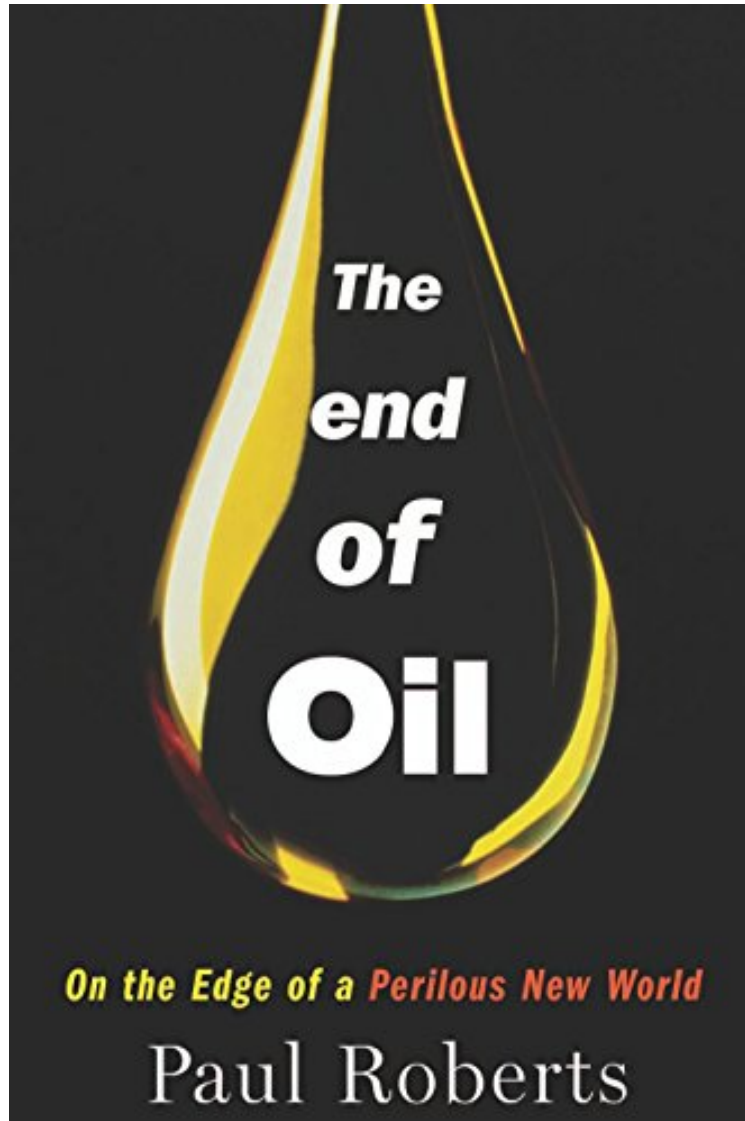


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## The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World

*Paul Roberts*

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**Paul Roberts : The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Most informative, well writtenBy John A. LeraasA prequel to "The End of Food", this is a most informative book that discusses our dependence on oil; its history, its politics and its economics. After reading this piece there is much that is more easily understood. Much of international politics and economics is more clear. The development of new energy sources and their tardiness, and the dependence of many sectors of the economy on oil is more transparent.Roberts' sequel, "The End of Food" is highly recommended after you read this book as the interdependence of these two great industries is amazing.0 of 0 people found the following

review helpful. It was a great book when it was written. By Mario It was a great book when it was written, but it is now (2017) outdated. They focus too much on hydrogen cell cars, which has been completely replaced by electric cars...2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Makes analysis of the contemporary energy order accessible. By Christopher R When I decided to read this book, I did so with the expectation of learning something only after wading through a great degree of partisan political rhetoric. It did not take me long to realize that Mr. Roberts' book is not what I had expected. He makes this complex issue accessible to the layman looking to familiarize himself with not only oil, but the energy economy. Rather choose a side and engage in partisan sniping, he tells the good, the bad, and the ugly of the policies advocated by every party involved in the energy debate. Not only does he analyze our present situation, but he also studies our several possible ways forward into a new energy economy. If I were pressed to make a complaint, it would be that I read the original hardcover edition of the book. A lot of the speculation regarding "worst case" scenarios involve \$50 a barrel oil. Now that we are nearly \$100 past that worst case, the educated speculation portrayed in the book should be coming to pass in the market. I would like to see either a completely updated 2008 edition or at least one with an updated preface.

Petroleum is now so deeply entrenched in our economy, our politics, and our personal expectations that even modest efforts to phase it out are fought tooth and nail by the most powerful forces in the world: companies and governments that depend on oil revenues; the developing nations that see oil as the only means to industrial success; and a Western middle class that refuses to modify its energy-dependent lifestyle. But within thirty years, by even conservative estimates, we will have burned our way through most of the oil that is easily accessible. And well before then, the side effects of an oil-based society—economic volatility, geopolitical conflict, and the climate-changing impact of hydrocarbon pollution—will render fossil fuels an all but unacceptable solution. How will we break our addiction to oil? And what will we use in its place to maintain a global economy and political system that are entirely reliant on cheap, readily available energy? Brilliantly reported from around the globe, *The End of Oil* brings the world situation into fresh and dramatic focus for business and general readers alike. Roberts talks to both oil optimists and oil pessimists, delves deep into the economics and politics of oil, considers the promises and pitfalls of alternatives, and shows that, although the world energy system has begun its epoch-defining transition, disruption and violent dislocation are almost assured if we do not take a more proactive stance. With the topicality and readability of *Fast Food Nation* and the scope and trenchant analysis of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, this is a vitally important book for the new century.

.com *The End of Oil* is a "geologic cautionary tale for a complacent world accustomed to reliable infusions of cheap energy." The book centers around one irrefutable fact: the global supply of oil is being depleted at an alarming rate. Precisely how much accessible (not to mention theoretical) oil remains is debatable, but even conservative estimates mark the peak of production in decades rather than centuries. Which energy sources will replace oil, who will control them, and how disruptive to the current world order the transition from one system to the next will be are just a few of the big questions that Paul Roberts attempts to answer in this timely book. As Roberts makes abundantly clear, the major oil players in the world wield their enormous economic and political power in order to maintain the status quo. Of course, they get plenty of help from the tens of millions of consumers, particularly in the U.S. and Europe, who guzzle oil as if there is an unlimited supply. And this demand shows no sign of abating—nearly half of the world's population lives without the benefits of fossil fuels and they desperately want to be among the haves. In countries such as China and India, where energy systems are already breaking down, Roberts discusses how they are looking to oil to fuel their race for development, in many cases ignoring environmental considerations altogether. Though there is much to be pessimistic about, Roberts does uncover some positive developments, such as the race for alternative energy sources, notably hydrogen fuel cells, which could help to ease us off of our oil dependence before a full-blown energy crisis occurs. No one book could cover every aspect of what Roberts calls "arguably the most serious crisis ever to face industrial society," but *The End of Oil* is a remarkably informative and balanced introduction to this pressing subject. --Shawn Carkonen From Publishers Weekly All economic activity is rooted in the energy economy, which means a substantial portion of the current world economy is linked to the production and distribution of oil. But what will happen, Roberts asks, when the well starts to run dry? Walking readers through the modern energy economy, he suggests that grim prospect may not be as far off as we'd like to think and points out how political unrest could disrupt the world's oil supply with disastrous results. But that could be the least of our worries; some of Roberts's most persuasive passages describe an almost inevitable future shaped by global warming, especially as rapidly industrializing countries like China begin to replicate the pollution history of the U.S. Some signs of hope are visible, he believes, especially in Europe, but the stumbling progress of potential alternatives such as hydrogen power or fuel cells is additional cause for concern. And though the current administration's energy policy gets plenty of criticism, Roberts (a regular contributor to Harper's) saves some of his harshest barbs for American consumers, described as "the least energy-conscious people on the planet." If the government won't create stricter fuel efficiency standards, he argues, blame must be placed equally on our eagerness to drive around in gas-guzzling SUVs and on

corporate lobbying. Stressing the dire need to act now to create any meaningful long-term effect, this measured snapshot of our oil-dependent economy forces readers to confront unsettling truths without sinking into stridency. This book may very well become for fossil fuels what *Fast Food Nation* was to food or *High and Mighty* to SUVs. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* This dense compendium explores a troubling paradox: the more energy we use, the richer we become, but spiralling consumption also speeds us closer to the economic havoc that will result from the depletion of oil and gas reserves. For political, cultural, and economic reasons (our current energy infrastructure is worth ten trillion dollars), alternatives such as hydrogen, solar, and wind power resist widespread development. Roberts's outspoken but even-handed account closes with four crystal-ball scenarios. In the rosiest, breakthroughs in renewable energy spur a decline in fossil-fuel use; in the direst, Arab resentment at the overthrow of Saddam Hussein leads to the downfall of the Saudi and Kuwaiti regimes, the price of oil rises to fifty dollars a barrel, and the unprepared American economy is left in tatters. Copyright copy; 2005 *The New Yorker*