

**THE NEW MAP: ENERGY, CLIMATE AND
THE CLASH OF NATIONS**

Ilhan SAGSEN ¹

¹ Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University, 14030 Bolu, Turkey; ilhansagsen@jbu.edu.tr,

ORCID: 0000-0001-6207-7183

Received: 03.01.2021

Accepted: 26.01.2021

Daniel Yergin. The New Map: Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations. New York: Penguin Press 2020. pp. 492.

Daniel Yergin can be accepted as a leading authority on energy, geopolitics and economy. He appeared before the book “The Map” with important books such as “The Prize”, “The Quest” and “Shattered Peace”. Yergin won the Pulitzer Award in 1992 with “The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power”, which focused on the process following the emergence of oil in the USA in the 19th century. His latest book is “The Map: Energy, Climate and The Clash of Nations” published by Penguin Press in 2020.

In his book “The Map”, Yergin examines the changing international system based on energy and geopolitics. The change in the international system has been defined as the new world map. He also states that the coronavirus, which emerged in China in 2020 and spread all over the world, complicates the new map. Within this context, the book tries to make sense of this new map by focusing on some questions such as how has “the shale revolution” changed the US position in the world?, how and why are new cold wars developing between the United States on the one hand, and Russia and China on the other and energy’s role in them?, how is the overall relationship between the US and China changing from “engagement” to “strategic rivalry” as the beginning of the new cold war?, How are unstable the foundations of the Middle East, which currently supplies one third of the world’s total oil and a significant amount of natural gas?, how can the transformation from fossil fuels to renewable energy take place?

Within this framework, the “New Map of America” chapter in the book emphasizes that the unexpected “Shale Revolution” has radically changed the energy geopolitics of the world. Accordingly, the USA has become one of the new geopolitical energy centers with the effect of shale revolution. The Shale revolution has pitted the US against Russia and Saudi Arabia and has also turned the US into one of the world’s largest energy exporters. Despite environmental concerns, particularly regarding the shale gas extraction process, it has created new job opportunities in almost all states in the USA.

In the “Russia’s Map” chapter of the book, it is emphasized that Russia became the “Great Power” again in Putin’s period. Energy constitutes the main motivation of Russia’s geopolitical rise. In this sense, Russia can be defined as an energy superpower. Energy trade and Russia’s power based on energy resources also affect foreign policy. For example, the source of tensions between Russia and Ukraine is natural gas-based. Energy dependence on Russia has strengthened Russia’s hand in foreign policy. On the other hand, the most vulnerable situation for Russia is that the Russian economy is also dependent on energy. Apart from that, from the Russian perspective, the map shows that Russia has turned to the Middle East and developed its relations with China. At this point, China and Russia take a common stance against the Western Hegemony in foreign policy in general and the US hegemony in particular.

The “China’s Map” chapter, first of all, states that China has increased its capacities in every aspect, from military to economy, from technology to politics. Additionally, this chapter emphasizes that China, described as the “workshop of the world”, is the world’s second largest economy, and in this context, this huge industry and economy has a huge energy need. Apart from this, the South China Sea as the most critical oceanic trade route is one of the most important places in China’s map to maintain control over the maritime trade routes. Another issue highlighted in this part of the book is China’s Belt and Road Initiative. According to the book, the two main objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative are to find new markets for its products and to reach new energy and raw materials. It is also discussed whether China will become the new leader in world politics with this project.

According to the chapter of “Maps of the Middle East” in the book, the main determinants of the map of the Middle East are gas and oil. Even gas and oil are defined as the identity of the region. However, the low oil prices that have emerged since 2014 caused a discussion on the future of oil in the region. Especially the low demand experienced in 2020 caused the Middle East economies to be revised and the oil-based economy model to be discussed. The issue is not only about the decrease in demand due to the pandemic or the low oil prices. The biggest challenge facing oil today is the new automobile technology that can be defined as an electric and driverless vehicle.

The chapter called “Roadmap” in the book emphasizes on Auto-tech as a new trillion-dollar industry. This new debate is linked both to climate change, to the future of geopolitics, and to the future of oil. In this context, the electric vehicle is an ontological problem for the global automobile industry. Likewise, this situation poses equally a problem for the world oil industry. Considering that 35% of the world’s oil demand stems from cars and light trucks, the extent of the transformation’s impact can be understood more clearly. In this sense, this part of the book focuses on the auto-tech transformation and its effects on the global economy, jobs, national economies and geopolitics.

The last chapter in the book called as “Climate Map” focuses on the energy transition, green deals, renewable energy and breakthrough technologies. In this sense, climate change caused by humans is accepted as the main determinant of the new map of energy. Climate change-based concerns arising from the increase of natural disasters such as forest fires, drought, torrential rainfalls, coastal flooding, heat waves, melting ice and hurricanes constitute the main

motivation for “Energy Transition”. Within this context, this chapter emphasizes the climate policies powered by research and observation, climate models, political mobility, social activism, financial institutions and deepening anxiety.

Eurasian
Research
Journal
January 2021
Vol. 3, No. 1

The two new topics of discussion in the last two chapters in the book, as new auto-tech industry and climate change, have both been the main accelerators of energy transformation and seem to constitute the main subject of interstate struggle in the upcoming period.

The final word about the book is that, in understandable language, The Map is suitable not only for energy professionals, but also for anyone interested in international systems analysis.