

Session 21: Infrastructure Protection, Natural Disasters, and Terrorist Threats

(The first three readings for this session are really short. Skim the last one that is relatively long.)

Discussion Questions:

- What impact would disrupted energy supply have on national security, domestic services, and economic vitality? (Draw on the analyses by Cornell 2009 and Perl 2008)
- What characteristics of energy infrastructure make it especially prone to natural disasters and terrorist disasters?
- Why do both Cornell (2009) and Perl (2008) think that privatization and deregulation of energy infrastructure make it harder to protect energy infrastructure? What do you think their call for public-private cooperation in this aspect?
- How is the world energy market intertwined with international politics? Give a few examples that illustrate behaviors of exporting countries and importing countries, and changes in world oil market.
- What do you think of other measures suggested by Cornell (2009), Perl (2008) and Yergin (2006), such as investment in infrastructure maintenance, enhancing refining capacity, diversification of supplies, and improvement in information exchanges?
- What are some of the key international and regional organizations mandated with coordinating energy policies? How effective do you think they are? What other critical countries or actors should be included?
- Yergin (2006) pointed out that in the United States, the lines of responsibilities for energy security are far from clear. Liberthal and Herberg (2006) said China's energy security policies are more a collection of ad hoc initiatives. What do these observations tell you about the decision-making regarding energy in individual countries? How does that pose further challenges to international coordination?
- Different countries may have different understandings of energy security and interpret the intentions of other major players in the world oil market differently. (See for example page 71 in Yergin (2006), and page 9 in Liberthal and Herberg (2006). What are the divergences and what are the common interests among countries? What measures can be taken to promote understanding and cooperation? Are fundamental conflicts that cannot be mitigated?

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