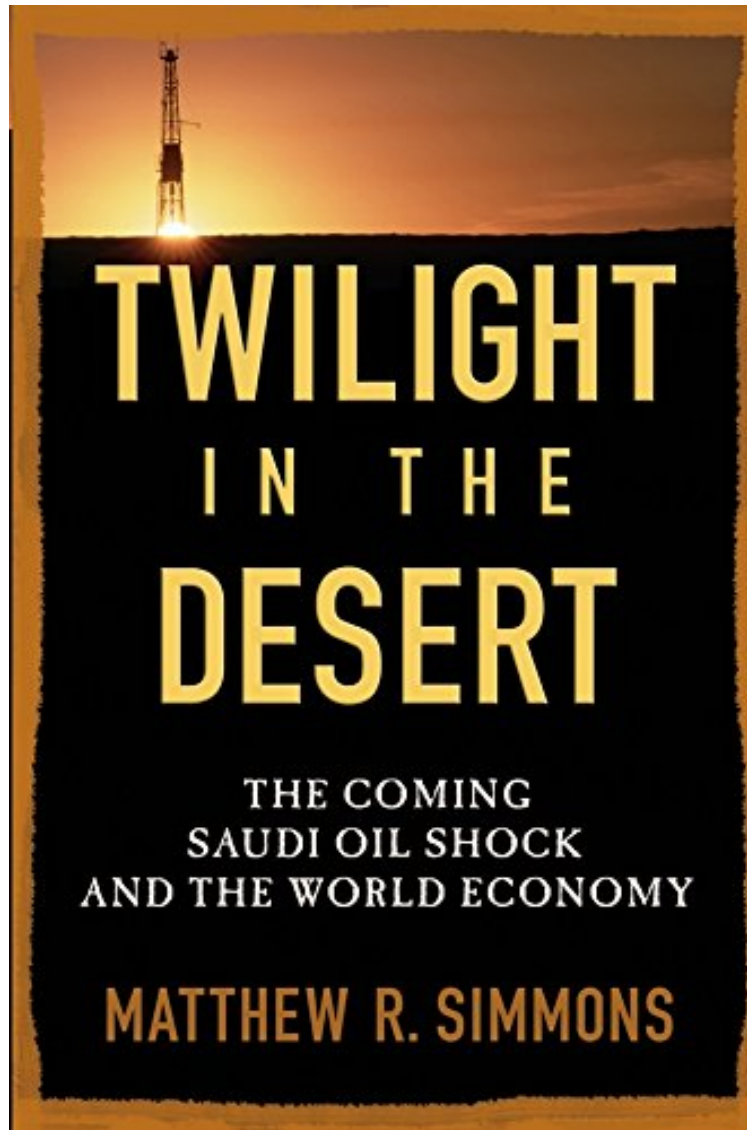


# Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy

*Matthew R. Simmons*

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**Matthew R. Simmons : Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OUR LEADERS HAVE FAILED US By SilverMalthusianMr Matt Simmons has written a superb book. I have been interested in oil for only the last 4 years, I remember the oil spike in the first half of 2008. I will never forget watching petrol prices go up 2 cents a litre every week for those 6 months,

thinking that the world had reached peak oil. Now, in December 2011, I realise that the world has not peaked yet, but we are very close. Conventional oil peaked in 2005-2007, depending on whose statistics you look at the GFC bought us some time, after all oil demand does drop during recessions. We are now more more reliant on non-conventional oil sources such as deep water tar sands. My research tells me that we will reach peak oil in 2011-2014, assuming no recession. Mr Simmons book was predominantly researched in 2004, however his findings are more relevant today than 7 years ago. This book predominantly takes a look at Saudi Arabia's oil exploration production history the likelihood of increased/plateaued oil production in the future. Mr Simmons takes a deep look into the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) technical reports on Saudi Arabia. Putting it simply, Saudi Arabia has a handful of super giants, namely: Ghawar, Abqaiq, Safaniya, Berri, Marjan, Zuluf Shaybah. All of these fields started producing in the 40s, 50s 60s except for Shaybah whose oil production started in 1998. These are old, tired ever maturing fields. All of these oil fields were discovered a long time ago the last major oil discovery was Shaybah in 1967. Saudi Arabia has already reached peak oil in 1981, however this was an artificial peak as Saudi Arabia was acting "responsibly" during the Iranian revolution the beginning of the Iraq-Iran war by increasing production to make up for the shortages from these nations. Iran peaked in oil production in 1978 at 6 million barrels a day is now only producing 3-3.5 million barrels a day. Mr Simmons goes deeply into the process of oil production how important it is to retain pressure in the fields to keep from the fields peaking prematurely. The author also goes into detail about the decision to either maximise the ultimate recovery of the reserves versus maximising return on investment from the field, which is usually not aligned together. Mr Simmons also explains why the artificial increase in production during 1979-1981, may have caused irreversible damage to the oil fields that will never be known. Mr Simmons also discusses Saudi Aramco's ambitious over optimistic claims that they can in the near future produce 15 million barrels a day maintain this output for 50 years. Mr Simmons also goes into other super giant oil fields around the world how they declined. The University of Kuwait came up with an analysis of global oil production in 2010 projecting that OPEC production will not peak until 2026. I believe this to be unrealistic. Venezuela peaked in 1998, Indonesia 1977, Iran 1978, Algeria Kuwait are now in decline there is political turmoil in Libya Iraq. It seems to me after reading this book that Saudi Arabia may get to 12 million barrels a day of production, if it is lucky, however maintaining today's high level of around 8.4 million barrels a day, let alone reaching 12 million barrels a day, for years or decades to come will be a tall order. Mr Simmons ends the book with possible solutions that are all logical including conservation, local food production consumption, liberating the workforce curtailing globalisation. Some people have labeled Mr Simmons as a doomsayer, however he is making a completely logical argument offering solutions, so I find this label ridiculous. I, however believe that it is too late. We should of been making these decisions transitioning to other sources of energy with a lead time of at least 20 years. History has shown that it takes more or less 40 years to completely transition from one energy source to another, a gradual process that requires a lead time. The stone age did not end because we ran out of stones, the bronze age did not end because we ran out of bronze, however the oil age will end it is most likely it will bring our industrial civilisation down with it. We are hopelessly unprepared. I highly recommend this book if this topic interests you in particular if you would like to learn what is involved in exploring for producing oil. Mr Simmons has done an incredible job of explaining these concepts to the layman. If Mr Simmons was still alive today, I would thank him for his contribution in this field.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Informative  
By Steve Dietrich  
It's not a quick or light read, but a very worthwhile one. Simmons methodically takes the reader through the numbers to reach conclusions that have the potential to seriously alter our economy and that of the middle east . With the current political unrest (much of it inspired by outsiders from radical groups around the globe) a change in the economies of the more stable middle east nations may have dire consequences.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Well researched, but fails to "connect the dots"  
By M. Gaffey  
Mr. Simmons' purpose in writing this book was to assess how long Saudi Arabia will be able to sustain its present rate of oil production. His assessment required extensive detective work as well as "reading between the lines" of Saudi Arabia's official statements because the Saudi's are highly secretive about their oil fields and they do not make any of their production data available to the public. Mr. Simmons concluded that Saudi Arabia will not be able to sustain its current production rates much longer and will soon enter a period of rapid decline. Mr. Simmons' thesis is that conditions experienced at individual oil wells can be extrapolated to determine the level of depletion of the entire oil field in which the wells are located. As background, Mr. Simmons used old, but comprehensive, data on Saudi oil fields that were compiled prior to when Saudi Arabia nationalized its oil industry. This data establishes which Saudi oil fields are the largest and most productive. Mr. Simmons then analyzed more recent papers written on individual wells within the most important Saudi oil fields to see if these wells were exhibiting signs consistent with oil field depletion. For example, oil wells with problems such as "gas caps" or "high water cuts" can be an indication that the entire oil field is in an advanced state of depletion. Mr. Simmons concluded that problems indicative of depletion are occurring at wells in Saudi's most productive oil fields. Mr. Simmons also noted that production increases at smaller fields and the development of newly discovered fields have been barely sufficient to offset the declines at the older fields. Mr. Simmons is a formidable researcher, but his writing skills leave something to be desired. Rather than condense the complex technical information into coherent conclusions, he simply repeats the same facts over and over, apparently hoping that the

reader will "connect the dots" for himself. Because of this, I probably missed many of the points Mr. Simmons was trying to make. Better organization and summary of the complex material could have made the book half as long as twice as understandable.

Twilight in the Desert reveals a Saudi oil and production industry that could soon approach a serious, irreversible decline. In this exhaustively researched book, veteran oil industry analyst Matthew Simmons draws on his three-plus decades of insider experience and more than 200 independently produced reports about Saudi petroleum resources and production operations. He uncovers a story about Saudi Arabia's troubled oil industry, not to mention its political and societal instability, which differs sharply from the globally accepted Saudi version. It's a story that is provocative and disturbing, based on undeniable facts, but until now never told in its entirety. Twilight in the Desert answers all readers' questions about Saudi oil and production industries with keen examination instead of unsubstantiated posturing, and takes its place as one of the most important books of this still-young century.