

DISAPPEARING PETRO WORLD

The US has over the century used oil and coal to remain a world power. It increased its oil production during the two world wars to supply the fuel to the UK. Next, it fortified trade relations with Saudi Arabia, Iran and other West Asian countries to secure oil supplies. In 2000, when oil prices shot up globally, the country started exploiting its shale fields in North Dakota and Montana to reduce its dependency on imports. By 2019, the US became the world's top oil producer, responsible for 19 per cent of the world share.

By owning most of the world's oil and coal reserves, the US, Russia, Australia and Saudi Arabia have largely controlled the global fossil fuel economy

→ Oil trade → Coal trade

Russia is the other country that has used its oil, coal and natural gas reserves to exert global supremacy. It was the largest oil producer during World War-II and exported the fuel for money. In 1973, when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries placed an embargo on the US for supplying oil to Israel which was in a war with Arab nations, Russia started exporting to western countries. Since the mid-2000s, Russia has been searching for more reserves in the Arctic region taking advantage of the melting of the Arctic ice cap and Siberian ice cover.



Saudi Arabia's erstwhile ruler Ibn Saud in the 1900s approached New Zealand, Bahrain and the US to search for oil in the region, but only the deal with the US materialised. In 1938, a US company found the country's first oil field. After World War II, the US began sourcing oil heavily from Saudi Arabia, and these exports became the country's main source of income. Over the years many more fields were discovered by US-Saudi Arabia firm ARAMCO. Currently, the country is home to the world's largest ever Ghawar oil field. It produces 12 per cent of world's oil.

Australia discovered coal in 1797 and it has been exploiting the polluting energy source since then. Australia currently exports 70 per cent of its coal produced and has faced global criticism for its continued interest in coal. Mining alone accounts for 29 per cent of the its greenhouse gas emissions.