

ANWR and the Blackout?

On September 8, you published an editorial (your own) which claimed that there was some relationship between the spectacular power failure across the northeast US and Canada, and the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Always an eager member of the "Coalition of the Drilling", aren't you?

The editorial claims further that the relationship is to energy policy, and that we need a cohesive one. Granted, the nation does need an energy policy. So does the state. You further state that the Bush Administration presented an energy plan in May 2001. But did it get anywhere? No. And why not? Because Bush administration VP Dick Cheney was the prime mover in a back room deal to keep the real decisions about energy policy out of the public eye. Who can trust this situation? Congress is supposed to deal with policy, in collaboration with the administration. Instead, the administration developed a private energy plan with their cronies, separate from congress, and in secret. How are we supposed to have a cohesive energy policy, when the administration makes secret deals and refuses court and congressional subpoenas to disclose them to the American public? You are very willing to deceptively credit the Bush administration with something that it actually prevented from happening, rather than helped to create. What say you about this? You say nothing.

An energy policy which aimed forcefully at energy security for this nation would hugely affect a better world, and quickly. Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org) recently published a brief Fact Sheet on Energy Security. Here are some important facts from that work, from which we can learn:

- The United States has 6% of the worlds population, but uses 26% of the worlds oil, produces 9%, and owns a mere 2-3%. There is simply no way we can drill our way out of this situation.
- Half of the oil used in the United States is imported. One fourth of oil usage comes from OPEC countries, and one eighth from the Persian Gulf.
- In peacetime, the cost of maintaining military forces earmarked for Persian Gulf intervention costs approximately \$60 billion — ~\$1.58 per gallon paid through our taxes, rather than at the pump. We are actually paying double the cost on the pump already, the second \$1.58 paid through federal income taxes.
- If 27% of our nations cars were hybrid-electric models, all Persian Gulf oil imports would cease. The National Academy of Sciences found in 2001 that our current 20.4 fleet efficiency could be doubled with the adoption of safe cost-effective, but efficient cars and light trucks.
- Americans pay as much for transportation fuels as for national defense.
- All these facts are backed up by a 29-page paper also located on the www.rmi.org website.

Knowing these facts, it is clear that advocating for drilling for oil in a wilderness with irreplaceable values and a uniquely protected arctic ecosystem, the only one in the world, is at least wrong-headed, probably futile in achieving any substantial change in oil imports and balance of payments, and would do

nothing to change the world-wide decline in oil production, which is recognized as fact by ALL major oil companies.

This is what you should be telling people in your editorials: the facts, not hype and deception.

Sincerely,
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