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The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations

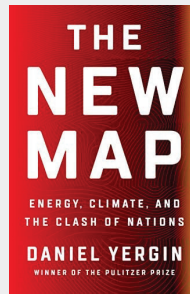
By Daniel Yergin

Penguin Press, 2020, 512 pages, \$38.00, ISBN: 9780698191051

Reviewed by Arife Delibaş, Social Sciences University of Ankara

Daniel Yergin is a preeminent author on energy, geopolitics, and global economy studies. He is the 1992 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, which presents the history of oil and the struggle for wealth and power that has always surrounded it. In two of his previous books, *The Prize* (1990) and *The Quest* (2011), Yergin identifies oil and environmental concerns as the main driving forces of international politics. In his most recent book, *The New Map: Energy, Climate, and the Clash of Nations* (2020), he focuses on shifts in the energy market and geopolitics and explores the likely winners and losers in the coming era. *The New Map* is about the new world order shaped by the dramatic shifts in energy and geopolitics, which Yergin calls the new global map. In it, he seeks answers to the question of where the globe is heading with these changes.

The New Map consists of six main chapters. The first chapter, “America’s New Map,” concentrates on a single question: how has the shale revolution changed America’s position in the world? The most significant energy innovations of the 21st century, shale oil and



gas, have positioned the U.S. as the world’s major exporter. Yergin states that these developments have not only improved the U.S.’ competitiveness in the world economy but are also significant for geopolitics. Yergin argues that the geopolitical consequences of the shale revolution have led to a change in the concept of energy security and new flexibility in foreign policy for the U.S. However, these new dimensions are limited because the energy industry remains globally interconnected.

The next chapter, “Russia’s Map,” focuses on the developments generated by geopolitical energy competition and Putin’s quest to revive Russia as a Great Power. Oil and gas are key drivers of Russia’s rebound and its nation’s economy. Yet this makes the country economically dependent on these resources. Yergin situates Russia’s natural gas supply to Europe at the center of a geopolitical clash. The conflict in Ukraine and unresolved issues originating from the breakup of the Soviet Union are the most important factors in the new antagonism between Russia and the West. Yergin points out that the concept of energy security means different things for Western, Eastern, and Central European

countries. While it is warmly welcomed by the West, it connotes vulnerability and the manipulation of supplies for others.

In chapter 3, “China’s Map,” Yergin focuses on China’s remarkable advances in global economic and military power over the previous two decades, and the energy demands of what will soon become the world’s largest economy. The author discusses the rivalry between China and the U.S. in regard to the South China Sea and the Belt and Road Initiative, arguing that energy represents an essential part of both sites of contention. He also draws attention to the deterioration of the “WTO consensus” and emphasizes the conundrum of increasing dependencies and growing distrust between the two countries due to the impact of COVID-19. Energy plays a significant role in China’s strategy of shifting to Central Asia; remarkably, Yergin examines its strategy as motivated by both energy and security interests.

The following chapter, “Maps of the Middle East,” addresses the historical processes of re-drawing the map of the Middle East from the collapse of empires to the current dynamics of the region. Yergin refers to jihadists such as ISIS and their effects, and seeks to answer the question, how unsteady are the foundations of a Middle East that still supplies a third of the world’s total petroleum and a significant amount of its natural gas? He explores the struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran for predominance across the map, emphasizing the effects of oil as well as ideology, religion and competing interests. In his calculus, the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan are the shaping points of the U.S.’ regional policy in the Middle East. Yergin describes the region not only with maps of frontiers but also of power from oil and gas. His focus continuously circles back to

questions about the future of oil, infusing his analysis of the past with a sense of urgency and relevance.

Evaluating the junction of climate policies and technology and the idea that the future constraint is demand, Yergin examines how transportation –specifically, the automobile sector, which is the one market that seems to guarantee an ongoing need for oil– will change in the “Roadmap” to the future. He discusses gasoline-powered cars versus electric cars, personal ownership of cars versus mobility services, and people-operated cars versus robotic driverless cars. Yergin evaluates all these choice points as a battle between technologies and business models for market share, as all of these new alternatives are serious threats to oil. Yergin states that oil is no longer a leader in the automotive sector, but that change will take some time.

The last chapter, “Climate Map,” focuses on the climate issue, which Yergin considers to be a determinant for the new energy map. The main starting point of the chapter is how the momentum of climate policies will transform the energy system. The author draws attention to the political and economic challenges to a lower-carbon future. He focuses on the question, how will the “energy transition” from fossil fuels to renewables play out? Yergin takes time to discuss the positive and negative aspects of renewables. Advancing various technologies will take time and money, and energy transition means different things to different nations. Yergin stresses the idea that geopolitics is part of the new energy mix due to global competition, globalization, and the interdependence of the supply chain.

Yergin’s general conclusions in *The New Map* are that energy, especially oil and gas, will continue to be an essential part of geopolitics

in the post-coronavirus world and that the main driving force today is climate and mobilization around it rather than energy security. Oil will maintain its preeminent position as a global commodity but will also play a central role in environmental and climate debates.

The New Map offers a detailed perspective on energy, geopolitics, great power competition, and the environment by connecting historical information with current developments. The perspective Yergin offers is far from pedantic and proceeds as if it were an engaging story—a continuation from certain starting points

found in his previous books: the origins of the new Cold War, the ongoing intermingling of oil and geopolitics, and fragmented globalization. Therefore, those familiar with Yergin's previous works can see where and how the lines of thought found there evolved into and throughout this book. Yergin has developed a historical, global, and strategic perspective and writes with mastery in describing where the world is heading and the direction of possible changes. In a nutshell, *The New Map* is a good beginner's book, especially for those interested in the role of climate in shaping the future of energy.

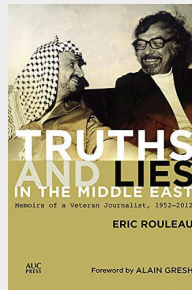
Truths and Lies in the Middle East: Memoirs of a Veteran Journalist, 1952-2012

By Eric Rouleau

The American University in Cairo Press, 326 Pages, £24,95, ISBN: 9789774169069

Reviewed by Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander, Inspire Me Foundation

Numerous books have been written analyzing the various contours of the Palestinian problem. These include native accounts and documentation by non-Palestinians of the variegated dimensions of the Palestinian conflict. But an account of the conflict by a native of the region, who documents, describes, and deliberates on different aspects of the Palestinian problem and its impact on neighboring countries is quite rare. Eric Rouleau's memoirs, which span over six decades, is an eyewitness account of the politics and important events as they unfolded in the Middle East. The canvass of the memoir encompasses the whole region, but the Palestinian problem and its related issues take center stage.



In the “Foreword,” Alain Gresh introduces Rouleau as an Egyptian Jew who was exiled from his homeland after the creation of Israel. Although he is a Jew, the Jewish community considered Rouleau an outsider due to his initiatives to reconcile Israelis/Jews and Palestinians/Muslims. As a journalist,

Rouleau documents how the creation of Israel resulted in an escalation of problems between Jews and Muslims in Egypt, where he was threatened and labeled as a Zionist and Communist. Concurrent with the creation of Israel, the Cold War era set in, and the newly independent countries of the Third World sought refuge either in capitalist or communist camps led by the U.S. or the USSR, respectively. As an emerging power in the Arab