

Just Say No To Oil

A Ten Year Plan to End the War on Terrorism

Lawrence Hagerty, November 13, 2001

It has been a long time since the United States has experienced such a widespread display of flag-waving patriotism. I've been told that it was like this in the early days of World War II and again in the months after that war ended. The only time I have seen anything close to it myself was when Americans walked on the moon for the first time. There certainly were a lot of flags waving then. Of course, that day they were waving in joy. Today they remind us we are engaged in a "war on terrorism."

Now don't get me wrong, I have nothing against displaying the American flag. I do wonder, however, how many people realize that patriotism requires much more than driving around town flying a flag from their big automobiles. Patriotism also requires sacrifice and consuming large quantities of oil-based products is not very patriotic. Of course, this isn't what we are hearing from Washington these days. Their somewhat convoluted message goes like this: "Don't panic. Be alert. Keep spending." I happen to believe that if the fundamental values of our society are under attack, as the president tells us, we are going to be called upon to do much more than just continue shopping.

Think about what we accomplished in the 1960s with the space program. When President Kennedy first announced that we were going to send men to the moon, he told us that we could meet this incredible goal by the end of the decade. If you recall the sad state of the U.S. space program at the time, you will remember how impossible this mission sounded to those who actually understood the magnitude of the task. Yet he told us that it was our patriotic duty to do it, and we did. It wasn't easy, nor was it inexpensive. What I am about to propose is a far more modest objective than sending humans to the moon.

As you probably have guessed, I am talking about eliminating our dependence on foreign oil *and then* continuing to completely eliminate our dependence on oil altogether. You might tell me this would be too costly or "painful," but you cannot convince me that it is impossible. After all, we put men on the moon and brought them back. And we did so in under ten years with no better a technological starting point than we have today for transitioning to alternative fuel technologies. There simply is no better strategy for ending this ill-conceived war on terrorism.

How, you may ask, will eliminating oil from our gluttonous diet for non-renewable resources end the war on terrorism. Just look at a map, read a little history, do the math, and the answer will be clear. The "oil corridor" in the Middle East contains 75% or more of the world's known supply of oil. This is also where (we are told) our most implacable terrorist foes come from. If you have studied the history of that region, you are aware of the fact that ever since the Crusaders first invaded that land over 1,000 years ago there has been no peace. Our president might see this as the "first war of the 21st century," but a lot of people in the Middle East see it as just another campaign in a very old war.

So let's finally call an end to this oil binge we have been on and begin developing new technologies that don't require a never-ending supply of oil. What "national interests" do we have in the Middle East other than the oil supply? Why else are we spending billions of dollars for our military to police that part of the world? Isn't it time to bring our servicemen and women home and to quit wasting all that money to protect the interests of the oil industry and a few wealthy Middle Eastern families? Look at the facts. The two most powerful men in our government today are former oil company executives, and now they have the entire U.S. military at their disposal to protect the interests of the industry that spawned them. They are doing so, of course, under the guise of protecting our "national interests."

Today it is difficult to argue against the position that protecting the oil supply is in our highest national interests. Face it, we are hooked on oil. I haven't seen any widespread national movements to improve the mileage on our cars. Where are the tax incentives for installing solar panels on our houses? Where are the government programs to build power plants whose electricity comes from renewable resources? Only a handful of small organizations are working toward goals like these. And why isn't everyone involved? Because we are all oil junkies who got hooked by big businesses in much the same way they once hooked us on cigarettes.

So let's all check ourselves into rehab and begin to kick our oil habit. We should approach this problem just as we did when we went to the moon. It should become our nation's number one priority. Admittedly, there is no guarantee that by eliminating our dependence on oil and removing our armed forces from the Middle East that there will be an end to terrorist acts in the U.S., but this surely would be a big step in the right direction. I firmly believe that how we rise to this challenge is how future generations will judge us.

Other opinions by Lawrence Hagerty
can be found at:
www.MatrixMasters.com
Email: hagerty@matrixmasters.com

[Copy Left]
"Just Say No To Oil" Copyright © 2001 Lawrence Hagerty
Verbatim copying and redistribution are permitted in any medium provided this notice is preserved.