



THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TOWARDS UKRAINE IN THE SPHERE OF ENERGY SECURITY AFTER 2022

Yuliia Halakhova

Institute of Political and Administrative Sciences, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, square M. Curie-Skłodowskiej 5, 20–031 Lublin, Poland, ORCID: 0009-0004-1610-387X
e-mail: yuliia.halakhova@onet.pl

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Abstract

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 marks a turning point in the world order, including the global energy architecture. Energy wealth, including oil and gas, has a significant impact on the political structures of countries. The Russian Federation uses its energy resources as a political tool influencing the energy situation of Ukraine and European countries. The United States, in turn, supports allies on the European continent, seeking to reduce the region's dependence on Russian supplies in order to strengthen its position on the international stage. The initial questions are: How do the United States and the Russian Federation view Ukraine in the context of energy security after 2022? What is the significance of integration with the European energy system for Ukraine in the context of Russia's actions? What are the main differences between the approaches of the United States and the Russian Federation to energy issues in Ukraine? The Ukrainian state stabilizes and at the same time weakens the antagonisms of the great geopolitical players – the United States and the Russian Federation. Political players are seen through the prism of Schmitt's division into friends and enemies, and thus the principle «The enemy of my enemy is my ally». The actions of the Russian Federation aimed at destabilising the Ukrainian energy sector should be seen as an 'enemy', while the US policy towards Ukraine, perceived by the state as a 'friend', should be seen as an effective strengthening of its energy independence/

Key words

United States, Ukraine, Russian Federation, energy security policy.

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1. Admission

This article is the result of research on the energy security policy of the United States and the Russian Federation towards Ukraine. The structure of the article takes into account key aspects related to Ukraine's energy security after 2022. The paper analyses issues of Ukraine's energy self-sufficiency, its import and export dependence, sanction policy against Russia, including the related effects on

the Ukrainian state. In addition, Ukraine's energy interdependencies within the European Union are discussed. It is worth noting that Ukraine's energy security is one of the most important elements of national security and an integral part of Europe's energy security.

The outbreak of a full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine (February 24, 2022) marks a watershed moment for the world order, including for the global energy structure. Russia's power and

influence in Europe and the post-Soviet area largely depend on its vast energy resources, primarily oil and gas (Rutland, 2008). The energy policy of the Russian Federation has long served to achieve its geopolitical goals, with one of the key ones being the restoration of the status of a superpower state. It is worth noting that in international relations, status is an indicator of the rank of states in the hierarchy of power (Bieleń, 2018). The key interest of the United States is to settle the war, including energy issues in Ukraine, because it poses a serious threat to peace and stability on the European continent and the «return of the US leadership» in the world. The West's victory in the war in Ukraine would symbolize not only strategic achievements, but also the sphere of influence of Western civilization, including a return to the principles of the liberal international order.

The contemporary approach to security takes into account not only the challenges and traditional understanding of problems, but also the new security agenda in the form of a wide spectrum of energy threats. According to researchers from the Copenhagen School – Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde – the change in the discourse of security (including the separation of military, economic, ecological, social and political security sectors) occurred as a result of the process of securitization of many social, economic and ecological problems (Kuźniar et al. (Eds.), 2012). It should be noted that the destabilising character of «new threats», including those related to the energy dimension, has a negative impact on the security of states.

In the conditions of globalization and internationalization, it is worth emphasizing that we cannot limit ourselves only to economic aspects. At this point, it is worth noting that, according to the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Energy, Andriy Gerus, Ukraine's readiness under martial law focuses on two levels: firstly, on the energy path, including the protection of facilities, the accumulation of additional equipment in warehouses that can be quickly replaced and the finding of a backup power system (Gazeta Verhovnoï Rady..., 2023); secondly, on the war level, i.e. effective air defence and possible supplies of equipment to Western partners (Gazeta Verhovnoï Rady..., 2023). Firstly, the boundaries between the dimensions of security «overlap» and mutually condition each other in the form of a «causal mechanism», namely the relationship between the energy dimension and political and economic aspects is inevitable.

Neoclassical realists assumed that states with similar power but different structures would pursue different foreign policies: they could seek to revise the existing order and expand their influence, or they could defend the status quo and defend their interests

(Łoś-Nowak, Kuźniar (Eds.), 2005). According to Michael Ross's theory, wealth from oil (and gas) often leads to authoritarian rule. In the case of Russia, huge revenues from energy exports allow it to maintain authoritarian power structures and invest in internal security and the army, which directly suppresses the democratic regime. The wealth created by oil often contributes to greed and corruption among political elites, instead of improving people's socioeconomic conditions and transitioning to democracy (Ross, 2001). The Russian Federation uses the «gas argument» as the main element of its foreign policy and exerts influence on the countries of the former USSR (Ukraine), as well as on the whole of Europe (Enerhetychnyi faktor..., n.d.).

The aim of the article is to look at energy security policy understood as an external orientation on the US-Ukraine-Russia axis. The implementation of the assumption required focusing on three specific issues:

1) internal conditions, including economic differences between the regions of Ukraine ruled by the oligarchic system of power; 2) causative factors to determine the impact of the interests of the superpowers on the Ukrainian state; 3) the place and importance of Ukraine in the energy policy of the USA and Russia.

In terms of methodology, the article is the subject of an analysis of foreign policy, including energy security. This means that we explain the energy opportunities and relations, including the economic and political interests of the Russian Federation and the United States towards Ukraine after February 24, 2022.

It is worth noting that the antagonistic models of homo politicus and homo economicus inevitably lead to a conflict of interests. The manner and effects of the operation of political groups should be considered through the prism of the preferences and actions of individuals included in these groups (Wilkin, 2005). On the one hand, the ruling elite is seeking to break ties with Russia, which is crucial for Ukraine's national sovereignty, but also to build an energy hub and make the Ukrainian state a key energy player on the European continent. On the other hand, the oligarchic system of power is characterised by an interest in maintaining the status quo due to its dependence on imports.

2. Ukraine in the energy security policy of the United States and the Russian Federation

Initially, after gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine did not achieve energy self-sufficiency. It is worth noting that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's energy infrastructure became dependent

on Russian gas imports, which posed a serious threat to its sovereignty and stability. Nevertheless, after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the hybrid war in Donbas in 2014, the country began to reduce its dependence on Russia by increasing imports from European Union countries.

Firstly, in terms of geological fossil coal resources, Ukraine ranks seventh in the world, estimated at about 34 billion tons, or 3.5% of the world's reserves, with 11.3% of Ukrainian deposits being anthracite (*Enerhetychnyi faktor...*, n.d.). Hard coal mining in Ukraine is concentrated primarily in the Donetsk and Lviv-Volyn Coal Basins. The largest fossil fuel deposits in Ukraine are coal deposits, accounting for about 90% of their total energy value (Kopiński et al. (Eds.), 2023). These deposits are located mainly in the eastern part of the country, which is currently occupied by the Russian Federation. Secondly, despite ranking second in Europe (after Norway) (*Enerhetychnyi faktor...*, n.d.) in terms of cold gas reserves, Ukraine is still forced to import this raw material. On the one hand, increasing production could make the Ukrainian state self-sufficient. However, this would require investment in the mining infrastructure. On the other hand, the constant sequence of events in the form of war and its consequences hinders the use of the energy potential of the state. Russia is trying to maintain control over energy resources in the occupied territories of Ukraine, which is part of its strategy to increase political and economic influence in the region (Two years on, what the Russian invasion..., 2024). It is worth mentioning that as a result of hostilities since 2014, Ukraine has lost 63% of coal deposits, 11% of oil fields, and 20% of natural gas reserves, while Russia has seized 41 coal fields, 41 natural gas fields, including 14 propane fields, and 9 oil fields (Faiola, Bennet, 2022). Ukraine's energy security is also affected by Europe's largest underground natural gas storage facilities with a capacity of over 30 billion m³ (Galushchenko, 2023). Thirdly, internal factors, such as economic disparities between regions, have a significant impact on the harmonisation of energy policy in order to achieve self-sufficiency. On the one hand, the left-bank part of Ukraine, especially the Donbas, is industrialized and heavily dependent on the Russian Federation. This region dominates in heavy industry, energy and machinery. Most of the resources (oil, gas, condensate and natural gas) are located in the eastern oil and gas region (Surmacz, Paszkowski (Eds.), 2023) (Dnipro-Donetsk). On the other hand, the right-bank part of the Ukrainian state is more agricultural, which results in different economic needs. These economic disparities are further exacerbated by the oligarchic

governance system, which is characterised by high levels of corruption and a lack of transparency in ownership structures. It is worth noting that these factors determine the behaviour of the Ukrainian state in international relations, which directly translates into political decision-making in the context of Ukraine's energy security strategy. The energy sector remains managed instrumentally, depending on the commitments and political and business preferences of the current government, and not on long-term strategies (Iwański, Sarna, 2017). Such behaviour of the elites leads to a complicated political situation in which economic interests may prevail over political interests.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there was a reversal of the international order. It was unusual that in 2022 the United States delivered more LNG to Europe than ever before, (which was also pointed out by the Executive Director of the Energy Agency Fatih Birol (Gas LNG, UE pierwszy raz w historii..., 2022) that a significant part was aimed at compensating for the losses of Russian gas imports, which also indirectly benefited Ukraine (Cahill, Palti-Guzman, 2024).

U.S. President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced in Brussels that annual deliveries are expected to increase to 50 billion m³ in the long term. According to the Commission, this could replace about a third of Russia's current gas imports (USA dostarczą..., 2022). The United States supports Ukraine by increasing exports of liquefied natural gas, which strengthens its energy independence and reduces Russia's influence, showing that U.S. military power is not «interchangeable» for economic gain but operates on the principle of economic interdependence. Russia, despite its military power, cannot directly exchange it for economic benefits in Ukraine, but is trying to maintain its influence by controlling gas supplies and building alternative transit routes.

The war in Ukraine shows that economic and energy powers play a key role, and that interdependencies in energy trade determine political action. Russia's military power remains important, but its influence on Ukraine is realized mainly through economic and energy pressures, rather than direct exchange for economic benefits. Moscow's export dependence on Ukraine has significantly decreased, which was of course due to the reaction of the Ukrainian Crisis Committee to the war invasion, which on February 26, 2022, announced a ban on non-transit natural gas exports from Ukraine (Ukraine Stops Exporting Natural Gas..., 2022). Analysing the situation, it can be concluded that before the attack, the Russian

Federation used the status of an exporting country, and in this case, energy policy was an instrument in relation to Ukraine and the democratic world. On the other hand, after 2022, Russia's energy policy towards Ukraine has evolved towards missile attacks on infrastructure in order to put pressure on the Ukrainian government and force it to make political concessions. Undoubtedly, the Russian attacks were also aimed at destabilizing the economy and lowering the morale of the Ukrainian people in the country. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation was not able to achieve its goals in the context of the energy war against Ukraine.

The key task of the United States is to prevent the restoration of Russia's economic and energy potential through restricting access to the Western world by introducing international sanctions and embargoes. It is worth noting that the Russian Federation has lost its position on European markets due to the sanctions and has become increasingly dependent on Asian countries. In the event of an embargo on Russian oil, China and India will not be able to make up for the shortfall, not to mention that Russia sells at a discount and receives non-convertible currency. In response to Russia's recognition of the Donetsk National Republic and the Luhansk National Republic (Ukraine), the United States imposed direct sanctions on the operator company SP-2 AG and its executive director Matthias Warnig: their assets were blocked in the U.S. jurisdiction, and all their transactions with individuals and legal entities in the United States were banned (SSHA vveli sankcii protiv..., 2022). Ultimately, Russia was deprived of the right to join the International Energy Agency. It can be assumed that since the very beginning, Western countries perceived the energy institutions they support as an instrument of public regulation aimed at ensuring their energy security and promoting the model of international energy cooperation, including their political and economic interests.

On April 18, 2023, an alliance was formed at the intergovernmental political forum held in Japan of the G7 countries to eliminate the Russian Federation from the nuclear energy market. It is worth noting that the proliferation of nuclear war would mean the collapse of the proliferation regime, including a change in the future international order. The United States seeks to uphold the principles of nuclear non-proliferation by maintaining sanctions and public diplomacy. At this point, it is also worth mentioning the deterrence strategy, which is based on assuring allies of their readiness to defend themselves, without increasing tensions between the parties. Ultimately, the political

decisions made by the United States and Russia in the context of the nuclear policy and international energy security have global consequences, as do prisoner games, in which every move affects the reactions and long-term outcomes of the other side. In the case of Russia, the irrational game leads to long-term political and economic costs, which have negatively affected not only its position on the international stage, but also the global energy security architecture. Such a game may lead to a situation that will force the West to convene a «new Yalta conference», whose purpose will be to establish new rules and divide spheres of influence in the world.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the world has become more divided and polarized than at any time since the end of the «Cold War». Russia's key goal is to limit Ukraine's role in European gas transit and weaken its position in the context of counteracting Russian aggression. As a result of the war, Ukraine, together with its EU partners, has synchronised with the European energy system. In practice, this meant that if Ukraine did not have sufficient own capacity, it would receive electricity from European countries. On the other hand, if electricity is cut off in the Ukrainian state, the surplus production may flow to EU countries. It is worth noting that Law No. 946 «On the Termination of the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Russian Federation on Measures to Ensure the Parallel Functioning of the United Energy System of Ukraine and the Unified Energy System of the Russian Federation» (Resolution of August 23, 2022), which was adopted on August 23, 2022, completely severed energy ties between Ukraine and Russia. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky noted that in this way Ukraine has become a member of the «energy union» (UE połączyla..., 2022).

In the case of U.S. policy, a new stimulus for Ukrainian-American cooperation was the «Memorandum of Mutual Understanding at the Government Level between Ukraine and the United States», concluded on September 24, 2023, on cooperation in ensuring the stability of the energy system of the Ukrainian state. The main objective was to work together to improve the stability of Ukraine's energy system, in particular, by rebuilding critical infrastructure, introducing distributed generation, reforming the energy sector and facilitating Ukraine's post-war transition to a low-carbon, competitive and EU-integrated energy economy (Memorandum of understanding..., 2023). Cooperation between the countries primarily concerned the reconstruction of Ukraine's damaged electricity, heat and gas

infrastructure. Then, strengthening the stability of the power system by increasing its efficiency and flexibility. It is worth noting that the installation of distributed gas generation, including combined cycle gas turbines (CCGTs) made in the USA (Memorandum of understanding..., 2023), was intended to provide additional energy sources. In addition, the preparation and implementation of reforms in the energy sector in accordance with the European Union legislation and Ukraine's obligations under the Energy Community Treaty, as well as cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy (Memorandum of understanding..., 2023) will be crucial for a long-term success of the energy sector.

Taking into account the process of the Ukrainian state's entry into the EU's energy space after 2022, the state concept and legal framework determine the course of Ukraine's energy policy. On May 1, 2023, the «Energy Strategy of Ukraine until 2050» (Pro zatverdzhennia..., 2023) was adopted. The essence of the strategy is to strengthen the role of energy security through the integration of the Ukrainian energy system with the European one. In this case, it is a positive approach that dictates a specific course of action. Firstly, the key element is the modernisation of the energy sector using the latest technologies (hydrogen and nuclear) in accordance with Western standards. Secondly, the focus is on improving energy efficiency, developing renewable energy sources and achieving energy neutrality by 2050. On the other hand, the law adopted on June 30, 2024 by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine «On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on the reconstruction and «green» transformation of Ukraine's energy system» (Zakon Ukraïni..., 2024) focuses attention on increasing the share of renewable energy sources in Ukraine's total electricity production, as well as on ensuring transparency and accounting for electricity production from renewable energy sources. It also takes into account the prediction of the possibility of exporting electricity by producers and buyers.

Integration into the European energy grid has allowed Ukraine to survive Russian attacks on infrastructure and energy exchanges from

neighboring countries, which directly underlines the interdependence of European structures and the Ukrainian state. It is worth noting that thanks to its geographical location and energy resources, the Ukrainian state may become an exporter of electricity in the future. On the one hand, this will primarily require a formal and legal framework, such as an association agreement with the European Union to liberalize the energy market, but also a reservation of standards in the nuclear sector. On the other hand, there will be a need for foreign investment in mining infrastructure due to Ukraine's outdated energy model. This postulate not only symbolized the will and trust of the Ukrainian people, but it also confirmed the state's readiness to take responsibility for energy security and cooperation with European partners (Request for emergency..., 2022). It is worth noting that the United States is also involved in broader European efforts to strengthen the continent's energy infrastructure, which includes improving the connectivity of gas and electricity networks, further integrating Ukraine into the European energy market (Cahill, Palti-Guzman, 2024).

The Russian occupation and the possibility of manipulating the equipment of nuclear stations, especially the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant¹, poses a potential threat of nuclear terrorism. The U.S. supports Ukraine in terms of energy security, especially in the nuclear energy sector. Following Russia's seizure of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the United States is working with Ukraine to ensure the safety of workers and the continuity of nuclear fuel supplies. It is worth noting that the Ukrainian Ministry of Energy and the American company Tetra Tech have agreed to cooperate in the field of demining energy infrastructure in the region. Ukraine has stopped importing nuclear fuel from Russia, replacing it with supplies from the American company Westinghouse Electric Company (Two years on, what the Russian invasion..., 2024). The head of the Ministry of Energy, Herman Halushchenko, recalled Ukraine's successful cooperation projects with the American companies Westinghouse and Holtec, as well as the concluded agreements on the construction of new production

¹ It is worth noting that the Ukrainian state lacks distributed, decentralized energy generation, which means that the facilities are easily disabled by Russian missile attacks. The Russian-occupied part of the country accounts for about 25% of the installed capacity of all power plants in Ukraine, i.e. about 15.5 GW (Cahill, Palti-Guzman, 2024). In the territories controlled by Russian troops, there is also the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant, destroyed by the invaders in June 2023; Such aggressive actions on the part of the Russian Federation are in direct violation of Article 56 of the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949: «Installations and structures containing dangerous forces, namely dams, dams and nuclear power plants, should not be attacked even in cases where such facilities are military facilities, if such an attack could result in the release of dangerous forces, and then heavy losses among the civilian population» Of particular importance is the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (RES), the largest nuclear power plant of this type in Europe, with an installed capacity of 6 GW. Although Ukraine has three other nuclear units, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is responsible for 43.5% of the country's reactor capacity.

capacities in Ukraine, in particular, two power units in the AR1000 Westinghouse technology at the Khmelnytskyi Nuclear Power Plant (Westinghouse gratuluje..., 2024). In addition, as part of cooperation with the U.S., Ukraine plans to implement a pilot project to produce clean hydrogen and ammonia from small modular reactors (Two years on, what the Russian invasion..., 2024).

As a result of the massive missile attacks on energy infrastructure that have been ongoing since autumn 2022, they have repeatedly led to restrictions in the availability of electricity in Ukraine, which has affected the level of security of the Ukrainian economy. Under the changed conditions, the Ukrainian state had to import electricity, and at the beginning of 2023 the deficit reached almost 30%. It is worth noting that supplies were made mainly from Poland and Slovakia, which enabled Ukraine to partially meet its energy needs. As of April 2023, Ukraine has been able to resume energy exports despite the ongoing attacks. Among the recipients of Ukrainian energy were Poland, Moldova and Slovakia, which contributed to the strengthening of regional energy cooperation. In the context of cooperation with Poland, it is very important to restart the 400 kV line between Rzeszów and the Khmelnytskyi Nuclear Power Plant in May 2023, which has not been operational since 1993 (Matuszak et al., 2023).

It is worth noting that certain stages can be entrusted to the private sector, but legally, state authorities are responsible for implementing an appropriate energy policy that guarantees the security of energy supply (Braun, 2018). The government led by Joe Biden is providing financial support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure. For example, at the Peace Summit held on June 15–16, 2024 in Switzerland, Vice President Kamala Harris announced the allocation of more than \$1.5 billion to strengthen Ukraine's energy sector, address humanitarian needs, and strengthen civilian security (Vice President Kamala Harris..., 2024). In this context, the parties discussed issues of cooperation in the provision of available loans, loan guarantees and insurance for equipment produced in the US that will be delivered to Ukraine. The United States has committed to supporting Ukraine's role as a transit country and ensuring security of energy supply. Additionally, the U.S. Export-Import Bank and other financial institutions have made it easier for Ukraine to purchase gas during the winter months, ensuring that the country can meet its energy needs (Cahill, Palti-Guzman, 2024) despite the war.

3. Conclusions

The war of aggression launched by Russia on February 24, 2022, has revealed an evolution from the old Moscow centralism to the modern expansionism of the Russian Federation. In the context of this war, the United States and the Russian Federation have taken different approaches to the issue of Ukraine's energy security. The United States supports Ukraine's sovereignty and integration with the West, promoting energy cooperation within European structures. Russia, on the other hand, is seeking to destroy Ukraine's energy infrastructure in order to put pressure on the Ukrainian government, including pursuing its own interests.

The war economy is crucial to achieving Russia's geopolitical ambitions, and the invasion of Ukraine was aimed at weakening its position in the European energy system. In the case of import and export dependency, Ukraine has effectively reduced its dependence on Russian energy supplies by increasing imports from European countries. Striving to develop our own energy resources is aimed at reducing dependence on external suppliers.

Integration into the European energy system was a key step towards reducing Ukraine's dependence on Russian energy supplies. Thanks to this integration, Ukraine was able to survive Russian attacks on its energy infrastructure and receive support in the form of electricity from European Union countries. This is a strategic step towards transforming Ukraine into a major player on the European energy market.

Intensified cooperation with European countries and the United States is of fundamental importance to ensure Ukraine's energy security. The U.S. is betting on cooperation with Ukraine as part of Western alliances and supports its integration into European structures, which is contrary to Russia's strategy of domination and influence over the former Soviet republics.

In conclusion, the war in Ukraine and the related geopolitical measures have had a significant impact on Ukraine's energy policy. Integration into the European energy system and support from the United States are crucial to increasing Ukraine's sovereignty and energy stability. At the same time, Russia is trying to maintain its influence, which leads to a confrontation of interests in Europe.

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