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The emergence and evolution of Russian foreign climate policy: Energy Perspective

Atif Aljemaili Alharbi

RUDN University, Moscow, Russian Federation
E-mail: alboyti@gmail.com, 1072228007@pfur.ru

Abstract. The issue of «Climate Change» arose in the late 20th century as a worldwide concern, and thus a significant item on the international political agenda as well as a distinguished foreign policy subject matter. Climate change is a trans-border threat, and its universal nature necessitate the involvement and the outmost collaboration by all nation-states in an actual and appropriate international response, in accordance with their collective but distinct accountabilities. Russia is considered to be one of the key players in the arena of climate change international politics, actually the Kyoto Protocol 1st commitment period (KP-1) wouldn't see the light of day and enter into force without the Russian Federation ratification. Moreover, Russia is the fourth major greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitter in the world and one of the main producers and exporters of all types of fossil fuels. Hence, not only Russia will be affected by the net harmful consequences of climate change, but also by the adverse effects of the international policies and response measures to combat climate change. This Article consists of three sections. Section one is an introductory remark on the crucial role that Russia plays in both the international climate politics and the energy market, and the substantial share of hydrocarbons revenues in the federal budget, which will make Russia between the rock and the hard place in the process of global energy transition, at least in the long run. Section two explores Russia's historical GHG emissions and removal by sinks in period of 1990-2021 so as to understand the efforts made to confront climate change. The last section sheds some light on the evolution of the Russian Federation external climate policy since the collapse of the Soviet Union till the last climate conference that took place in Dubai and try to inspect the Russian position towards the "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other relevant legal instruments.

Key words: Climate Negotiations, UNFCCC, Russia Climate Policy, Fossil Fuels dependence, Hydrocarbons, Global stocktake

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Возникновение и эволюция внешней климатической политики России: энергетическая перспектива

Атыф Альхарби Альджемайли

Российский университет дружбы народов им. П. Лумумбы, Москва, Россия
E-mail: alboyti@gmail.com, 1072228007@pfur.ru

Аннотация. Проблема «изменения климата» возникла в конце XX в. как проблема мирового масштаба и, следовательно, как важный пункт международной политической повестки дня, а также как важная тема внешней политики. Изменение климата — это трансграничная угроза, и ее универсальный характер требует вовлечения и максимального сотрудничества всех национальных государств в реальном и адекватном международном реагировании в соответствии с их коллективной, но различной ответственностью. Россия считается одним из ключевых игроков на арене международной политики в области изменения климата, ведь без ратификации Российской Федерацией Киотский протокол 1-го периода обязательств (КП-1) не увидел бы свет и не вступил бы в силу. Более того, Россия является четвертым по величине эмитентом парниковых газов в мире и одним из основных

производителей и экспортеров всех видов ископаемого топлива. Данная статья состоит из трех разделов. Первый раздел представляет собой вводное описание о важнейшей роли России как в международной климатической политике, так и на энергетическом рынке, а также о значительной доле доходов от продажи углеводородов в федеральном бюджете, из-за чего Россия окажется между молотом и наковальней в процессе глобального энергетического перехода, по крайней мере в долгосрочной перспективе. Во втором разделе рассматриваются исторические данные о выбросах и поглощениях парниковых газов в России в период 1990-2021 гг., чтобы понять, какие усилия предпринимаются для противостояния изменению климата. Последний раздел проливает свет на эволюцию внешней климатической политики Российской Федерации с момента роспуска Советского Союза до последней климатической конференции в Дубае и пытается проанализировать позицию России в отношении «Рамочной конвенции ООН об изменении климата (РКИК ООН) и других соответствующих правовых инструментов».

Ключевые слова: Переговоры по климату, РКИК, климатическая политика России, зависимость от ископаемого топлива, углеводороды, глобальная инвентаризация

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Introduction

One of the main and crucial players in international climate change politics is the Russian Federation. Not only is Russia the largest country and among the 10 most populous nations of the world [Shiraev, Khudoley 2018: 1-4], but also enjoys a huge territory and rich natural resources that function as important carbon sinks (absorptive or removal mechanism of GHGs) such as water, soil, forests, etc.[1] In addition, Russia is a key power in the worldwide energy market [Elass, Jaffe 2009: 7], particularly in the field of hydrocarbons, as a major producer and the world's leading exporter of fossil fuels, as well as one of the crucial providers of energy-intensive products [Makarov 2022: 2]. To this end, it goes without saying that these resources indeed impact the global climate considerably on one hand, and the nation-state that possesses such resources will be a key player in any international climate deliberations on the other. As a matter of fact, the status of being a large economy rich in fossil fuels and among the largest four emitters can be considered as a source of fundamental power for Russia in international climate politics. Yet, the translation of such power into influence in the climate deliberation rounds had been dependent on the country's strategy and ability to unite with other significant emitters, as well as the amount of emissions and the ability to control them. In other words, and as Mark Purdon eloquently argued [Purdon 2014: 311] that countries power in the international climate change stage is primarily a function of emissions [Below 2017: 5] , which is why China and the United States are seen as the most powerful countries on global climate change due to the fact that they have the largest amount of GHGs emission and consequently the utmost capability to impose global damage and avoid damage through their deeds. Therefore, it's fair to conclude that Russia's behavior in the international arena will affect the path of global policies that deal with the issue of climate change [Gustafson 2021: 4].

In accordance with the report of the "Nationally Determined Contribution" (NDC) of the Russian Federation", which was submitted in 2015 and been updated in 2020, Russia has witnessed an increase of the average annual surface air temperature for the last 50 years which is 2.5 times higher than the growth rate of the average global air temperature. Therefore, wide-ranging of negative ramifications took place on Russian land, which in turn have a substantial and growing effect on the natural ecosystems, the living circumstances and well-being of people, and the socio-economic development of the country [Lioubimtseva 2010: 8][2]. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the envisioned climatic changes are also expected to have a significantly positive impact on many regions and sectors of Russian economy [Lioubimtseva 2010: 8].[3] Yet, it

[1] With a total landmass area of over 17 million km2, the Russian Federation is considered to be the largest nation-state in the world that its territory is covering nearly13% of "Mother Earth" surface. Around 46 per cent of the total land area is covered by forest and other woodland which make up almost a quarter of world timber resources, also the agricultural lands -12,9 %, or 220,6 million ha. More than 120 thousand Russian rivers stretch for more than 10 km, their estimated overall length is 2,3 million km; Russia possesses more than 9% of the World's hydropower resources. Around 67 % of the land area is under permafrost, which is sensitive to climate change and methane-rich. For more information, see "Section B. National circumstances at UNFCCC Report on the technical review of the third national communication of the Russian Federation", https://unfccc.int/documents/3601. (Accessed 24/4/2024). See also the summary section and pp. 19-20 at "Eighth National Communication of the Russian Federation under UNFCCC,2022. «Восьмое национальное сообщение Российской Федерации», представленное в соответствии со статьями 4 и 12 Рамочной Конвенции Организации Объединенных Наций об изменении климата и статьей 7 Киотского протокола Москва, 2022. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NC-8_BR-5_rus.pdf. (Accessed 26/4/2024).

[2] Nationally Determined Contribution of The Russian Federation, submitted to the UNFCCC in Dec.2015, and been updated on 25/11/2020. Nationally Determined Contributions Registry | UNFCCC. (Accessed 24/4/2024) See also the English version at https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/NDC_RF_eng.pdf. (Accessed 24/4/2024).

[3] IPCC. 2007. Climate Change 2007. Impacts, Adaptation and Variability. Working Group II Report. For example, see pages 193, 556. (Accessed in 26/4/2024) https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ar4_wg2_full_report.pdf.

was argued that when all factors are taken into consideration, the net impacts of climate change would be negative [Gustafson 2021: 6].

On the other hand, Russia will be negatively impacted also by the global response policies and actions to confront climate change, as were stipulated in the several provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other relevant legal instruments, i.e. Kyoto Protocol 1997(KP) and Paris Agreement 2015(PA) as well as Conference of Parties (COPs) decisions. Among these climate response measures is the energy transition to renewable energy sources and thus to low or/and zero GHGs global energy landscape. This in turn embodies a real challenge for countries whose economies are highly dependent on hydrocarbons, in particular, for those with a less diversified economies and more reliant on oil and gas revenues, such as Russia and most members of OPEC+ mainly the Arab petroleum exporting countries (See Figure 1).

As a matter of fact, oil and gas revenues have been and continue to be the central pillar of the Russian economic activity and its ability to withstand the crises that break out from time to time. As shown in Figure 1, these revenues represented more than 50% of the revenues of the Russian Federal Budget in the period 2011-2014. Moreover, we can also see that this kind of dependency decreased with the decline in oil and gas prices in 2016 and 2020 to 36% and 28%, respectively. However, this situation has changed significantly with the recovery of oil and gas prices in subsequent periods. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that these revenues decreased as a percentage of total federal revenues in 2022 and 2023, reaching 42% and 32% respectively, despite the rise in energy prices in general in that period[1]. However, it can be argued that this decline may be due to price discounts below international oil prices for Russian oil exports to alternative markets following the Western sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation after the Ukraine crisis[2].

Russia GHG emissions and removal by sinks:

Russia is the fourth largest GHGs emitter among national economies with a share of 5.1% of world CO2-eq emissions excluding "land use, land-use change and forestry" (LULUCF) in 2020 and 3.8% including LULUCF [3]. Furthermore, Russia is among the top five emitters of GHGs, if we consider the EU as a single entity, which altogether contribute nearly 60 % of global emissions[4] (See figure 2). As reported in the UNFCCC technical review of the Russian Federation recent submissions on GHGs inventory information[5] (See table 1), Russian total GHG emissions excluding LULUCF were around 2,051.4 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2-eq) and 1,482 million tons of (CO2-eq) emissions including LULUCF in 2021, resulting a growth rate in total emissions of 4.6% and11.2%

[1] Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. (2024, March 4). Follow the Money: Understanding Russia's oil and gas revenues - Oxford Institute for Energy Studies.(Accessed in 26/4/2024) https://www.oxfordenergy.org/publications/follow-the-money-understanding-russias-oil-and-gas-revenues/.

[2] The Future of Russian Energy Exports under Sanctions | List of Articles | International Information Network Analysis | SPF. International Information Network Analysis (Accessed in 4/5/2024) https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/takahashi_01.html.

[3] Human activities impact terrestrial sinks, through land use, land-use change and forestry activities (LULUCF), consequently, the exchange of CO2 (carbon cycle) between the terrestrial biosphere system and the atmosphere is altered. In short, mitigation can be achieved through activities in the LULUCF sector that increase the removals of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from the atmosphere or decrease emissions by halting the loss of carbon stocks. For more information, see "Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)", https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/land-use--land-use-change-and-forestry-lulucf , (accessed in 29/4/2024).

[4] China is the leading GHGs emitter with a share of 28% and 26%, USA 12%, and 11%, India 6.9% and 6.7%, and EU 6.7% and 6.2% excluding and including LULUCF respectively. "Climate Watch: Historical GHGs Emission". (accessed in 4/5/2024) https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions?chartType=line&end_year=2020&sectors=total-excluding-lucf&source=Climate%20Watch&start_year=1990.

[5] Report on the technical review of the eighth national communication and the technical review of the fifth biennial report of the Russian Federation | UNFCCC, Jan/2024. (Accessed 1/5/2024) https://unfccc.int/documents/636783.

to the year 2020, respectively. The 2021 level of GHGs emission is considered to be almost 68% of 1990 level of emissions excluding LULUCF, and around 55% including LULUCF.

Furthermore, as illustrated in Table 1, the distribution of emissions by sector hasn't changed significantly between 1990 and 2021, which is still dominated by the energy sector, whose share in total emissions excluding LULUCF was nearly 78% in 2021. The above-mentioned report also demonstrated the contribution of individual GHGs to their total emissions, which shows that the leading role still belongs to CO2 whose share is 79.4% in 2021 and CH4 comes second with 14.6% in the same year[1]. By reviewing the historical data for these two individual gases in 1990, it can be concluded that there is no significant change in the shares of such gases in the 2021 total emissions. Its noteworthy to indicate that the variations in Russia total GHGs emission throughout the period 1990-2021 could be attributed to the national circumstances and were determined primarily by other factors such as : the economic performance, i.e. fluctuations and structural shifts of the economy, policies and measures (P&Ms) to combat climate change, alterations in the structure of the energy mix, fossil fuels consumption and production, energy efficiency, promotion of renewable energy, and the general trend of air temperature on the territory of Russia[2].

In light of the above, the Russian Federation is the undeniable frontrunner of international obligations to limit and reduce GHG emissions, due to the cumulative reduction of annual GHGs in comparison to 1990 levels which is 41 billion tons of CO2-eq. This in turn equals more than double of the aggregate response efforts of the EU countries (19 bln tons CO2-eq) and, hence, have postponed global warming by a year[3]. Actually, the latest UNEP "Emissions Gap Report 2023" signaled that Russia showed no emission gap in 2022, among those countries who achieved the Cancun pledges in 2020, and likely to meet its NDC targets[4].

Evolution of the Russian Federation External Climate Policy:

Turning now to the Russian foreign climate policy, which began to evolve mainly through its involvement and participation in international organizations that address climate change, particularly, after adopting the climate international multilateral agreements, namely UNFCCC 1992, KP 1997 and PA 2015. Accordingly, development of the Russian foreign climate policy could be sectioned into four main phases that are linked to 4 historical milestones, namely: UNFCCC 1992, Kyoto Protocol 1st period 1997, Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2009, Presidential Decree on greenhouse gas emissions reduction 2013, and Paris Agreement (2015) and beyond.

Early stage of UNFCCC 1992:

Despite its key role in the present international climate politics, Russia negotiating stance during the early 1990s when the UNFCCC was first negotiated reflected an overall foreign policy strategy of keeping a low profile and non-positive engagement in international climate process[5].

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[1] Ibid. Also it should be noted that the source of CO2 is mainly being generated from the energy sector and the burning of fossil fuels. Informal translation from the "Четвертый Доклад Российской Федерации За Двухгодичный Период, представленный в соответствии с решением 1/CP.16 Конференции Сторон Рамочной Конвенции Организации Объединенных Наций об изменении климата", Москва 2019. Russian Fourth Biennial Report under the UNFCCC, Moscow 2019 (Accessed in 1/5/2024) https://unfccc.int/BR4. See also the "Report on the technical review of the fourth biennial report of the Russian Federation, FCCC/TRR.4/RUS, Sep. 2020. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/trr4_RUS.pdf. Last accessed 5/5/2024.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Russian Federation, "2020 Voluntary National Review of the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" //SDG 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts". https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26962VNR_2020_Russia_Report_English.pdf

[4] UNEP, Emissions Gap Report 2023: Broken Record. https://www.unep.org/interactives/emissions-gap-report/2023/#section_-1.

[5] This assumption could be supported also by the fact that Russia ratified the UNFCCC on 28 December 1994 after two and a half years of its adoption, and also after its entry into force in March 1994. Moreover, there is no mention what's so ever to the issue of climate change in the "2000 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation", climate change started to become a priority and a subject matter of the

[Turkowski 2012: 1] (the author own experience of prolonged participation in the UNFCCC negotiation rounds) This in turn due to a number of internal factors such as the aching economic transition, scientific skepticism, low environmental awareness and the political elite viewpoint. That's why climate change had little significance and was of a little of a concern for the Russian authorities at that time. [Turkowski 2012: 1] [Andonova, Alexieva 2012: 4] As a result, Russia stayed mostly out of the scope in the preliminary negotiation rounds of UNFCCC, which were designed mainly by USA, EU and developing countries acting as a negotiating bloc, i.e., G77&China. [Andonova, Alexieva 2012: 5] Actually, the main impetus for Russia's participation was driven by the need to protect its status as an economy in transition among industrialized countries. Additionally, some authors claimed that Russia showed some involvement by associating itself with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which stood against any quantitative emission reductions in succeeding protocols at that time. [Andonova, Alexieva 2012: 5].

Kyoto Protocol 1st period 1997 Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation:

The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) took place at the 3rd Conference of Parties COP3 in Kyoto-Japan in December 1997 and signed by Russia on the 11th March 1999. Nevertheless, and similar to the situation of ratifying the UNFCCC, it took the Russian government more than 5 years to ratify KP on 18th Nov. 2004, which allowed the protocol to enter into force on 16th February 2005.[1]Such protracted ratification process of KP could be attributed to the heated political dispute among various influential groups and authorities regarding the gains and drawbacks of the KP for the Russian economy on one hand, and because of the political leverage and the significant part that Russia gained in the international climate negotiations as a result of the US withdrawal from the protocol in 2001 [Tynkkynen 2014: 8] [Gusev 2016: 40] [Makarov 2016: 537]. Indeed, the continued existence of KP was at risk due to the US withdrawal from the protocol, resulting in the failure of meeting the requirements of KP entry into force, which is the ratification by 55 parties representing 55% of industrialized countries total emission in 1990. Despite the ratification by 120 parties whose emissions were below 44%. in 2004, the threshold for entry into force was not met.

Given that Russia's share of global GHGs accounted for 17.4% at that time, it's suddenly gained a decisive role in the international climate negotiations and became the state to decide the fate of KP after playing a humble role in the early days of UNFCCC negotiations. Moreover, KP was the initial driving force for having the issue of climate change as an item in the political program of Russian Federation [Gusev 2016: 40]. Against this background, a great debate was initiated between the proponents of Russia's ratification of KP and who stood against that. [Tynkkynen 2014: 9] [Gusev 2016: 40] The proponent's argument revolved around the political and economic benefits such as EU support for Russia membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the benefits of KP market mechanisms, [Andreja Cirman et al 2009: 38] in addition to the reduction of GDP energy intensity through the

"Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" only by 2008. It should be noted that this low profile engagement was not the case during the USSR era, when the powerful states dominated the leadership positions of the IPCC 1988. USSR, USA, and UK held three of the top five positions in IPCC working groups, Prof Yuri A Izrael was Working Group II Chairman. See IPCC Impacts Assessment Report1990. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ipcc_far_wg_II_full_report.pdf.Furthermore, at the Noordwijk Ministerial Conference on Atmospheric Pollution and Climate Change in Nov. 1989, the opposition by USA, USSR and Japan prevented conference participants from agreeing on a specific timetable or the level of emissions target. Also, the topic of climate change was part of the agenda items at the United States-Soviet summit in Malta1989.

[1] "Ratification Status of the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC" at UN Treaty Collection, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-a&chapter=27&clang=_en. (Accessed 6/5/2024)

enhancement of energy efficiency measures. On the other hand, and in addition to the previously mentioned internal factors, the opponents of the ratification pointed to the serious challenge of US absence as a promising buyer of Russia's excess emission quotas [Makarov 2016: 537] [Andonova, Alexieva 2012: 5], the inability to meet the objective established by the Russian government to double GDP within the following 10 years, and the likelihood that such ratification could limit industrial evolution and lead to a condition where Russia may be forced to purchase emission allowances. Eventually, potential benefits overshadowed possible risks and Russia ratified the Kyoto Protocol, thus making its deep involvement and contribution to the advance of international climate policy. [Tynkkynen 2014: 8] [Gusev 2016: 40].

Towards the "Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2009":

Following the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, the issue of climate change received a substantial attention by Russian authorities, and a series of regulations intended to further implement mitigation and adaptation actions to tackle climate change were adopted in accordance with the provisions of the UNFCCC and the KP.[1] The "Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation until 2020", which was approved in December 2009, was the prime document on this matter [Gordeeva 2014: 5]. Endorsement of the "Climate Doctrine 2009" along with participation of the Russian President in the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 was a crystal-clear indication that the leadership of Russia acknowledged climate change as a real problem [Gusev 2016: 41-42].

Despite the fact that "Climate Doctrine 2009" didn't have a legal standing, i.e., not legally binding [Henry, Sundstrom 2012: 1311], and was subject to "serious criticism from the expert community" [Gusev 2016: 42].[2] The Doctrine stated that there are four main objectives of Russia's climate policy, which centered around developing the scientific basis for climate policy, developing and implementing actions to adapt and mitigate the human induced climate change, and to engage with the international community to address climate change[3]. Unlike the "Concepts of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 2008, which stipulated that countering climate change by expanding international cooperation would ensure environmental security of the planet, the doctrine also recognized climate change to represent a national security threat to the Russian Federation as well[4].

The UNFCCC 1992, among others, was an integral part of the "Climate Doctrine 2009" legal foundation, which affirmed that climate change is one of the foremost international challenges in our time. Climate change typifies a multifaceted problem which can't be confined only to science and must be related to other dimensions of Russia sustainable development. Moreover, the "Doctrine" embodied the international dimension of climate change within the Russian Federation's policy priorities and stated that it represented a unified public policy of Russia, both within its borders and in the international arena. This in turn, explained why the Doctrine stipulated that the nature of Russian interests concerning climate change are universal and can't be confined only to its territory, and hence, the approaches of other countries as well as the international community on dealing with the climate issues should be taken into account[5]. Around the time of the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December 2009, the Russian government once more became proactive

[1] See, for example: Presidential Decree N°889, On Some Measures to Increase Energy Efficiency of Russian Economy, approved on 4 June 2008; Concept of the long-term economic development of the Governmental Decree N° 1-p, about main directions of the state policy on energy efficiency and electricity produced by renewable energy sources up to 2020, approved on 8 January 2009.

[2] It was argued by the critics of the climate doctrine 2009 that it lacks a lucid action plan with targets and processes to accomplish them, no timeframe, or financial resources…etc. That's why a complex plan on the implementation of the climate doctrine was adopted only in May 2011.

[3] The Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on 17 December 2009, (Accessed 7/5/2024). http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6365.

[4] Ibid., The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4116 (Accessed 7/5/2024)

[5] Ibid

in negotiating its stance. Just before the conference, President Medvedev reiterated the three main themes that shape the foundation of Russia's negotiating position in international climate politics: First, that major economies must concurrently make the required commitments to combat climate change. Second, these commitments should not be incompatible with economic and development opportunities of each country. Third, the international community recognition of Russia leadership in emissions reduction owing to the country's natural sinks which absorb carbon emissions. In addition, Russia was involved in the Copenhagen negotiations process with an obvious position on emissions targets prior to the COP. Given that other countries would do the same, President Dmitri Medvedev pledged to commit Russia of reducing its emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020. [Henry, Sundstrom 2012: 1303] At the UN climate conference in Cancún in 2010, Russia pledged once more to reduce GHG emissions by 15-25% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. Moreover, Russia clarified its position towards the Kyoto Protocol in the view of the global changes that took place since its adoption in 1997. Alexander Bedritsky, the Russian "Special envoy for Climate" acknowledged that KP was only a practical step for international cooperation in mitigating climate change and there is need to improve the global efforts. He considered the adoption of commitments for the Second Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol, as it stands now, "*would be neither scientifically, economically, nor politically effective.*" Consequently, Russia announced its withdrawal from the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (KP-2).[1] Russia made it very clear that it will only join an agreement that include all major emitters. As a matter of fact, Russia called for the transition to a new agreement, that would focus on broadening international cooperation for the achievement of long-term goals, and the need to the extension of the list of emissions reduction commitment countries by including the fast-growing economies in it.[2]In fact, Russia has submitted a topical amendment to the Convention, providing the possibility to revise Annexes I (Industrialized nations) and II (OECD countries)[3].

Presidential Decree on greenhouse gas emissions reduction 2013

Upon the withdrawal from the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, Russia declared its own initiative by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation 2 No 752, 2013 "On the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions"[4] and a target for limiting greenhouse gas emissions was set on till 2020, which is no more than 75% of the 1990 level. This target was reflected also in Russia's preliminary Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), aims to limit anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions to 70-75% of 1990 levels by 2030. Moreover, Russian President Vladimir Putin echoed this target at the UN General Assembly, suggesting a broader approach to tackle climate change. [5]However, the Russian target has been criticized by experts, as it leaves room for growth and lacks an identified emissions peak. [Gusev 2016: 46]

[1] Russia reiterated the same stance at the Climate Conference in Doha - Qatar, December 2012, which witnessed a procedural dilemma between the Chairman of the Conference and the delegation of Russia. For more information see Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) , Vol. 12 No.567., December 2012 https://enb.iisd.org/enb/vol12/, Last accessed 4/5/2021.

[2] Statement by the Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation, Special envoy for climate Alexander Bedritsky, UNFCCC COP 16/CMP 6 (Cancun, Mexico 2010), https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_16/statements/application/pdf/101209_cop16_hls_russia.pdf. Last accessed 3 May 3, 2021.

[3] Statement by the Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation, Special envoy for climate Alexander Bedritsky, UNFCCC COP 18/CMP 8(Doha, Qatar) 2012 https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop18_cmp8_hl_statements/Statement%20by%20Russia%20%28COP%20%29.pdf.

[4]Presidential Decree N° 752, On the Reduction of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions, approved on 30 September 2013, http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/37646, last accessed 6/5/2024.

[5] Vladimir Putin statement in the plenary meeting of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. September 28, 2015, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50385. Accessed on 3/5/2024.

Paris Agreement (2015) and beyond:

Russia signed the Paris Agreement (PA) on 22 Apr 2016 and accepted it on 7 Oct 2019[1]. Unlike the KP which was comprised of commitments to reduce GHG emissions for developed countries only, the new agreement took into consideration the new global economic realities that the new long-term temperature goal of combating climate change requires collective global action by all countries, including Developing Countries who are responsible for 60% of global emissions. Under the PA countries are entrusted to identify their commitments, develop an adaptation plan, and GHGs emission targets on the national level, Unlike KP 'top-down' structural design, described as international joint efforts directed to the achievement of a shared objective, PA represents a hybrid structure, in which bottom-up approach to promote participation (contained in parties' contributions) is combined with a top-down process to promote ambition and accountability(by reviewing the collective progress known as the global stocktake), [Bodansky, Rajamani 2018: 48] The Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 4, 2020, N 666 "On the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions" updated the target of the previous Presidential Decree on greenhouse gas emissions reduction 2013 by ensuring that "*by 2030 a reduction in GHG emissions by up to 70 percent compared to the 1990 level*", and consequently, the 2015 Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) target was adjusted in the new 2020 NDC. The NDC also touched upon Russian national measures in the field of mitigation and adaptation[2].

At the 'Leaders Summit on Climate' in 2021, President Putin discussed Russia's approach to international cooperation to combat global climate change. He emphasized the importance of UN climate agreements and Russia's responsibility to fulfill these obligations. Russia was able to reduce emissions by half since 1990 and has made low-emission energy sources a sizable segment of its energy mix. The country plans to execute environmental modernization, energy efficiency improvements, clean fossil fuel technologies, and aims for carbon neutrality in the Sakhalin region by 2025. Putin also touched upon the importance of comprehensiveness in dealing with all factors causing climate change, urged countries to join collaborative scientific research on low carbon technologies, and deal with climate change within the context of sustainable development[3].

Russian Federation at the Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Change Conference (COP 27) cautioned against modifying the commitments of UNFCCC parties under geopolitical circumstances and gave emphasis to the national circumstances of every party and the right to choose their own path to achieve climate goals. Moreover, Russia emphasized that developed countries must show actual leadership and provide developing countries with more financial resources and technology. In Dubai COP28, while discussing "Global Stocktake" and evaluating the ability of the international community to achieve PA long-term temperature goals, the Russian Federation outlined the main features of the vision of future multilateral cooperation to combat climate change. This vision must be ambitious, but in line with the features of the "Climate Convention" by being holistic (considering the diverse needs of people worldwide including the need for energy, water and food, and better quality of life), realistic (addressing the dilemma of lack of trust caused by unfulfilled pledges), and inclusive (tackling the free-riding and benefiting from other parties' compliance). Russia also expressed the intention of achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2060[4].

Conclusion

[1] Ratification Status of Paris Agreement at UN Treaty Collection, (accessed 6/5/2024). https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=_en

[2] Nationally Determined Contribution of The Russian Federation, submitted to the UNFCCC in Dec.2015, and been updated on 25/11/2020.(Accessed 24/4/2024) ,

[3]Speech of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the 'Leaders Summit on Climate', April 22, 2021 http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65425. (Accessed 7/5/2024)

[4] Ruslan Edelgeriyev, Russia's High Level Segment statement at Sharm El-Sheikh COP27 November 16, 2022 (Accessed 3/5/2024), https://unfccc.int/documents?f%5B0%5D=conference%3A

«*Global development should not just be 'green' but also sustainable for all countries…. it should be closely connected with progress in such high-priority areas as efforts against poverty and closing development gaps*» Vladimir Putin.[1] The official documents of the Russian Federation and various statements by the top-officials illustrate that climate change is perceived as a global multidimensional and a complex issue that covers many aspects of human life-patterns and activities, and therefore, should be tackled as such. Accordingly, it's been argued in this article that the key to understand the Russian external climate policy and its role in the realm of international climate negotiations can be through understanding these dimensions, which include but not limited to, the economic performance that rely heavily on the use and export of hydrocarbons. In addition, energy exports should be perceived not only as an economic backbone but also as an instrument that «*should help to promote the country's external policy*" and enhance the» *geopolitical power*" [Henderson, Mitrova 2020: 97]. Moreover, Russian stance in the international climate arena has also been greatly influenced and determined by wider foreign policy considerations and objectives. [Korppoo 2008: 7] (Makarov 2016: 536). [Henderson, Mitrova 2020: 97] Actually, it was a channel for integration with the international community [Makarov 2016: 536,544] and to gain 'prestige' by showing itself as an accountable global player. [Korppoo 2008: 7] [Lioubimtseva 2010: 8] Moreover, equal footing with, and independence from, the world's primary power centers of the USA, EU and China, is a second Russian foreign policy goal. Actually, the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept 2016 was very clear about this approach by indicating in article 3c that being as a "*center of influence in today's world*" is considered as a national interest and strategic priority[2]. Russia is also being concerned about the equity of any climate change agreement that have limited international participation in the mitigation commitments realm, this in turn explains beyond any doubt the repetitive assurance of Russia's commitment towards PA once the collective effort by all members is holistic, realistic, and inclusive.

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ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ/APPENDIX

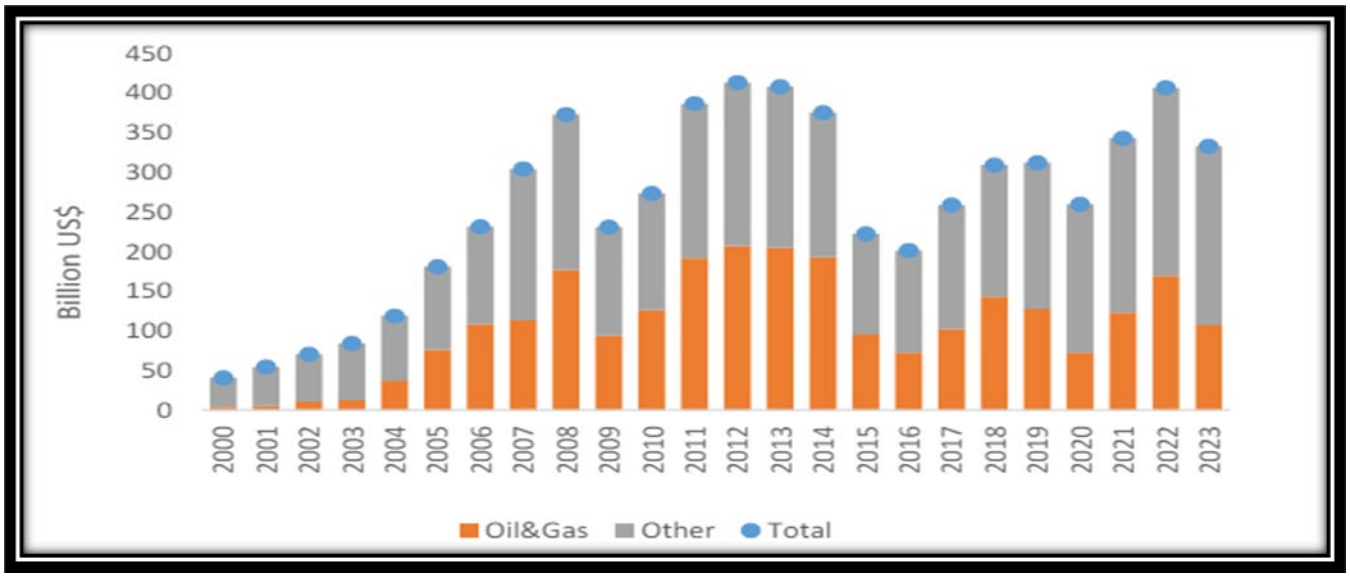

Figure 1: Russian federal budget revenue (USD).

Source: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2024

Table 1.
Greenhouse gas emissions by sector for the Russian Federation for 1990–2021.

	GHG emissions (kt CO_2 eq)					Change (%)		Share (%)	
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2021	1990–2020	2020–2021	1990	2021
Sector									
1. Energy	2 577 132.87	1 521 020.60	1 639 330.25	1 593 849.58	1 679 103.65	–38.2	5.3	81.4	77.9
A1. Energy industries	1 171 194.98	842 615.26	878 937.43	819 801.72	866 135.27	–30.0	5.7	37.0	40.2
A2. Manufacturing industries and construction	211 289.43	99 325.57	129 731.32	147 150.32	167 646.13	–30.4	13.9	6.7	7.8
A3. Transport	320 237.89	174 136.93	229 571.43	229 004.93	225 727.70	–28.5	–1.4	10.1	10.5
A4. and A5. Other	588 901.74	191 880.72	175 968.56	180 914.95	189 250.09	–69.3	4.6	18.6	8.8
B. Fugitive emissions from fuels	285 508.83	213 062.11	225 121.51	216 977.66	230 344.46	–24.0	6.2	9.0	10.7
C. CO_2 transport and storage	NA, NO	NA, NO	NA, NO	NO	NO	–	–	–	–
2. IPPU	286 507.76	198 604.93	204 389.90	254 393.52	259 516.02	–11.2	2.0	9.0	12.0
3. Agriculture	250 734.98	120 764.27	105 420.26	118 805.28	121 284.74	–52.6	2.1	7.9	5.6
4. LULUCF	–77 415.61	–473 257.27	–698 066.14	–557 559.91	–484 824.68	–620.2	13.0	NA	NA
5. Waste	52 203.44	54 611.59	70 253.02	94 061.48	96 694.93	80.2	2.8	1.6	4.5
6. Other[a]	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	–	–	–	–
Total GHG emissions excluding LULUCF	**3 166 579.05**	**1 895 001.38**	**2 019 393.43**	**2 061 109.86**	**2 156 599.34**	**–34.9**	**4.6**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total GHG emissions including LULUCF	**3 089 163.44**	**1 421 744.11**	**1 321 327.29**	**1 503 549.95**	**1 671 774.66**	**–51.3**	**11.2**	–	–

Source: GHG emission data: the Russian Federation's 2023 annual submission, version 3.
[a] Emissions and removals reported under the sector other (sector 6) are not included in total GHG emissions.

Source: Report on the technical review of Russai 8th national communication& 5th biennial report, 2024.

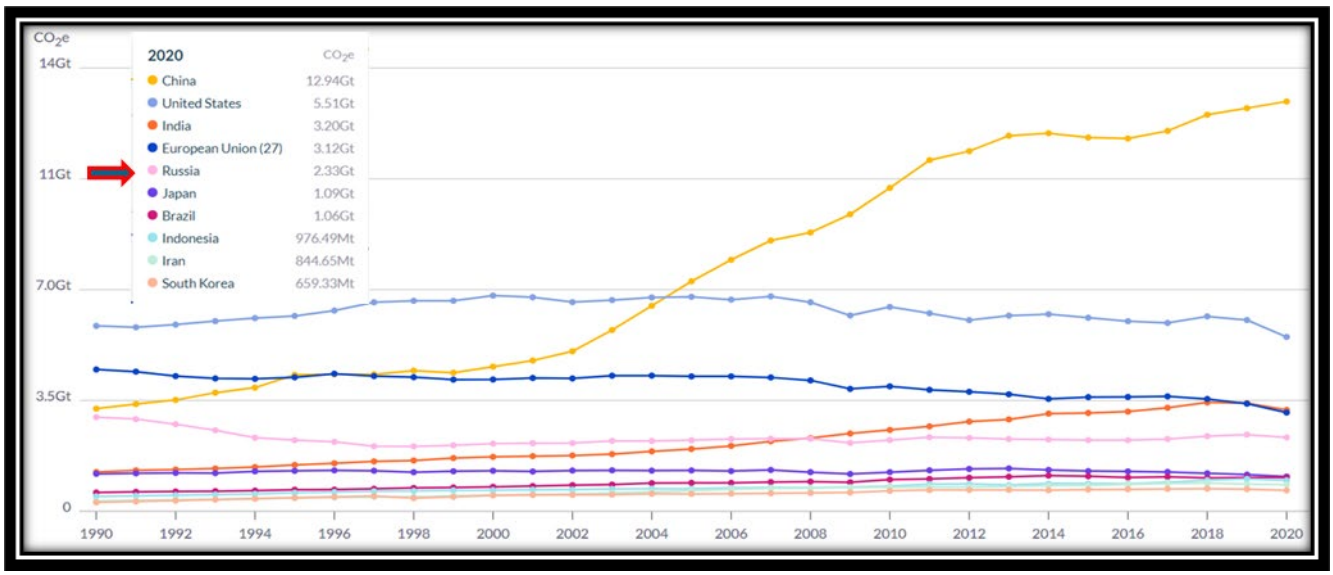

Figure 2: Top GHGs emitter total emissions (CO2-eq), excluding (LULUCF) 1990-2020.
Source: Climate Watch 2024

ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ / INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Atif Aljemaili Alharbi, International Relations Senior Advisor, the former Head of Kuwait Negotiating Delegation at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change UNFCCC, PhD candidate at the Department of Theory and History of International Relations, RUDN University. Moscow, Russia. Email: alboyti@gmail.com/

Атиф Альджемаили Альхарби, старший советник по международным отношениям, бывший глава переговорной делегации Кувейта в Рамочной конвенции ООН об изменении климата UNFCCC, соискатель кафедре теории и истории международных отношений РУДН. Москва, Россия. Email: alboyti@gmail.com