

Please consider for a Compass piece for the Daily News:

2 July 2003

Nearly two years ago, I wrote a Compass piece about energy, oil and renewable options and the relationship of these issues to the terrorist threat that has since loomed about us since that climactic day, September 11, 2001.

Sadly, few politicians and people in power seem to make the clear and crucial connection between these events and our national energy use and its ramifications. But now, the ever insightful Amory Lovins, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute, has done so in a new paper ( [www.rmi.org](http://www.rmi.org)) simply called **U.S. Energy Security Facts**.

Here are some of the powerful points he makes, all facts he backs up with a supplemental paper. Perhaps they can help us all understand better just how much all this trouble with terror we continually face is a matter of our energy dependence and the politics it breeds. And more, how we can change that:

- Half of the oil used in the United States is imported. One-fourth comes from OPEC countries, one seventh from Arab OPEC countries, and one eighth from Persian Gulf countries
- US. light vehicles (cars and light trucks) use 70% of oil imports, or 2.9 times Persian Gulf imports, or nearly as much as Saudi Arabia produces.
- In peacetime, the cost of maintaining military forces earmarked for Persian Gulf intervention costs approximately \$60 billion a year —or \$1.58 a gallon---paid not at the pump, but through our taxes. Realize that this is **in addition to** the price at the pump, typically \$1.60 or so now. Literally you are paying twice what you think for the gasoline.
- If forces with a Persian Gulf primary mission were motivated entirely by our desire to protect access to Persian Gulf oil, the true cost would approach \$100 a barrel.
- Cost effective wind power potential in the Dakotas alone could make enough hydrogen to fuel (if efficiently used) all US. highway vehicles.
- If 27% of our nations cars were hybrid-electric models, which are available today, all Persian Gulf imports would cease. The National Academy of Sciences found in 2001 that our current 20.4-mpg fleet efficiency could be doubled with the adoption of safe, cost-effective, but efficient cars and light trucks.
- And my favorite of all---During 1977-1985, GDP rose 27%, oil use fell 17%, net oil imports fell 42%, and imports from the Persian gulf fell 87%. OPEC lost half its market, destroying its pricing power for a decade. If we'd repeated that 5.2% annual gain in oil activity at the 2001 Presidential Inauguration, **Persian Gulf imports would have disappeared by May of 2001!**

**It is within our means, and probably for much less money than now spent on oil imports, to change the entire energy picture for the better, with enormous implications for changing political vulnerabilities for the very much better. Why don't we?**

Submitted by Richard D. Seifert, professor, energy and housing, University of Alaska Fairbanks