

## Is America's Energy Crisis a Myth or Harsh Reality?

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Global Warming, Toxic Waste, Eroding Coasts and Wetlands - all terms that should be familiar to Americans because they have been used in recent years to expose our growing energy crisis. It seems that the more technologically advanced our society becomes, the deeper entrenched we fall into the energy crisis. Ramblers are being replaced by mini-mansions, compact cars have been upgraded to sport utility vehicles, and just about every item in our homes is digitally operated; no wonder Americans are leading the charge in the energy crisis. “[U].S. oil use has increased over the decade by nearly 2.7 million barrels a day - more oil than is used daily in total in India and Pakistan, which together contain more than four times as many people as the United States does. In total, the average American consumes five times more energy than the average global citizen...”<sup>1</sup>

As with any other crisis, everyone wants to step in and offer solutions they believe will de-escalate the situation from crisis to concern mode. Over the last decade we have begun to embrace “Going Green”, “Renewable Energy”, “Recycling”, and “Alternative Fuel Solutions” as a way to help with the crisis. According to U.S. News & World Report’s, Editor-in-Chief Mortimer B. Zuckerman, all of the above solutions are simply empty promises and the only true way to break out of crisis mode is to change Americans’ attitude about their usage.<sup>2</sup> The United States government has offered citizens few incentives to change their lifestyles and overall energy consumption. Gradually, individual Americans are changing their attitudes, but the only way the nation as a whole will adjust its mindset is through substantial government programs and intervention.

For example, in Denmark the government decided to wean themselves off of foreign oil dependence and came up with wind power as an environmentally friendly, home grown energy alternative. One major change that would drastically change the United States’ dependence on foreign oil would be the implementation and upgrading of the nation’s public transportation systems. There is no consistency from jurisdiction to jurisdiction on public transportation standards. As a result, select cities have top rated public transportation systems, while other cities’ public transportation is either nonexistent or more of a hassle than convenience.

In addition to improving America’s public transportation system, ethanol has been introduced as a clean fuel alternative. Although there are many benefits to this cleaner fuel alternative, the price and production of ethanol may be its major hang up in relieving America’s foreign oil dependence. “The fix du jour is ethanol, but it is certainly no elixir. It is expensive. Ethanol, moreover, uses corn and absorbs something like 20 percent of all the corn production of America, skewing the price of corn feed for poultry, hogs, and cattle, which in turn raises meat prices.”<sup>3</sup>

Yes, the United States is leading the charge in the energy crisis because, simply put, there is no sense of urgency to change things. With a few more incentives, detailed planned agenda, and carefully allocated dollars, Americans can start doing their part to reduce energy consumption and help downgrade the world from energy crisis to concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Worldwatch Institute, <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/808>.

<sup>2</sup> Zuckerman, Mortimer, “Energy to Burn”, *U.S. News & World Report*, March 26/April 2, 2007, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> See Footnote 2.