

Publication of “Energy Geopolitics”

Ken Koyama, PhD
Chief Economist, Managing Director
The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan

On August 12, my book “Energy Geopolitics” (in Japanese) was published by Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc. The book focuses on energy issues regarding the Ukraine crisis and takes up simultaneous hikes in various energy prices, the impacts of disruptions to energy supply from Russia, growing interest in energy security and the destabilization of global energy governance, covering energy geopolitics issues as indicated by the title.

The book follows my previous book “Dramatically Changing International Energy Situation” published on June 23. As introduced in “A Japanese Perspective on the International Energy Landscape (590),” I began to write the previous book in the spring of 2021 in an initial bid to analyze mainly the huge impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, accelerated global initiatives for carbon neutrality, and energy and environment policies of the U.S. Biden administration launched in January 2021. In the second half of 2021, however, energy prices began to skyrocket globally. Furthermore, Russia launched its invasion into Ukraine in February 2022, shaking the international energy situation. I then included these “new” events into the book. In contrast, I designed my latest book “Energy Geopolitics” to focus on the Ukraine crisis and take up relevant energy geopolitics issues. I drafted this book in 10-plus days between late April and the holiday-studded Golden Week in early May. As a matter of course, I did my best to update the book to reflect the Ukraine crisis trend up until I finished the book on July 13.

In a sense, the Ukraine crisis seems to exert great influence to turn around the global energy situation. After studying energy issues for more than 30 years since my entry into the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan, I think that the Ukraine crisis has extremely huge impacts that amount to those of the first oil crisis in 1973. In fact, the book points out and analyzes numerous similarities or affinities between the Ukraine crisis and the first oil crisis, including pre-crisis energy price spikes, heavy dependence on some specific energy supply sources, serious concerns about energy price spikes and physical energy shortages, and war and economic sanctions. Due to these similarities or affinities, both crises have produced a great global trend of energy security enhancement and made energy geopolitics a key matter of concern to the world. Another similarity between the first oil crisis and the Ukraine crisis is that energy price spikes and accelerated inflation led to European and U.S. interest rate hikes as a destabilizing factor for the global economy. As indicated by the maxim that history repeats itself, the world may face a grave, serious situation similar to the 1970s situation where the oil crises rattled the international community.

To discuss the looming unprecedented changes in the international energy situation in a multifaceted manner under the abovementioned awareness, the book is composed of the following chapters:

Opening Chapter: International Energy Situation and Geopolitics
Chapter 1: Energy Price Spikes since 2021 – Destabilized International Energy Markets
Chapter 2: Impacts of Ukraine Crisis and Geopolitics
Chapter 3: Energy Security Growing Significant
Chapter 4: Ukraine Crisis and Decarbonization – Their Impacts and Challenges
Chapter 5: Current Status and Challenges of Global Energy Governance
Chapter 6: Geopolitics Influencing International Energy Situation – Major Power Relations
Chapter 7: Major Powers Influencing Energy Geopolitics – Their National Situations and Significance
Chapter 8: Japan’s Challenges and Relevant Strategy

The opening chapter describes energy issues as essentially international ones and defines the concepts of geopolitics, energy security and global energy governance in preparation for discussing the relationship between the international energy situation and geopolitics as the theme of this book. Subsequently, Chapter 1 summarizes the characteristics of and background factors behind the simultaneous spikes in various energy prices that emerged and escalated even before the Ukraine crisis. It then discusses accelerating inflation, interest rate hikes and other issues as adverse effects of or measures against price hikes.

Chapter 2 summarizes Western sanctions on the Russian energy sector and Russian energy supply cuts that have shaken the international energy situation since Russia’s invasion into Ukraine. It also points out similarities or affinities between the Ukraine crisis and the first oil crisis and their meaning and describes how dramatically the Ukraine crisis has turned around energy geopolitics. Chapter 3 then provides the entire picture of energy security issues and points out that the Ukraine crisis elevated energy security to a top priority and led to the fundamental enhancement of energy security measures mainly in Europe that depends heavily on Russian energy supply. It also summarizes Europe’s comeback to nuclear energy and other impacts of energy security enhancement on the international energy situation.

Chapter 4 analyzes how initiatives for decarbonization as an important long-term challenge will be affected as energy security policies grow important rapidly. While future developments regarding decarbonization are extremely uncertain, the chapter indicates that the impacts on decarbonization initiatives may vary depending on whether such initiatives are for the short or medium to long term, how national conditions are and how economic growth and energy price hikes will be. Chapter 5 defines global energy governance as governance and control functions and mechanisms to stabilize international energy markets and maintain energy security. Then, it analyzes (1) the history of surplus production capacity management in the international oil market and (2) the history of power use under national energy security strategies, clarifying the current status and challenges of global energy governance.

Chapters 6 and 7 are closely related to each other. While Chapter 6 identifies today’s energy geopolitics challenges based on relations among the United States, China, Russia, the Middle East and other major actors that exert influence on energy geopolitics, Chapter 7 analyzes the major actors’ significance for energy geopolitics from four perspectives – energy market supply and demand, international politics, relations with the Ukraine crisis and relations with Japan. Based on discussions from the opening chapter to Chapter 7, Chapter 8 provides recommendations for 10 items of Japan’s relevant strategy with the significance of energy geopolitics taken into account. At a time when the

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Ukraine crisis has rapidly made the future international energy situation uncertain and forced the world to embark on an uncharted voyage, I will be pleased very much if this book that summarizes discussions under the contemporary theme of energy geopolitics makes some contributions to readers' understanding of energy issues.

Contact: report@tky.ieej.or.jp

The back issues are available at the following URL

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