

By 2030, the Asia Pacific region will account for two-thirds of the world's energy demand growth. This issue of the *Journal of Energy Security* does not examine the limitless factoids bolstering this emerging reality but looks more closely at the security implications of getting energy resources and power to Asian markets. These issues are examined not only from the perspective of Asia itself as a region, but perhaps most importantly the impact that these developments are already having among and between Asian neighbors and on the maritime thoroughfares that in many cases connect them to one another. The world is certainly not lacking in complexity; as Asia goes further afield to source the resources it burns at home to power its economies and to provide for its citizens such developments bring uncommon neighbors in touch with one another. China's forays into Venezuela and Iran are two cases in point where Chinese interests directly clash with US policy and our own national security interests. In short, the resource nationalism that drives many of these countries' policies brings them in closer proximate conflict with one another increases the risk of energy-related instabilities. How we deal with these resource-driven instabilities and how we prepare to protect and militate against them will come to define our collective world in the decades to come if not sooner.

As the ASEAN Summit which concluded in November demonstrated, resource competition sometimes makes strange bedfellows. Who would have imagined, nearly forty years after the end of the Vietnam War, that the US and Vietnam, along with Japan and India would be pulling together to offset China's policies regarding resource extraction in the South China Sea? Who would have imagined forty years ago that by 2025 India's population would eclipse that of China's as mighty Asia surges ahead with economic growth and expansion? Who would have imagined a Japan, bloodied by its spring earthquake and accompanying tsunami that would be forced to seemingly turn away from nuclear power generation and in doing so make itself less not more energy secure? This list of seeming improbabilities debunks the adage that the more things change the more they stay the same.

Asian energy security is not exclusively a China issue but the region's security is almost always either directly or indirectly impacted by this nation. China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a clear case in point. In an effort to thwart growing Islamic radicalism, China is joined in the ranks to counter this collectively perceived threat by other SCO members. In doing so, it is expanding its energy interests in very real ways across Central Asia while making friends with wary Central Asian states. And as China expands its own domestic nuclear power industry, Artem V. Goncharuk- our most welcome Russian *JES* contributor-asks rhetorically whether global nuclear technology providers are not short-selling themselves by creating a new commercial Chinese nuclear rival in the future?

We round out this issue with an examination of Saudi oil policy and are asked to consider whether we are in the midst of a fundamental paradigm shift in the Saudi provision of this most ubiquitous transportation fuel. Has Saudi Arabia abdicated its position as the world's biggest oil producer, global oil price-setter, and the world's most important swing-producer out of a conscious decision to 'get while the going is good' where higher oil prices translate into increasing its national revenue stream for a burgeoning population? Or are global oil markets hitting their heads against a glass ceiling defined by the Saudis' geologic and technological inability to produce more? The consequences of this latter development, if true, are chilling for oil dependent US and European economies mired in unemployment and slow-growth scenarios for the foreseeable future. Can we imagine a world, forty years from now, when China's Communist Party has been thrown out of office due to an inability to fuel its oil-based transportation infrastructure? Can we imagine a world, forty years from now, with a fundamentally different Middle East grasping at its last straws of oil? For much of the world, including Asia, it appears we are being swallowed alive by forces beyond our control. But the onus of responsibility rests with ourselves as it is our time and our burden to carry: to consider the improbable, to envision the implausible, and to prepare for the unlikely in charting a more secure energy future.

editor@iags.org