

REGIONAL CONFLICTS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT. The report analyzes the geostrategic rivalries that relate to natural resources and determine the regional balances of power. The report presents the influence of regional forces that clash their interests in rich in natural resources areas. In addition, natural resources are cited a reason for existing conflicts and wars. The focus is on certain aspects of the conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia, trying to bring out the key factors of the conflicts. The report analyzes the conflicts over natural resources and the genesis of the conflicting relationships between regional players and actors. The study seeks to bring out the main trends in the development of the regional security environment, which is determined by rivalry and the struggle for natural resources.

Keywords: conflicts, natural resources, Middle East, South Asia

РЕГИОНАЛНИ КОНФЛИКТИ ЗА ПРИРОДНИ РЕСУРСИ

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РЕЗЮМЕ. В доклада се анализират геостратегическите съперничества, които са свързани с природни ресурси и определят регионалните баланси на силите. Докладът представя влиянието на регионалните сили, които сблъскват своите интереси в районите богати на природните ресурси. Освен това, природните източници са отбелязани като причини за съществуващи за конфликти и войни. На фокус се поставят определени аспекти на конфликтите в Близкия изток и Южна Азия, като се прави опит да се изведат ключовите фактори на конфликтните отношения. Докладът анализира конфликтите за природни ресурси и генезисът на конфликтните взаимоотношения между регионалните играчи и актори. Изследването се стреми към извеждането на основните тенденции в развитието на регионалната среда за сигурност, която се определя от съперничеството и борбата за природни ресурси.

Ключови думи: конфликти, природни ресурси, Близък Изток, Южна Азия

Introduction

Natural resources retain their importance for human life. Their extraction, processing, supply and consumption depend on the needs of the growing population of the Earth. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to negative oil prices. These are fundamentally different contextual parameters that seem incomprehensible and confusing. Changing the value of oil is a factor that increases conflicts. As of August 1, 2020, 1:55 p.m., Humanity numbers 7,801,969,500 people. Vital to humanity is water, for which disputes, conflicts and wars are fought. About 70% of the Earth is covered with water, but only 2.5% of the "blue gold", as it is called, is freshwater and fresh water in rivers, lakes and dams is about 0.02%. Water, along with air, is one of the most valuable resources and sources of life for humans. The human body contains 60-75% water. As of August 1, 2020, 799,083,518 people do not have access to safe drinking water, since the beginning of the year 493,402 people have lost their lives due to water-related diseases. From the beginning of the year to the already mentioned date more than 2,560,170,000 liters of water have been used. . 140 liters of water are needed to make a cup of coffee with which we all wake up. Declining freshwater resources is a growing global trend that affects us all, but it is particularly significant for ¼ of the humanity. (The Global Risk Report 2020, p. 31) (World Economic Forum, 22 March 2019) Oil is another source of energy, which has defined the development of countries since it has been entering people's

daily lives at an intensive pace since 1950 as the main means of production, transport and energy. In one of his books, Professor Velichka Milina presents the "New Paradigm of Energy Security", which is determined mainly by three factors: the shale revolution, the crisis of the first decade of the XXI century and the increased vulnerability of critical energy infrastructure. Although the thesis of the "depletion" of fossil fuels seems hopelessly outdated, fueled by strategic shocks in new energy technologies that push the boundaries of what is possible and affordable. The new paradigm does not completely rule out the fact that oil and increasingly natural gas are the blood of the modern economy. The old paradigm determined the tendency towards increasing conflict for control over the last deposits of natural energy sources. (worldometer, 01.08.2020; Milina, 2013; Milina, 2007) Here comes the question, Does declining natural resources, such as drinking water and oil, continue to be the cause of conflicts?

Two mutually exclusive hypotheses are formed. The first identifies a reduction in the conflict caused by the desire to control natural resources, in relation to the Middle East, for example, based on the changing paradigm of energy security. It implies a diminishing interest of strong global and regional players, such as the global hegemon USA, in oil-rich countries, made possible by shale and technological revolutions that make it possible to search for alternative energy sources. The second one creates expectations for growing conflict over natural resources. It is based on the growing needs of the growing

number of people on Earth and the need for more energy, which, along with declining resources for vital drinking water and limited, hard to reach oil reserves, implies increasing competition and conflict for control over key region, transit corridors and resource - rich areas.

The rapidly changing security environment is part of the global trends for change in all aspects of life. The relevance of this study is determined by the ongoing conflict over natural resources, which retains importance for the survival and development of mankind. The **object** of study are the conflicts over natural resources as a key process in the global security environment. The subject of research are the conflicting relations between individual actors, which are motivated by the desire to control natural resources. The research topic imposes certain restrictions. The study focuses on certain manifestations of the oil conflicts in the Middle East and the water conflicts in South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. The aim of the study is to identify the importance of oil in the Middle East and water in South Asia to identify the specific manifestations of the conflict caused by the desire to control vital natural resources. The analysis is based on the hypothesis that, despite the changing realities caused by new technologies, natural resources in these regions remain the leading reason for conflicts. The research is based on a diverse set of scientific methodology: holistic approach, geopolitical analysis, multidisciplinary and historical approach, inductive and deductive analysis. Current analyzes, books on selected topics, scientific literature in the field of security, international relations, analyzes of think-tanks are used. The analysis is aimed at a wide range of users with interests in natural resources, international and regional security. Its significance is determined by the derivation of some of the modern conflict relations, which are caused by the competition for vital natural resources.

Oil as a mainspring for conflicts in the Middle East

In his book, "Petro-aggression. When oil provokes war," Jeff Colgan (2013) identifies oil as the most valuable commodity traded on international markets. Iraq's wars with Iran, the invasion of Kuwait, and the subsequent wars of 1990 and 2003 can be described as affected by oil. The revolutionary period from 1958 to 1968, led by Saddam Hussein, and oil resources created the conditions for an aggressive policy, with a tendency to achieve geopolitical ambitions by means of war. The availability, production and sale of oil determine the agenda of the Middle East countries and their relations with the outside world, in particular with the United States, India and China. A leading problem identified by both Velichka Milina and Jeff Colgan is the "curse of resources" and the principle for energy nationalism typical of hydrocarbon-rich exporting countries. In the period of the "ruling" old paradigm of energy security, energy nationalism determines the behavior of the main participants in the international energy market. In this way, oil is used as a geopolitical weapon. The fierce race for energy resources determines the growing demand and consumption that shape the energy policy of the countries. Thus, energy geopolitics and geoeconomics become the most essential part of the global and foreign policy of the major players in the energy market (Milina,

2013). For his part, Jeff Colgan describes the emergence of conflicts as a failure of the state to act rationally. In certain cases, the emergence of conflicts is dictated by the reduction of the cost of conflict and the growing tolerance of the "risk state", ie. in the emerging global, postmodern, networked, risky society, the modern "risk state" is being formed, which tends to tolerate more and more risks and uncertainties. It turns out that oil has been the leading motive for almost half of the international conflicts since 1973. The shale revolution did not change this trend, despite the change in the oil and gas sector in the United States. The country is unlikely to be able to isolate itself from international markets and events, despite the many indications of this and America's withdrawal from many international agreements and commitments after the coming to power of Donald Trump. In addition, the need for energy resources of the US allies remains leading, which determines their interests in an open and accessible global oil market. To this, Kolgan adds unexpected causes of conflict: competition for the transportation of oil by ship and pipeline, the growing threat of terrorism related to oil fields and transit routes, and the lack of resources in consumer countries are a potential source of international conflict.

International oil conflicts are determined by eight different mechanisms: Resource wars, in which countries try to acquire oil reserves by force; isolation from the influence of the opposition leaders of oil states such as Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini, who pursue risky foreign policies; the transformation of internal conflicts into international ones by countries that have oil reserves; financing insurgent actions, similar to Iran, which supports Hezbollah, with oil funds; conflicts caused by the prospect of a regional power dominating oil fields in a particular territory, the first Gulf War against Iraq for control of Kuwait in 1991; collisions along the pipelines and on the territory of the transit routes; activity of organizations such as Al Qaeda (and more recently Islamic State) on oil production; barriers related to oil in terms of multilateral cooperation and security. In addition, oil conflicts are complicating their dynamics due to three key global transformations: the shale revolution is displacing production centers from the Middle East to North America; about 16 developing countries in Africa have ambitions for conventional oil production and exports; the declining hegemony of the United States is related to the declining role of the country in providing security for the transportation of oil by ship and on transit routes and regions (Jeff Colgan, 2013).

As for the wars in Iraq, dictated by Saddam Hussein's ambitions in the late 20st century and early 21st century, it can be determined that the sole power in the country, the monopoly on natural resources, the resources accumulated by them lead to increased military capabilities. In addition, the inability of opposition forces to balance the concentration of power in a single center created the conditions for the expansionist ambitions of a traditionally militant elite. At the beginning for the 21st century, in 2001, Michael Claire's book "Resource Wars: The New Face of the World Conflict" was published, stating that one of the leading causes of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in the United States from Al Qaeda is the desire to dethrone the pro-Western government in Saudi Arabia and replace it with Islamist fundamentalists to control ¼ from oil supplies to the world (Clare, 2001).

It is with this act of violence that it confirms the tendency towards the privatization of violence in the global era and the

transformation of the power of many power, legitimate and increasingly illegitimate, centers. In addition to the growing energy needs and ambitions to control the Middle East and the complex relationships between the various actors, identity policies and revolutionary changes with the security environment emerging, where the focus of state security is shifting to individual security. More and more people are demanding respect for their identity security. Under the pressure of global transformations, many totalitarian regimes have been bent by the pressure of networking and rapidly mobilizing self-organizing systems. It turns out that the system that manages to adapt and build a hybrid structure and manages to use the technological advances of our time will gain a strategic advantage. The main conflict is between hierarchies and networks. Asymmetry in the conflict turned out to be an advantage, flexibility, the swarming of the individual elements won over the solid force. The paradigm of war had to be changed quickly. Temenuga Rakadzhiyska appears to be right that the nature of wars is radically changing, in the 21st century they will be fought between artificial and human intelligence. The validity of this thesis is questionable, a significant part of humanity has not passed into the new technological age, until it happens many of the wars to occur according to the laws of the twentieth century, and the main motive for them are territorial disputes and the struggle for resources (Rakadziiska, 2018). Thus, for the last 20 years, about 40% of the world's wars have been fought for natural resources. More and more conflicts are being fought over freshwater reserves in South Asia (Yuruk, B., Aynur Asgarli. 2018)

Water as a leading motive for conflicts in South Asia

The growing population of the Earth also determines the growing need of water. Freshwater reserves are a limited natural resource that is causing more and more conflicts between countries. Water is the cause of wars and conflicts between species from the dawn of life. According to Michael Claire, there are four major rivers that determine development and relationships in the Middle East and Southwest Asia: the Jordan, the Tigris and Euphrates, and the Indus River. Our particular interest in this part of the analysis is the Indus River. Its waters serve Afghanistan, China, India, Pakistan and Kashmir. An additional factor for tension and conflicts are identity divisions based on political, religious, cultural, ideological differences (Clare, 2001). Hank Pellissier brings out 225 drinking water conflicts and pays special attention to nine danger zones: North vs. South Yemen; Egypt v. Ethiopia; India v. China (under their influence are Afghanistan and Bangladesh); Burkina Faso v. Ghana; Thailand v. Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and China; India v. Pakistan for Kashmir water resources; Turkey against Syria, Iraq and Iran; Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; Israel v. Palestine (Pellissier, 2013) Kashmir's water resources are a mainspring for conflicts between India and Pakistan, two nuclear powers that often lead to clashes and create the preconditions for nuclear war. In 1960, a treaty was signed covering six rivers: the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab (ceded to Pakistan), the Sutlej, the Beas and the Ravi are Indian. However, Pakistan accuses India of diverting the Indus River through a dam system and canals, and 92% of Pakistan's territory depends on the

Indus water resources. The other line of tension in South Asia is the dispute between China and India over the waters of the Brahmaputra River. China is building a system of dams, with catastrophic consequences for India and Bangladesh. China plans to block about 10 major rivers that spring from the Tibetan Plateau. The reason for this is China's urgent need for water, which will increase in the coming years, more than 6,000 lakes have already dried up. For these reasons, the near future is full of uncertainty and appears to be potential for future conflicts.

The distribution of water resources in South Asia is a security issue, ie. securitized problem. The genesis of the conflicts in the region takes us back in centuries, but the problem worsened after World War II, during the withdrawal of the British Empire, when the new sovereign states were formed in 1947. India's central position determines its key role in water resources. The country borders the rest of the region, except Afghanistan, with which it is historically bound. The conflict between India and Pakistan is fueled, as mentioned, by control over the canals along the rivers that flow through the two countries. Authorities in the Eastern Punjab (India) periodically restrict and cut off water to the Western Punjab (Pakistan). The interests of three regional nuclear powers: India, Pakistan and China are the main problem in South Asia. The China-Pakistan partnership forces India to seek support from outside regional powers. The complexity of relations in the region escalated into a military clash in 1999, when India and Pakistan were on the cusp of nuclear war.

Pakistan's goal, with regard to the Indus River, is to control the entire course of the river, which flows from China through Indian territory, and the construction of dams exacerbates the conflict between the two countries. Examples are the Baglihar and Mangla dams (Keetelaar, 2007). Unresolved water issues in South Asia are potential conflicting source. The Tibetan Plateau is the largest water reservoir in the world, the lives of more than 1.3 billion people depend on water resources in the Himalayas, the countries directly affected are China, Nepal, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Pakistan (Dutt, S., Bansal, A., 2012) India and Bangladesh are arguing over 54 rivers, including the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Megna. One of the problem points is the construction of the Farakka dam, started before establishment of Bangladesh. In the past Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, East Pakistan, and Bangladesh was established in 1971 (Salman, M.A., 2002). India is also setting up a river connection project that harms Bangladesh.

India and Nepal have disputes over Nepal's energy supply potential and India's growing need. The energy used is only 1% of Nepal's capacity. A more significant problem remains the distribution of water between India and China. The two countries share 4 large rivers that flow through other countries. The Indus River also flows through Pakistan, the Brahmaputra River crosses India, China, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the Kosi and Gahara Rivers flow through India, China and Nepal, and the Sutley River crosses China, India and Pakistan. The disputed issues around the waters of the Brahmaputra River have a huge potential for conflict. The upper tributary of the river passes through China or 50% of the river basin. The waters of the river are vital for life in India and China. For India, the Brahmaputra River provides 30% of the country's fresh water and 40% of its water energy potential. The river is extremely important for Tibet. Added to this are the border disputes between the two

countries for the Eastern Himalayas, where Bhutan also intervenes (Hongzhou, Z. 2016). The forecasts for the growing population of India and China are not encouraging in terms of the conflict potential motivated by limited water resources. In the near future, water deficits may cause conflicts and wars between nuclear states, which not only threatens regional and energy security, but calls into question the survival of humanity as a whole (Uttam, S., 2016).

Conclusions

1. The study found that despite the global transformations and the changing nature of wars, natural resources retain their importance and impact on human life. The race for them continues in the context of the Fourth World War, which is already underway;

2. The analysis focused on two of the main resources for modern life: water and oil. The relocation of the oil and gas production center to North America and the withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East is a prerequisite for the struggle for resources that is typical for in the past twentieth century. This process is fueled by the privatization of force and the means of violence, which enables legitimate and illegitimate actors to assert their political and economic aspirations through the means of war;

3. The study identified risks of a water conflict in South Asia between nuclear powers question the survival of humanity in the event of a nuclear war;

4. The nature of wars is changing. The introduction of new technologies is changing the forms of warfare. Contactless wars with the use of UAVs (drones) transformed the idea of participating in a war that became a game. The drone pilots intervene thousands of kilometers from the potential attack zone, destroy the targets and return home to their families after work. On the other hand, the current analysis shows that natural resources retain their impact on people's lives, and their depletion will lead to new conflicts. The dehumanization of war poses new challenges that will determine the future of the human race. The struggle will be between the representatives of the new age and those who are far behind in the old age, and as we saw on September 11, 2001, the asymmetry of the conflict does not mean victory for the more powerful ones.

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