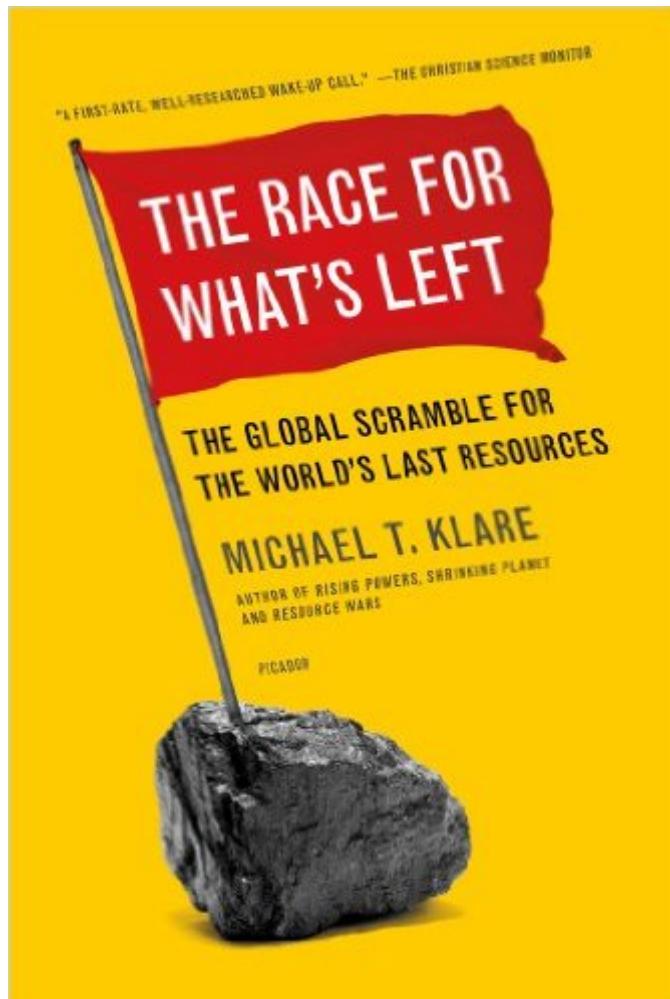


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The Race For What's Left: The Global Scramble For The World's Last Resources



Synopsis

"As Michael Klare makes clear in this powerful book, the heads of our corporate empires have decided to rip apart the planet in one last burst of profiteering. If you want to understand the next decade, I fear you better read this book."---Bill McKibben, author of Eaarth The world is facing an unprecedented crisis of resource depletion---a crisis that encompasses shortages of oil and coal, copper and cobalt, water and arable land. With all of the Earth's accessible areas already being exploited, the desperate hunt for supplies has now reached the final frontiers. The Race for What's Left takes us from the Arctic to war zones to deep ocean floors, from a Russian submarine planting the country's flag under the North Pole to the large-scale buying up of African farmland by Saudi Arabia and other food-scarce nations. With resource extraction growing more difficult, the environmental risks are becoming increasingly severe---and the intense search for dwindling supplies is igniting new conflicts and territorial disputes. The only way out, Michael T. Klare argues, is to alter our consumption patterns altogether, a crucial task that will be the greatest challenge of the coming century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The prolific Michael Klare has produced another book -- "The Race for What's Left" -- addressing the dangers we will face in the coming years, dangers which express our strong dependence on the earth and its material abundance along with our inability to create global political institutions which

secure peace and prosperity. It is worthy read as are Klare's previous books on this subject. In his latest, he addresses a few simple theses:1. The demand for natural resources will continue to grow2. The supply of these resources will continue to shrink3. The search for new sources of hydrocarbons, common and uncommon minerals, water and arable land will intensify over time and likely will generate resources wars.In a nutshell, we are now passing from an "easy-resource world" to a "hard-resource world." This claim encapsulates a few disturbing facts: Existing oil wells no longer produce at the rate they once had and once productive mines have become stingy. These key resources have peaked or will peak soon, and this fact will drive commerce in the future. More importantly, fallow and potentially productive farm land has become scarce in various locales due to overuse, desertification, urbanization and other destructive forms of consumption. We can expect food shortages to intensify as time passes. Furthermore, increasing demand will augment this 'natural' scarcity. Brazil, Russia, India and China are industrializing (or reindustrializing in Russia's case). Other countries have also taken off. Many are trying to develop their productive capacity and their natural resources. The industries in many of these countries are now competitive in the global market and will consume a growing share of the planet's raw goods.

I was really looking forward to reading this book. When I got it, I found it very disappointing. There are two problems that I have with this book. The first is the style that it is written in, the second is the coverage and structure.I found the style too anecdotal. I would have preferred something more academic. I felt as if I was wading through a lot of gumpf, before I got to any facts. The second issue here is that it focuses on narrow examples, rather than giving you an overview. I don't want to read a great detail about Gabon before I see Africa addressed as a continent for example. I find the style similar to CNN stlye reportage; high on emotive topics and narrow perspective, low on facts. It reads as if the author has an agenda and points to examples to prove his case. I would prefer a presentation of the facts rather than to be told what I should think. It feels as if I am reading propaganda despite the seriousness of the issues.As for structure, I would have preferred to see the book start with some kind of historical perspective, talking about Limits of Growth etc, before then going on to explain the geopolitical context (such as Zbigniew Brzezinski's the Grand Chessboard). That is, the current economic situation in the US and Europe vs BRIC etc, the US objectives in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and so on. We get none of this. All in all the coverage seems patchy, with too much time spent on some areas not enough on others. Flicking through the chapters I expected to see one entitled "Water Security", but nothing.Instead of this, the book starts with the story of a Russian submarine captain planting a flag on the floor of the arctic. Flicking through the

chapters reveals a similar anecdote at the start of each chapter.

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