

In the USA, the main problem of energy security is determined by the fact that North America cannot provide a complete energy independence for sustainable economic growth. It is obvious that the energy component of the US foreign policy is the product of the contradiction between a general trend of increasing energy consumption and a contradictory trend of decreasing energy reserves.

Additional complexity of the analysis is determined by the following difficulty: US energy security permeates all levels of activity and attracts various participants. In addition, energy security is expressed in a constant and multifaceted interaction between domestic and international factors, which makes policies more contradictory and inconsistent. This idea is also confirmed in lobbying government benefits or in their cancellation. In the foreign policy realm, it is manifested in the fact that the US approaches are arbitrary and vary from country to country. The very US position in the system is not determined by their influence on the subsystem of suppliers or on the consumers' system; the US are trying to regulate the international division of labor by political arbitration.

National interests and the oil factor in US foreign policy in the Middle East

The Middle East oil is very important for the US due to its higher quality and lower cost. The financial aspect is particularly important keeping in mind the fact that construction costs required for the new nuclear power plant increase annually by 15%. We do not take into account military infrastructure in the United States, where defense facilities are 99 percent dependent on the commercial nuclear power (Squassoni, 2013). Although the United States presents a country with its own uranium deposits (about 11 percent of the world's recoverable resources), it still imports most of the uranium from 12 different countries, which can be regarded as a political form of control over labor division.

It is also important to note the presence of US economic power, which is not directly related to military capabilities and which can provide the state with substantial international influence. Primarily, this influence implies financial resources, providing the possibility to both support or to undermine the currency exchange rate of the other states, to both promote and hinder their investment plans. This also implies the existence of "market power", that is, control over a large and lucrative market, which provides the possibility of blackmail in this area in order to achieve certain political or economic goals in another area. Besides, these subjects of international relations can prevent or restrict access to this lucrative market through various tariffs or quotas, in the pursuit of political goals. Structural power presents the third kind of economic power; this power has the ability to determine the agenda, to shape the decision-making context and environment within the predetermined opportunities and choices.

Thus, there is a complex and non-linear dependence among different countries. This creates a complex economic, environmental, social and political assortment of problems in energy security, directly reflected in the US foreign policy.

The crisis of 1986 showed that oil could be a weapon, leading to economic bankruptcies through a sharp increase in prices (Hirsch, 1987). There are only two ways to provide price increase: to reduce the number of fields, or to increase the number of consumers. Thus, artificial market manipulation can improve political results. That was the reason why the United States strongly opposed Saddam Hussein, since the emergence of a new major player on the world energy market could lead to oil price hike. Oil then was important for the United States because in 1988, over 97% of the total energy consumed in the transportation section was derived from oil (Sohn, 1990) that is, in the case of crisis, many citizens would feel its effect, which would greatly influence the 1992 presidential elections. Furthermore, transport problems have an impact on the entire infrastructure.

Since oil is supplied from the Middle East, threats to energy security ceased to be domestic and regional - they became increasingly globalized, governed by the logic of contemporary anarchic international order largely based on the use of force.

The US military power is based on the economy, which in turn, depends on access to sufficient energy resources. This is not only an important link. High level of food security has largely been achieved by the use of artificial fertilizers, which are based on hydrocarbons (Dannreuther, 2010).

In addition, military security of the state directly depends on the availability of sufficient oil quantities, which is necessary for the effective operation of warships, planes, tanks and other military equipment. For the fiscal year ending in 2008, Canada’s military spent $107 million on aviation fuel, over $40 million to power its ships, and $33 million to support the army’s ground fleet (Breede, 2015). Thus, oil flow management implies control over the military security of other states. That is why the United States decisively launched military operations in the Persian Gulf.

The United States did not come immediately to the forceful solution of energy problems. In the early 1970s, the National Security Council issued a document stating that the growing dependence on oil from the Middle East poses a severe security risk for the USA and NATO. At the same time, oil import control put the United States in a comparatively good position of control over NATO partners (Dannreuther, 2010). This implied the emergence of the Carter Doctrine, under which the United States considered any attempt to change the balance of power in the Persian Gulf, as an attack on the US vital interests. There is no proof that today Washington took the Carter doctrine off from the table.

At present, the US military interests embrace as many energy spheres as possible used by the US economic elites for instrumental purposes (Breede, 2015). Thus, the United States used the problem of Iraq's nuclear program in order to isolate Baghdad politically before the invasion. The US military occupation was a strategic success since it helped US oil companies to gain access to Iraq's oil resources and to win major contracts for exploration and production. Statistical data and business evidence shows that after the second US-Iraq war, crude oil exports from Iraq to the United States increased (Chatterjee, 2014). The US became the main consumer of Iraqi oil.

One should also note another aspect of the military dimension. Some authors (Dannreuther, 2010) believe that there is an interesting connection between arms and energy sales. The more material you sell for energy purposes, the more you buy weapons. Between 2001 and 2008, from the total $ 377.5 billion to $ 116.9 billion were spent for weapons by countries that either already had or wanted to develop nuclear power programs. Of these, four countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel and United Arab Emirates) are either oil exporting, or maintain communication for oil flows. The leadership of these countries have good relations with the United States; in this endeavor, Washington solidifies in the Middle East not only through violence, but also by maintaining their military technology cycles.

Since oil is the lifeblood of modern industrial economy, there is a direct correlation between oil prices and basic consumer prices. This generates a snowball, as a rise in oil prices, consumer prices rise in parallel to the oil price hike, so people pay more for these products, since they are not able to purchase other goods and services, or to save (Popescu, 2015).

The US military intervention in Iraq in 2003 can be seen as an attempt to gain access to Iraqi oil, so as not to depend on Saudi Arabia, which could not be trusted after 9/11.

Following this logic, some researchers believe that the type of power that the United States has applied in the Middle East under the Carter doctrine is that of a police officer, not that of a planner (Noël, 2006), however, the planning logic is present in the US-led operations.

This enables managing risk of energy supply shortages, resulting in the fact that the United States, can exploit resources for a long time without fear of oil price shock (Le Billon and El Khatib, 2004). Such a hegemonic US policy is necessary to provide stable functioning of an open, liberal international economic order, because simple compliance with the rules by participants is not enough. The consequences of uneven growth of power and influence that inevitably accompany the establishment of such an order, lead to the fact that the roles of states is formed through implicit " war of potentials ", where the emphasis is laid on excellence in the industrial potential, the size and skills of the population, the degree of technical progress and economic stability. This, in turn, will inevitably lead to a relevant increase in the desire to gain "military capabilities" and to a high degree of technological self-sufficiency, which ultimately implies extremely negative prospects for the modern world order. Therefore, the US role as a global hegemon implies control over energy flows to stabilize the world order favorable for this state.

From the Middle East region, the White House can control other important regions, such as the Caspian Sea, characterized by specific Chinese activity. China is sponsoring the creation of energy infrastructure in Central Asia. The rate of pipeline construction indicates China's ability to achieve more within a limited period of time in contrast to the United States and European energy companies (Weiss et al., 2012), which will inevitably result in the compulsory redistribution of spheres of influence in the global gas market.

The US takes a leading position in the global energy system, not only as a supplier or as a consumer, but also as an intermediary, who tries to control the distribution of labor through the dollar mechanisms and private companies.

The dollar mechanism is implemented through oil reserves' evaluation by major exporters (e.g., Saudi Arabia) only in US dollars. This factor provides leading position of the US within the existing system of international relations. The world economic growth requires an increase in oil consumption. It also means that in order to cover the deficit of energy resources, states will have to deal with Washington as the issuer of "petrodollars", which creates political power mechanisms.

The Gulf region is important for the United States. From this region, the White House will be able to control the pipelines, being only under construction, in particular - all the lines that will go through Turkey. In practice, this may indicate attempts to control the European Union aiming at diversification of its energy supplies. The difficulty lies in the fact that according to the logic of political realism, the US lacks sufficient resources that could be used to control all energy regions. For example, the Caspian regional states consider commercial ties with the United States as a tool to strengthen their independence, but not as an alternative to their relations with major regional powers. Another factor is the US inability to provide investment resources for the private sector for such complex areas as the Caspian region. This is determined by the fact that the size of investment return on is higher in the Gulf in contrast to the Caspian Sea. In addition, it is easier to manage Iraq, because the Iraqis do not require more jobs, as compared to the situation in Nigeria, where locals demanded more investment and jobs, and occupied oil derricks as a mark of protest.

In places like the Caspian Sea, the US energy security activities are potential by-product of such initiatives as border control, maritime patrol and coastal defense, combating terrorism and drugs (Weiss et al., 2012). Thus, in regions where the United States cannot establish direct control over energy resources, the American influence is increased either through mediation efforts, or through assistance in building infrastructure for the countries that (at least partially) share American views, in order to provide reliable supplies. In this case, it will not be threaten the US footprint on the world stage.

Military presence is another way to influence the global energy flows. Looking at US bases' location map, one can notice that most active military bases are located either on the transport routes of oil tankers or near the oil fields. In addition, in order to provide more rapid and flexible response the oil region of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea were referred to a particular division – USCENTCOM. This may indicate the fact that in the event the United States is unable to agree on the national interests through diplomacy they will be able to negotiate using force. Rather, US commitments to maintaining the flow of oil from energy-rich regions forms part of a broader 'public goods order' under US hegemony. In this sense, the US state acts as a "hegemonic stabilizer" for the global oil order, where is plays a major role (Raphael and Stokes, 2014).

Therefore, the United States continue to view the relatively uninterrupted flow of oil to where it is needed as a key element of the US national security interests, and strive to work with other key customers in order to create and to maintain the conditions for its world hegemony (Stokes and Raphael, 2010). In order to retain its hegemony, the US needs to ensure safety of its private capital and profit. In case the US government is unable to generate exclusive possibilities with the use of force, the protectionist rhetoric is changed to a liberal approach.

The Washington's liberal policies are based on actions aimed at dismantling the existing monopolies for the extraction and transportation of energy resources. This will give an opportunity to strengthen the American influence by attracting private American investments that will stimulate the orientation on the United States. In return, Washington is attempting to ensure a predictable investment.

Thus, the US is strengthening its advantages over potential rivals, maximizing incentives for all states to work within the system.

At the same time, given that any serious challenger to US primacy would require unfettered access to vast quantities of oil, preventing the emergence of any such challenge is a core theme of US strategy (Raphael and Stokes, 2014). Thus, the energy factors in US foreign policy lead to the fact that the United States serve as a controller in the international division of labor.

The idea that the United States use their TNCs to control global distribution of labor is confirmed by protection of their companies. In 2005, the bid by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for US energy company Unocal was securitised by US elite actors, who called for presidential action on the grounds of "national security" (Nyman, 2014), because any action in the field of international energy security is a zero-sum game: the greater is the US benefit, the greater is the loss of other actors. The US political circles considered that selling the ninth largest energy company would pose a threat to the US footprint in the global division of labor. In this case, China can put economic pressure on a purely political decision, because the House of Representatives opposed sale of the company that supplied 0,2% of the total amount of oil to the US market. On 29 July 2005, the TNC representatives in the legislative bodies of the United States moved even further and adopted a Pombo amendment to the Law on energy policy (2005), which set a sale limit for energy companies. Thanks to such norms, the US retains a leading position in the world oil market.

The US energy diplomacy often used various sanctions as a tool against countries, which pursue a policy that does not meet the American interests or pose (according to the US), threat to the generally accepted democratic principles or to the international security. Thus, in view of the subsequent long, inevitable and difficult restructuring of its national power industry, the US will be forced to rely heavily on imported oil and natural gas, as well as to continue diversification of income sources in terms of foreign economic policy. Various African countries, the Caspian basin, promising offshore areas of the Far and Middle East will become increasingly important as new areas of exploration and production of raw fuel, even in despite of the so-called shale oil revolution.

Discussion

A comparison of the views of various experts on the events of 2000-2014 from the position of both the experts of 1980-1990, and the modern, allowed to see their long-term vision of the influence of the oil factor on foreign policy and international relations of the end of the twentieth century at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to conduct a retrospective understanding of the events of that time, from the height of modernity.

The analysis of the sources has shown that the study of the influence of the oil factor in the formation and implementation of US foreign policy has been a priority scientific direction in the 1980-1990 and remained so at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Moreover, since the beginning of "Operation Iraqi Freedom» by the United States and its allies in March 2003 (Operation Iraqi Freedom, OIF) in the international community particularly acute discussion of the purposes and methods of US foreign policy in the Persian Gulf and other oil-rich regions. There was certainly no consensus. But there was the general view of the problem, which can be broadly summarized as follows. After World War II the United States minimized the production of its own oil, maintaining the reserves for the future. However, in order not to experience the "oil shock", as happened in early 1973, Washington, together with leading American oil companies set the strategic goal – to control and develop the most promising fields, especially in the Persian Gulf. Even according to Michael T. Klare "the Pentagon has now placed resource competition at the center of its strategic planning" (Klare, 2008). This view was typical for the period, which is considered.

In the works of the 1980s (Hirsch, 1987), as well as in books and articles of the later period (Sohn, 1990), the authors understand the main goal of US foreign policy in the context of solving oil problems in establishing and maintaining hegemony to ensure the stability and peace in the exporting countries and firstly the oil-rich regions of the Persian Gulf.

The same concept has dominated in the early and mid-2000s (Le Billon and El Khatib, 2004; Yergin, 2006; Noël, 2006). After the invasion in Iraq in 2003 of the US forces and their allies, it actually became unconditional and the Iraq war was considered as the main argument in this concept favor. Although oil was not the only cause of the war, its role, according to all authors, as a factor was very high. The only difference is in the assessment of the degree of oil factor influence.

The analysis of the works of the late 2000s and early 2010s showed the preservation of the same understanding and the further spread of the idea of the US as the main participants in the struggle for the world's oil resources to ensure its national security. This was due to high prices, which sometimes reached 135-140 US dollars per 1 barrel or even more, and the highest level of consumption of oil by the United States.

It is worth noting that none of the authors saw no alternative assertive foreign policy in the oil-rich regions of the world. The difference of opinions was only in matters of tactic: diplomatic pressure, the purchase of shares of the oil companies, sanctions or war. As for the strategy, the view is one – it is necessary to control the sources and routes of oil revenues, to diversify the fuel and

energy sector, to develop alternative energy. The issue of shale oil has been considered mainly in the late 2000s, when the beginning of its commercial production become a reality more and more.

Thus, the applied theoretical and methodological approach made it possible to consider the problem of the influence of the oil factor on foreign policy of the United States until 2014 in the context of the period, which is examined, and to construct the paradigm of the possible perception of this policy.

Conclusion

Despite the active development of various types of energy, mainly nuclear and alternative energy, in the analyzed period of time the oil took the main place in the fuel and energy complex of the United States. In addition, it was one of the main raw materials for the chemical and electronics industry, mechanical engineering and other high-tech areas of production.

The comparative analysis of these studied works showed the understanding of the authors that during the 1980-2000 the US was the world's largest consumer and importer of oil. The own production of oil for the United States was not enough, and its dependence on imports has always been very high, sometimes exceeding 50%. The major source of imported oil was the Persian Gulf, where were more than 1/4 of the imported volumes, and the Gulf of Guinea as well.

Therefore, for the United States the guaranteed secure oil supplies from abroad were a matter of national security and interests. This question was one of the main in the foreign policy. For solution to the problem the United States have used a variety of diplomatic, military, political and economic methods and ways. The most effective way was to establish the control over oil companies active in the oil-rich regions of the world, and the imposition of sanctions against the regime and the countries that have tried to use the US dependence on their oil.

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