

BOOK REVIEWS

The New Continentalism: Energy and Twenty-First Century Eurasian Geopolitics. By Kent E. Calder. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. 416 pp. \$35 (paper).

Rarely does a book challenge both realist and liberal international relations theory while seemingly bolstering both at the same time. Kent Calder's *The New Continentalism* does exactly that by focusing on the intersection of energy and geopolitics in Eurasia. Calder argues that increasing energy interdependence between Eurasian petrostates (the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia) and energy-insecure Asian consumers (China, India, Japan, and South Korea) is contributing to major shifts in international affairs. International relations scholars have long pointed to the impending decline of the United States and emergence of China as the next transformation in the international order. Calder has provided compelling insight into the mechanics of that shift with a much-needed emphasis on energy in structuring the international political economy. This book is not about China's rise, but its preeminent position on a Eurasian continent quickly becoming a powerful political-economic entity.

Energy is the force behind this "new continentalism" because of the high degree of resource complementarity on the continent. The massive reserves of hydrocarbons in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia along with rapid and continuing growth in China and India provide the impetus for regional cooperation. The declining US role in the region—particularly post-Iraq and Afghanistan—creates the space for a political-economic transformation, one guided by energy relations between Eurasian states. The challenge that Calder grapples with throughout the book is explaining these energy relations as resulting from more than market forces or globalization. Market forces are critical to understanding this growing continentalism, but they are indeterminate, and only tell part of the story about how Eurasia is being transformed.

The missing variable is geopolitics. Put simply, Calder argues that in the post-Cold War world geography is once again preeminent in international relations. Energy reserves in Eurasia are either landlocked or need to pass through narrow straits to reach external mar-

kets. Transporting those resources is therefore highly contingent on cooperative economic relations among nations in this volatile region of the world. Russia has the ability to control much of the energy flow out of Central Asia due to existing infrastructure, though relations between Central Asian nations and China or India can potentially change that, with pipeline prospects already being discussed. India lacks access to Middle Eastern oil via overland routes because of its tumultuous relationship with neighboring Pakistan. China's "Open Up the West" campaign would benefit immensely from overland pipelines rather than relying on shipments from coastal cities. North American readers should have no trouble appreciating the importance of geopolitics to energy. Alberta's oil sands developers and many US Republicans have been frustrated at every turn by opposition from the US government and the provincial government of British Columbia to oil pipelines that would allow Albertan oil to reach US or Chinese markets.

Market forces fail to explain why this phenomenon is only recently beginning to take shape. Calder explains this timing by pointing to six critical junctures that fatefully determined how Eurasian relations evolved. The first was the 1973 oil crisis that led to the nationalization of Western holdings in the Arab world. Second, the Four Modernizations beginning in 1978 provided the basis for unrivaled Chinese economic growth in the decades to follow. Third was the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which reoriented the petrostate away from the West. Fourth, India's 1991 financial crisis and economic reforms stimulated Indian growth. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 is the fifth, and was integral to opening up Central Asia and reinventing Russia. Finally, Vladimir Putin's coming to power in 1999 and his aggressive energy strategy transformed Russian energy policy. These junctures are what have created the political conditions for the rapid increase in Eurasian energy interdependence that has emerged over the past two decades. Calder analyzes the impacts of these events on the domestic politics of all the major producer and consumer nations in the region, and in doing so masterfully bridges the divide between international relations and comparative politics, between the global and the domestic, to provide a convincing account of how these pivotal events changed domestic incentives, and eventually relations between states.

Analyzing the strategic and policy implications of this new continentalism is the most challenging objective that Calder set for himself. The strategic outcome of Eurasian interdependence is mixed,

Calder argues, as concurrently a source of coordination between states, and also of instability and potential conflict. It is difficult to demonstrate a causal connection between potential sources of tension to actual military policies or conflict—a challenge that is compounded when considering large-scale geostrategic shifts with numerous possible future implications. Predicting the strategic implications of such complex interdependence in such a volatile region is a tall order, and more work is necessary beyond this book, which admirably lays the foundation for a new way of thinking about Eurasian geopolitics.

Especially compelling is Calder's discussion of the implications of Eurasian interdependence for the liberal economic order and US global influence. Reduced dependence on the United States means that the power of the United States to set the normative agenda and to shape governing institutions will wane. The liberal values considered part and parcel of economic growth are not as salient in these mainly authoritarian states. The maintenance of a liberal world order, with all of its ideals about human rights and individual liberties, may well be dependent on US capability to navigate a rapidly changing international order in which it can no longer rely on its economic and military might. As Calder puts it, "the emergence of an interactive, increasingly continentalist Eurasia is quietly transforming the nature of international affairs, reintroducing realist, geopolitical concerns in a postideological world that had fitfully tried for nearly two decades to transcend them." Yet much of this continentalism is underscored by liberal market forces in a world in which the United States remains unrivaled in global influence. What Calder has accomplished is to put Eurasian energy at the forefront of discussion about the next critical juncture for a global economy that is in a prolonged state of crisis.

■ Justin Alger

*Department of Political Science
University of British Columbia*

A Critical Introduction to Mao. Edited by Timothy Cheek. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 392 pp. \$27.99 (paper).

Recent protests in China over the Diaoyu Islands have shown that for many Chinese, Mao Zedong is still a polarizing figure. Some hold him in unrelenting high regard as the national father, the hero of the