by Japan, the US, and western Europe. (The large transfers of petroleum from the Middle East to the general area of Malaysia reflect petroleum transport to Singapore for refining.)


Another important disruption of the petroleum market occurred with the 1973 Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) shutoff of oil shipments to the US and western Europe in reaction to perceived favoritism of Israeli over Arab interests in the Middle East.

Many of the same countries that are rich in petroleum also have abundant natural gas supplies. However, a corresponding international commerce in natural gas has not emerged due to the greater difficulty and expense of transporting natural gas. Thus, natural gas found at sites far from population centers, especially if they are separated by water, has gone largely unexploited.