

# CHOICE

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Smil has produced an inspiring, daunting analysis of a range of probable global catastrophes that require critical assessment and considered, worldwide response. This is a probability account of “fatal discontinuities” and trends to 2050. Catastrophes reviewed include collision with extraterrestrial objects, volcanic mega eruptions and collapses, influenza pandemics, and violent conflicts and terrorist attacks. Equally challenging trends include energy transitions and environmental change. These are discussed in the context of a new world order: decline of major economies (Japan, Europe, Russia, US), evolution of the Muslim world, and the rise of China and India. A final chapter deals with risk and “uncertainty”- quantifying the odds and rational attitudes. Smil deplors grand forecasts and deliberate support for euphoric or catastrophic views of the future. Instead, he presents eclectic grand inquiries and long-term historic perspectives, emphasizing our limited understanding and inherent uncertainties. The text is presented in brilliantly clear English and draws on the author’s amazing erudition and breadth of knowledge. The citations alone are astounding. *Global Catastrophes and Trends* is a vital antidote to current widespread media exaggeration, and is worthy of the widest possible readership.

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