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Comment:

Russia is attempting to use environmental activists in furtherance of its influence to stop American oil and gas exports and pipelines. In a U.S. House Science Committee March 1, 2018 called Russian efforts to influence U.S. energy markets, released a staff report uncovering Russia's extensive efforts to influence U.S. energy markets through divisive and inflammatory posts on social media platforms. The report details Russia's motives in interfering with U.S. energy markets and influencing domestic energy policy and its manipulation of Americans via social media propaganda. Russian Attempts to Influence U.S. Domestic Energy Markets by Exploiting Social Media March 1, 2018 . it demonstrates how the Kremlin manipulated various groups in an attempt to carry out its geopolitical agenda, particularly with respect to domestic energy policy. Congress committee began investigating Russian attempts to influence U.S. energy markets in the summer of 2017 intricate money-laundering scheme. Russian-sponsored agents funneled money to U.S. environmental organizations in an attempt to portray energy companies in a negative way and disrupt domestic energy markets. American social media companies produced for the Committee confirmed that Russian agents were exploiting American social media platforms in an effort to disrupt domestic energy markets, suppress research and development of fossil-fuels, and stymie efforts to expand the use of natural gas. Between 2015 and 2017, there were an estimated 9,097 Russian posts or tweets regarding U.S. energy policy or a current energy event, a significant portion of content related to energy or environmental issues. Russia exploited American social media as part of its concerted effort to disrupt U.S. energy markets and influence domestic energy policy. They targeted pipelines, fossil fuels, climate change, and other divisive issues to influence public policy in the U.S. Russia provides roughly 75 percent of the natural gas imported by countries in Central and Eastern Europe while the countries in Southeast Europe "receive almost all of their natural gas from Russia."

"Russia's Gazprom has acknowledged for the first time a threat to its dominant position in European gas market from an expected influx of liquefied natural gas (LNG) produced in the United States under [the Trump] administration. Russia has a significant interest in disrupting U.S. energy markets and influencing domestic energy policy. American energy is booming. Surge of American energy into the global marketplace heightens the Kremlin's desire to eliminate or mitigate the American energy threat and to do so by influencing social media users, American voters, and public officials. American Gas and Oil represents a direct threat to Russian energy interests. First, an abundance of American supply in the global energy marketplace stands to reduce Russian market share and thus revenues generated from oil and gas activities. Second, by providing supply alternatives for European countries dependent on Russian supply and infrastructure, American energy stands to disrupt the Kremlin's ability to leverage energy consumption for geopolitical influence. The United States has recently experienced an energy production boom that stands to "fundamentally reshape the global energy landscape. primarily "attributable to increased production of natural gas and crude oil enabled by the use of hydraulic fracturing techniques," also referred to as fracking European officials, and the U.S. intelligence community have all

publicly noted that Russia and its government corporations are funding a covert anti-fracking campaign to suppress the widespread adoption of fracking in Europe and the U.S., all in an effort to protect the influence of the Russian oil and gas sector. Secretary General of NATO, told reporters in 2014, "Russia, as part of their sophisticated information and disinformation operations, engaged actively with so-called nongovernmental organizations environmental organizations working against shale gas to maintain dependence on imported Russian gas. On July 7, 2017, Chairman Smith and Energy Subcommittee Chairman Randy Weber (R-Texas) sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin requesting that the Treasury Department investigate allegations of Russian interference in the U.S. energy market through covertly funding radical environmental groups opposed to fossil fuels. Pipelines and domestic energy infrastructure were a primary target of the Russian agents. Specifically, several posts encouraged protests of pipeline construction, which is illustrative of the Kremlin's indiscriminate efforts to influence U.S. energy policy. *☺

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