

The Folly of Our Ways

It has been difficult to ignore the spiraling cost of energy. In hindsight, an epic warning in 1973 from the Middle Eastern oil producers went largely unheeded. It was then that oil shipments to the West were halted in retaliation for US military support of Israel in the “Yom Kippur War” involving Israel, Egypt and Syria. As a result, gasoline rationing and long lines at the pump became commonplace and prices skyrocketed. Clearly, it was time for US policymakers to come up with a plan to reduce our long-term dependence on foreign sources of energy.

As we fast forward from 1973 to 2005, we can see that the way in which our leaders addressed the energy problem and charted our future was not through the use of brain power but through the use of military power. However, some credit is due for the effort put forth in developing Alaskan reserves as a means of lessening reliance on foreign suppliers.

As it is difficult to extricate the declared War on Terror from the deliberate reach for Middle Eastern oilfields, many observers are struck by the sheer irony and futility of this mission. The criticism is not borne so much out of partisan politics as it is out of the simple observation that US dependence on imported oil is lining the pocketbooks of countries that hate Americans and their allies. Through oil imports, the US sends billions of dollars each year to regimes that sponsor terrorism against the Western world. Therefore, a portion of each dollar spent on imported oil goes to people trying to kill us.

The only effective way to win the War on Terror is to stop sending money to countries and regimes that are hostile toward Western nations. Now more than ever, we need our politicians to embrace the commercialization of fuel-efficient vehicles and affordable substitutes for traditional fuels.

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