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GUREEV Danila

*The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, student,
Russia, St. Petersburg, 191186, Moika river embankment, 48;
e-mail: gureewdanila@yandex.ru*

LOGINOVA Elizaveta

*The Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, student,
Russia, St. Petersburg, 191186, Moika river embankment, 48;
e-mail: lizochka-loginova@mail.ru*

PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IN THE ARCTIC

Abstract. The article deals with the participation of the Northern Kingdom in the Arctic. The United Kingdom is a Maritime power, known primarily through an extensive trading system, as well as a member of the UN security Council, one of the main observers in the Arctic Council. Great Britain as observer country cannot claim the extraction and exploitation of fossil resources, but is actively showing interests in the development of the Arctic region. In addition, the UK is geographically close to the Arctic region. The United Kingdom is an important actor in the development of the Arctic. The greatest interest in the Albion (as well as other States) called Northern hydrocarbon resources. Great Britain is an oil and gas producing country, which in recent years has faced a shortage of raw materials. It is for this reason that Britain is forced to establish close cooperation with the most full-fledged strange of this region, namely with Russia. However, the specificity of London lies in the desire to abstract from Moscow politically, but the British oil and gas corporations on the contrary is aimed to work closely in the extraction of oil and gas with Moscow. It is this problem that causes disputes over the "exploration of the Arctic" both in the Northern Kingdom and abroad.

Keywords: Arctic, Great Britain, oil and gas sector, Russia, oil and gas corporations.

The Arctic shelf is in the sphere of influence of the majority of Northern countries and the competition in this region is maximal as anywhere else. So why is it that one of the most remote regions in the world is the most attractive? A quarter of the world's carbon reserves are located on the Arctic shelf. Large oil reserves are located in the Arctic. The flight of strategic nuclear missiles across the Arctic is the shortest. The Northern sea route is the shortest waterway from Europe to Asia. That is why the development of this sector is a priority for most Northern countries.

The international legal field was formed when the process of development of the Arctic was going on. Accordingly to 1920 Treaty the Arctic was divided into five polar sectors by the coastal States (the USSR, Norway, Denmark, the United States and Canada). The top of each of them is the North pole, and the base is the Northern border of

each state. The USSR got the largest sector, but over time the agreements were revised. However, this fact does not prevent other countries from participating in the Arctic process and pursue their geopolitical interests.

The Arctic region had become a point of conflict of interests of several States by the second half of the 1990s. The international forum Arctic Council was established to avoid open military confrontation on 19 September 1996. The Arctic Council is a platform for constructive dialogue between the Arctic member countries, but this process provides observer status to non-Arctic States, intergovernmental, inter-parliamentary organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Observer countries are actively showing interest in the development of the Arctic region. They cannot claim the extraction and exploitation of fossil resources in the Arctic. All observer countries are active participants in the international political process and they influence the situation in this region through other projects. These observer countries are: Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, China, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Poland, France, Japan, India, Singapore, Switzerland.

Britain, being closed to the Arctic region, also has its own geopolitical interests. The key interests are:

- 1) the study of climatic features and their impact on the flora and fauna of the region.
- 2) the Use of new trade routes.
- 3) the Full participation of the UK in the oil and gas sector as an economic partners.
- 4) the Arctic as a promising military platsdarm.

The last two factors are the most promising and require more detailed consideration, but first we need to deal with the status issue of British participation.

Until recently, the Arctic issue was not particularly interested in Britain and the state did not have a clear strategy for participation in this sector. Arctic issues were raised in the House of Lords in 2007 and 2010.[1,70] As yet as in 2013, Arctic question about Britain's participation in the Arctic was discussed in the project "in defense of the Arctic" where the key issues were the development of oil and gas sectors for the needs of the country.

Generally, speaking about the oil and gas situation in Britain, it should be noted that to date, the Northern Kingdom is hardly engaged in the search for new oil and gas fields and available ones may soon be exude. The hydrocarbon deficit is covered by imports. Britain uses its hydrocarbon reserves as carefully as possible, and the total number of them is not particularly large. Gas deposits are located mainly on the Northern coast of Scotland, and they are almost exhausted. Until

recently, Britain actively supplied blue fuel to continental Europe via pipeline, but now it is an importer from Norway.

At the same time, British oil and gas corporations are one of the most powerful representatives in the market. According 2016 ROYAL DUTCH SHELL Britain's turnover was in the third place, and BP 6 [2, 19]. At the same time these corporations are engaged in production of oil and gas worldwide, having about 4 thousand branches on oil worldwide production. BP acquired almost 20% of Rosneft's shares, prescribed its participation in the Arctic.

And it turns out that the UK, without showing its active participation in the Arctic, but still actively participates in the region, as well as it is interested in further scientific progress on more efficient production of Northern fuel.

The modern specificity of the Arctic is limited to the establishment of a certain hegemony of Western countries to form a counterweight to Russia. The so-called "little NATO" forms a stage for the countries of Canada, Sweden, Great Britain and Norway. Although Sweden and Finland, are not in NATO, they still are partner states. The current situation forms a single competitive space directed against the Russian Federation.

The Northern European military bloc project, which is capable to protect the interests of the European North in the Arctic, was first proposed by the Norwegian part in 2009 [3,47].

Britain as a member of NATO was initially interested in this project, finding common prospects for themselves in the creation of any military political bloc, especially in the Arctic. Moreover, as a key player in NATO Britain could easily take the most favorable position for itself. In such a context, Russia takes the most unprofitable position and can expect the military presence of the Alliance in the Arctic, the necessary measures to strengthen the military potential of the Western fleet in the region, which leads to a response from Russia.

However, Britain's position can be described as "friends with everyone" and the recent poisoning of Skripal and the subsequent expulsion of Russian diplomats did not affect the Russian-British relations in the Arctic. Britain aims at joint cooperation and the opening of new joint ventures on the Territory of the Russian shelf. At the same time, Britain uses methods of pressure on Russia to achieve the maximum benefit for itself, since Russia has a modern potential in the development of the Arctic. Britain understands this fact and actively uses it.

The United Kingdom relies on the conclusion of diplomatic treaties in its methods of manipulation in order to improve its position in the political pressure on Russia. Being an observer country in the inter-row organization, Britain also supports the different participants in the

discussion. And develops cooperation with the United States and its European partners. It allows to diversify its pressure on the Russian side using diplomacy for other countries [4].

The UK is able to manipulate the Russian Arctic through international discussions. As well the key method of manipulation is ecological discourse. However, Britain, in this issue is not the initiator. For example, the Norwegian environmental company Bellona, accusing Russia of non-environmental use of oil production in the Kara, Pechora and Barents seas, and the Northern Kingdom was connected to this accusation.

It is necessary to identify the key factors of hydrocarbon cooperation between Russia and the UK.

First, the decision of British oil and gas companies through the Russian market has become a tradition. Russia became a key hydrocarbon market just after the collapse of the USSR.

Secondly, the way to develop the Arctic through cooperation with Russia is the most profitable and simple. Russia with the help of UN declares its rights on the Lomonosov ridge, because about 60% of the reserves of all hydrocarbons in the region are located. And today Rosneft produces a large amount of gas in the Arctic regions of Russia.

Thirdly, the UK takes account of the total Arctic discourse. Britain also uses all possible forces to creation various political organizations to involve the maximum number of players. Many countries do not have a common access to the Arctic (China, Japan) insist on creating of a regime of shared access to Arctic resources in contrast to the existing policy of dividing the Arctic into a coastal zone.

Fourthly, it is worth noting that there is the increase in the degree of hostility towards Russia. Although the cold war is over, Britain's rhetoric about "potential danger from Russia" has not faded until now. The British see the threat from Russian nuclear submarines as that Russia is the most dominant military player in the region [5].

Summing up, it should be noted that the British activity in the Arctic is not unambiguous and has a complex structure. The British are extremely interested in developing the Arctic, while understanding the role of Russia in the development of the Arctic sector. Therefore, the political decisions of the British resemble the policy of "We are with you and we are against you". The British actively cooperate with Russia and receive their material benefits while doing everything possible to reduce Russia's influence in this sector. Britain intends to take a leading position among the observer countries of the Arctic Council.

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