



Daniel Yergin, *The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations* (New York: Penguin Press, 2020).

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Rapid expansion of the global economy since the Industrial Revolution has stretched natural resources and altered the nature of conflicts. Fossil fuels have been the main contributor to environmental degradation, but they are also the key enablers of economic activity. In an increasingly multipolar world, many countries are trying to extend

their sphere of influence, thus, enhancing the impulse to ensure steady supplies for the future. The need to secure natural resources is creating new alliances and triggering disorder. Moreover, regions with proven energy reserves continue to be embroiled in power struggles. In this book, Daniel Yergin, a Pulitzer award winner for his previous work on oil industry, attempts to explain how the recent developments related to energy markets and climate change will shape the new global order.

A book like this covering various dynamics of modern-day conflicts was essential as the nature of conflict has evolved and encompasses a wide range of factors. It is a rare contribution that has given climate change its due consideration in terms of understanding future clashes. Moreover, many of his assertions have turned out to be true since the publication of this book. The

tussle between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members over production quotas, growing militarisation of South China Sea and the fallout of United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan indeed indicate that instability will persist as both state and non-state actors engage in military confrontations.

The oil embargo imposed on the US after the Middle East war brought economic misery to the States. The severity of the crisis led US officials to introduce new speed limits on highways to bring down fuel consumption in the country. Yergin understandably begins this book by covering the shale oil revolution in the US which has made it an oil independent country. Even before the shale revolution, the US' dependence on Middle Eastern oil had considerably fallen after discovery of oil in Alberta, Canada. The author also explains that the reasons behind Washington's continued engagement in the Middle East are not primarily due to securing oil supplies but for maintaining its influence on the countries that supply the commodity to its rivals.

Yergin discusses a number of scenarios impacting the geopolitical landscape. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Washington's 'Indo-Pacific Strategy', Russia's growing interest in the East and changing energy market dynamics in light of climate change impacts are some of the key topics he refers to. The book covers the hostility between the West and Moscow and how President Putin aims to restore Russia as a great power globally. It explains how the Russian annexation of Crimea was part of the Kremlin's strategy to counter Western influence in the region and bring together countries of the former Soviet Union inside a common economic space under its leadership.

According to Yergin, BRI was launched to counter Washington's 'pivot' to Asia and a key part of the strategy was to march towards the West and expand its economic clout (p.182). In order to contain China, the US is aiming to strengthen economic ties with its traditional partners and the launch of Build Back Better World (B3W) further backs up Yergin's argument. The contentious nature

of the South China Sea was one of the factors behind Chinese investments in Pakistan. The development of Gwadar Port and road networks to connect Xinjiang will provide safer and shorter route for trade between China and majority of its partners. More importantly, Chinese access to Middle Eastern oil will not be hampered by the growing US presence in South East Asia.

Given the intertwined nature of modern conflicts, CPEC's route became controversial as India objected that it passed through disputed territory. CPEC related developments have partially contributed towards increasing clashes in the Jammu & Kashmir region and has forced China to be more assertive against India. The book also highlights how India is strengthening ties with countries like US, Japan and Australia to counter China's rise but he argues that for many countries 'there is advantage to attaching themselves to a rising China' (p.190).

India's territorial disputes with China and Pakistan have a long history and they continue to shape New Delhi's relations with its neighbours. Such disputes are also prevalent in the Middle East. The book gives a historical account of various conflicts in the region and how the discovery of oil elevated its position on the world map. Oil was also a source of conflict within the Middle East. Saddam Hussein was determined to redraw the region's map and seize oil resources of his neighboring countries (p. 214). His ambitions led to the formation of a 34-nation strong coalition to counter Iraq and the resulting conflict has had a lasting impact on Middle East's security dynamics. Further, the book describes how the quest for energy resources turned Middle East into a battleground and adds that recent discoveries have raised the significance of South China Sea. It explains how the region will become more contentious with growing possibilities of a direct conflict between the US and China.

The concluding chapter is titled 'The Disrupted Future' where the author discusses the fragmented global order and a new Cold War. According to him, the world order depends on China and the US who are increasingly at odds. China is challenging US dominance in

every sphere and the Thucydides' Trap is a fitting description for the current state of global affairs. Moreover, Yergin adds that fast paced innovations, the global pandemic and climate change are having considerable influence on international relations. To maintain their dominance, major powers have to adapt to changing trends as new technologies will shape the future map of energy and politics (p. 429).

This book is a useful resource for those interested in understanding the origins of some of the major global conflicts and how the future of our planet will shape up. To limit further deterioration of global peace and order, it is advisable to learn from history while taking scientific evidence and climate change realities into consideration.