

## IN ALL FAIRNESS

### Surrendering Energy Independence

Gas prices may be coming down to earth, but for how long? Unfortunately, America's economic and energy security is more vulnerable than ever. Incredibly, our reliance on foreign oil is now at a dangerous all-time high of 65 percent, almost *double* what it was during the 1970s energy crisis.

The inconvenient truth is that we continue to pay a high price for decades of no-growth environmentalism. Special interests' ongoing obstructionist lawsuits, restrictive environmental regulations, and unreasonable laws all undermine America's energy independence.

A new refinery hasn't been built in the U.S. since Gerald Ford was President over 30 years ago. Even more regulations are currently in place that make it prohibitively expensive to upgrade existing power plants or tap our abundant domestic energy resources. Yet, uncompromising environmental activists and professional bureaucrats still obsess about the habitats of plant and insect species.

In the meantime, America's gas pumps continue to fuel foreign enemies dedicated to our demise by enabling terrorists around the globe. We agree with the recent *New York Times* editorial that U.S. oil dollars should not be enriching and empowering teacher-

#### ***The State of Our Energy***

ous anti-U.S. dictators closer to home, such as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. A sneering Chavez uses American money to buy Russian jet fighters and hire Washington PR firms to game our democracy with slick Joe Kennedy TV commercials.

We must realistically confront how we can reduce our reliance on energy imports. New energy proposals being offered are uncertain, and likely decades away. It's idiotic to punish America's consumers and businesses for energy use and yet forbid the immediate development of America's abundant and available energy resources.

Significant improvements in U.S. technology have made energy production and resource extraction of oil, natural gas, and coal more environmentally friendly than ever. Yet environmentalists who claim that burning any fossil fuel contributes to global warming even oppose using the one dependable energy source that produces zero carbon dioxide – safe and reliable nuclear energy. Today, nuclear energy accounts for only 20 percent of U.S. energy production, while France has almost 80 percent of its electricity generated by nuclear power plants built with American technology. The French nuclear energy program was a wise and resolute response to the same energy crisis that America faced in the 1970s. Yet elitist Americans who sniff French Bordeaux turn their noses up at this viable option to achieve our own energy independence.

It all comes down to this – for the good of our country and America's strategic interests, can professional ideologues and their political allies be practical enough to put aside their disdain for free enterprise and capitalism to do what needs to be done? With so much at stake, the self-inflicted paralysis of America's domestic energy production has got to stop.



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