

**WORLD ON THE EDGE: HOW TO PREVENT ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
ECONOMIC COLLAPSE BY LESTER R. BROWN 2011. EARTHSCAN.  
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**Reviewed by**  
*Mazhar Farid Chishti*

**Abstract**

*The title of the book is very scary but brilliantly explains the connections between food and energy. War for fresh water, devastating weather moves, mud sliding, and insecurity of food are the topics and detail shows the grip of the writer. The first half of the book explains glitches of the world but the second presents an improbable picture.*

Ehrlich, P. R. (1971) explored the fact that the food, energy and water catastrophes will be among some important problem of future and today we are witnessing. He wrote in a brilliant way which made a significant amount of impact that time and drew attention of the renders. Pimentel, D. et al. (2007) pointed out the increasing population and its impact of energy and food and summed up that world must look for alternative energy sources

In this book the author exemplify the low-spirited picture of lessening natural resources. Food shortages are the most vital challenges to global economy and emerge as a new precedence for nations rather than depleting fossil fuel. Unrest in Middle East and further hike will deteriorate the situation. Certainly, hike in fuel prices will shift the burden on future generations. Food supply will never be able to meet the growing population. In developing and under developed countries where already situation is alarming cannot meet the desired growth rate.

As global trends changes, government policy will change which will defiantly create winners and losers, and for those who are

aligned with changes will welcome these changes. Investment in Sectors like food and energy are very much interested in policy change because of their huge profits. And other enormous profit taking sectors are like architecture, agriculture transportation. Brown, the writer is very much clear about the approaching changes in policy but it's a matter of when not why.

A very interesting and informative part of the book is 12 Investment Mega-Trends, which are going to shape our world in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first Mega-Trend is an apparent shift in energy and power sectors. Countries like Saudi Arabia having biggest oil reserves in the world is investing in solar energy so that can secure themselves is future as the oil reserves are depleting. The word top energy consumer is china, now having huge investment in commodities. Japan and Germany both have innovation based economy are now investing in green technology which is future's source of energy. How to hedge against in inflation which is big question of this century and a possible answer of this question to the writer is investment in

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real estate and this is second Mega-Trend. Huge investment in farmland from countries like South Korea Saudi Arabia, China, United Arab Emirates lease or purchase land in Sudan, Pakistan and Ethiopia. And in Brown's view this the other way of water acquisitions. In near future, Wars on water are not out of question but at present there is strong competition on water among nations. In the last 50 years with an immense increase in urban communities' water usages has almost tripped. Three nations that produce a major portion of world's grain are facing threat as their water level falls. Brown agrees the term "virtual water" introduced by John Allan of King's College London which describes the critical role of water in agriculture.

Subsidy on food items is a major hinder when we calculate the actual cost. In writer's point of view governments spend heavily to subsidized food products and annually \$ 500 billion are evaporated with fossil fuels rather only \$ 46 billion are spared for alternative fuels.

As the energy prices rises world turns to wind and solar energy this century will witness localization instead of globalization. Future technologies are going to change the whole business; clean energy is not in demand only due to cheap source of energy but due to environmental issues. In near future a clean shift from fossil fuel to clean fuel will reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent. Brown proposes that governments must impose heavy taxes on fossil fuel to reduce carbon emissions and to promote energy economy. And this is the only way to safe our environment otherwise there would be devastating effects as governments and their policies are moving in the direction, but the whole process is very slow.

Nuclear energy has become again a big question mark in the wake of partial radiations in recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan. On the other way some nations like Germany is in a review process and this could be rebirth of a question nuclear why nations go nuclear this time not due to prestige of any nation but energy needs of a nation.

Further emphasis is added by Brown, huge demand of food items, high speed increase in world population, shortage of water, all will push this world towards low-cost and clean source of energy. And in this battle some will make big profits and some will loose. But this transition should be made for clean environment for future generations.

## References

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