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Energy Security in the Era of Climate Change: The Asia-Pacific Experience edited by

Luca Anceschi and Jonathan Symons (Energy, Climate and the Environment Series).

Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012. Pp. xvii + 299; index. £60.00 (hardback). ISBN 978 0

230 27987 2.

Energy security is becoming an increasingly significant issue in relation to climate change, as international agreement struggles to combat national priorities. This collection brings this tension to the fore through an examination of the ways in which energy security and climate change interact at the global and national level. The aim is to examine ‘how energy security policies are, will and ideally should be transformed in the light of scientific evidence that many widely used sources of energy contribute to dangerous climate change.’ (p.3) The book is divided into three sections examining concepts, national cases and global governance respectively.

Sections One and Three consider the relationship between energy security and climate change, finding it to be challenged by the persistence of national interest. In Chapter 1, Mayer and Schouten question the utility of the concept of energy security, arguing that ‘pursuing it threatens its very aim.’ (p. 13) Culture and tradition also shape climate change efforts, as Lister (Chapter 2) argues with regard to energy efficiency efforts where there is a social and historical bias against reducing energy demand, despite the relatively low costs. Falk (Chapter 13) argues that climate change is forcing a re-examination of concept of energy security as it ‘respond[s] to the increasing complexity of the physical and social world that humans are constructing’ (p. 253). Taking this further, Camilleri (Chapter 14) argues that the development of a process in climate negotiations requires recognition alongside measurement of

outcomes. The message of these two sections is that the steps being taken to address climate change at the global level are impacting on and clashing with national conceptions of energy security.

The concepts outlined are explained through case studies in Section Two identifying how energy security and climate policies interact at the national level. The range of cases examined provides an illustrative mix, from energy intensive developing states (China and India) through to energy exporters (Australia and Russia). Each chapter examines key developments and priorities in both energy security and climate policy. The picture that emerges is a complex one, but demonstrates that in all cases energy concerns are being prioritised, with economic and political constraints shaping decision-making. Chapter 10 (Anceschi) on Central Asia provides an interesting microcosm of wider tensions, bringing together energy exporters and importers in the same region. Despite shared historical experiences and contemporary environmental challenges, collective regional cooperation is limited by domestic political priorities.

The cases examined and the conceptual analyses in this collection provide a compelling argument for treating energy security as an important element in shaping attempts to address climate change. The collection achieves the aim of detailing how concerns over energy security and climate change interact, pointing to the difficulties involved in overcoming existing patterns. The challenge in doing so is noted by Diesendorf (Chapter 4) who argues that the compatibility of energy security and climate change ‘depends on the definition of “energy security” we choose, the kind of society we aspire to, globally and nationally, and the level of risks we are prepared to take.’ (p. 83) Although the collection provides strong evidence of national and global

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compatibility of climate change and energy security, this would have been strengthened by greater consideration of regional approaches to these issues, incorporating the role of regional bodies (for example APEC and ASEAN) play in shaping ongoing developments.

In bringing these two significant areas of concern together this book will be of use to students and academics working in these areas, through its detailed case-studies and conceptual analysis of the challenges involved in matching energy security and climate change goals.

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