

Islam are seriously flawed, a product of his own dislike of “uncivil” Islam and lack of rigour in establishing the facts behind allegations of regimist sectarianism, manipulation, and violence.

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***The Asian Energy Factor: Myths and Dilemmas of Energy, Security, and the Pacific Future.* By Robert A. Manning.** New York: Palgrave, 2000. 246pp.

The end of the Cold War brought to the fore a multitude of non-traditional issues that staked their claim to be included in the field of “security studies”. In contrast to the realist orientation, with its emphasis on power relationships among sovereign states, the so-called “new security challenges” extend the scope of security to incorporate non-state actors as well as “any number of issues ranging from civil or ethnic conflict”, through “resource scarcity, and uncontrolled migration”, to “transnational terrorism”, to quote Manamoto Tadashi in Paul B. Stares, ed., *The New Security Agenda: A Global Survey*. Among these, “energy security” has figured prominently in Asia under the shadow of the Gulf War and the South China Sea dispute between China and some Southeast Asian states.

Robert Manning has come up with a well researched analysis of the myths and realities associated with the important issue of energy as a significant factor in Asia’s political economy in the foreseeable future (2000–10). At the same time, he has admirably tried to dispel “the myth of energy scarcity” (chapter 2) on the global scale, that emanates from what he aptly calls “the apocalypse industry” (chapter 1) which thrives on misplaced extrapolations of past trends and a crisis mentality among its doomsayers.

After attempting to demolish the pessimists in the first two chapters, he takes on the extreme optimists (chapter 3) by tackling the myth of the Caspian Basin’s “resource bonanza” that purportedly would turn the region into the “New Persian Gulf” (p. 41). After pointing out the dubious nature of statistics on oil “reserves” that grossly overestimate the economically “recoverable” reserves, the chapter contends that huge technical, transport, and financial constraints

together with “political risks” associated with post-Soviet states of this landlocked region present formidable challenges to its commercial exploitation. As such, it draws the conclusion that the “Persian Gulf’s importance will not be mitigated by the energy resources of the Caspian”, for Asia as well as the United States (p. 58). The author also cautions that the “impressive U.S. campaign for its Caspian Basin objectives [set by the Clinton administration] risks fomenting unnecessary strategic competition with Russia and China” (p. 55).

Chapter 4 is an overview of the Asian energy scene that also discusses the consequences of two competing visions regarding the “question of energy” — one emphasizing “strategic” considerations in the geopolitical sense and the other associated with a market-centred approach. On the other hand, it acknowledges the presence of “a third approach with elements of both approaches co-mingling” (p. 61). Another phenomenon caused by the “inexorable trend ... of growing Asian oil dependence on the Middle East” (p. 74) is the unfolding of “a complex set of interlocking economic and financial relationships” (p. 77) that creates the Asia–Middle East energy nexus that could eventually “erode U.S. global influence” (p. 83). This emerging nexus and the geopolitics and geoeconomics of Asia’s energy “predicament” are expected to impact upon the relationship between the United States and China, on the one hand, and the Middle East, on the other.

The next four chapters deal with energy resources, energy utilization, energy policies (or lack thereof) and the politics and economics of supply and demand as well as environmental issues (pollution and global warming) in Asian states. Countries like China (chapter 5) and India (chapter 6) that are increasingly becoming more energy-intensive in their economic and social development are covered in detail. Japan and Korea, which are more mature energy consumers, are presented in chapter 7. The ASEAN Seven (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) are analysed in a regional context.

Regarding China, “the world’s second largest consumer of energy” (p. 85), its energy usage is examined in the context of the country’s modernization drive that has led to consistently high GDP growth rates. Manning avers that China’s energy choices are defined by the “underlying realities” of increasingly large oil imports, “still burgeoning demand for electricity”, and the fact that “there are growing environmental pressures [caused by heavy dependence on coal-fired plants]” (p. 93). It is argued that to meet these challenges, China has to implement further economic reforms; more reliance on market forces in general, and deregulation of the energy sector in particular. After discussing the implications of China’s quest for energy security, the author contends that

“China’s emergence as a global energy player need not be disruptive to global stability or a negative factor in the world economy”. In a positive note, Manning posits that “if managed properly, energy could be an important element fostering China’s regional and global economic integration” (p. 118).

In the case of India, the author argues that: “Sino-Indian similarities are particularly striking in regard to most aspects of their energy predicament” and that “success in both cases” is “largely dependent on reform” (pp. 119–20). After stating that “India’s hope for energy security” in the “foreseeable future” is constrained (as in the past) by “its political geography” (p. 133), the author identifies “reliance on global markets and cross-border investment” as the “core of India’s approach to energy security” (p. 137). This is despite concerns regarding India’s quest for “a blue water navy” and its nuclear ambitions (pp. 138–41).

It is pointed out that for Japan and South Korea, whose energy supply mix is heavily dependent on nuclear power and where there has been a “keen awareness of energy vulnerabilities” (p. 167), the solutions being sought are market-based diversification policies. The presence of the United States as a security guarantor of both countries seemingly obviates the need to approach energy security from a national security perspective.

In discussing the ASEAN Seven, chapter 8 presents Indonesia and Singapore as “upstream and downstream linchpins” (p. 174) in the Southeast Asian energy nexus. Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei are regarded as “modest producers” of oil and gas, while Thailand and the Philippines are described as “modest consumers” (pp. 179, 182). Manning argues that there has been a “gradual movement toward more self-contained energy development as an instrument of energy security” (p. 184). On the other hand, he identifies “several layers of vulnerability at the point where energy and security concerns intersect” (*ibid.*). They are: the problem of “maritime oil piracy”; “risk of disruption of the shipping lanes, a low-probability, high cost concern”; and “conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea” (pp. 184–85). However, the author contends that “there are serious reasons to doubt the proposition that security concerns, indeed, potential military conflicts, are likely to be triggered by questions of energy security” (p. 186).

The aforementioned contention is elaborated in the last chapter (chapter 9) which poses the question whether the energy issues would lead to conflict or co-operation in Asia. Manning concedes that “perceptions — based on flawed assumptions — may be having the effect of spurring both wrongheaded energy policy decisions and reinforcing trends toward confrontation” (p. 188). He also observes that

the existence of, what he calls, “Asian pathologies” linked to historical baggage and the emphasis on national sovereignty, make it difficult to agree on co-operative solutions to energy problems in the region. He also delineates the “nuclear challenges” to the region with the attendant risks for further proliferation of nuclear weapons. In spite of such reservations, he contends that “rather than being a source of conflict, energy has the capacity to become an integrative force” (p. 203) for regional co-operation. To this end, he recommends a set of regional and global “energy initiatives” premised upon “strategic petroleum reserves; sea-lane security”; curbing “maritime piracy”, and “nuclear cooperation” (pp. 205–6). After discussing the positive role that could be played by the United States in the aforementioned issues, the author ends by stating, in the last paragraph of the book, that his analysis “has tried to demonstrate that scarcity is increasingly counterproductive as a paradigm for fashioning energy security” (p. 207).

All in all, this is a most informative and level-headed analysis of energy issues in the Asia-Pacific region that this reviewer has come across in recent years. Although he does not claim to have all the answers to the questions raised in the book, Manning manages to clearly dissect the issues and separate myths from realities. Policy-makers and academics in the fields of area studies, energy studies, regionalism, and Asia-Pacific relations, as well as those who have a general interest in the region, will reap significant benefit from this book. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the compelling logic and impressive facts supporting Manning’s analysis, whether it will convince the doomsayers and those with vested interests to modify their perspectives remains to be seen.

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***Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices.* Edited by Hazel Smith.** London and New York: Macmillan Press Ltd and St. Martin’s Press, 2000. 278pp.

Since the end of the Cold War, the themes of democracy, democratic peace, and democratic development have assumed an increasingly central place in international relations scholarship and have produced some controversial conclusions and recommendations. This edited volume adds to that literature — and to those controversies — because it