

## Quintessential Pragmatism III

In the last article, we talked about Global Warming. QP's conclusion was that it is probably occurring and that man's actions may be influencing it. However, from a practical standpoint, we will probably use all the fossil fuel on the planet and greenhouse gasses will increase. Even with the most severe limitations in this country, increased usage by developing nations will cause the increase to continue. We should learn how to use resources wisely and recover them cleanly.

The more pressing issue for this country and one that directly affects future energy recovery efforts, is energy independence. Because of our dependence on foreign petroleum, we are vulnerable to "energy blackmail" by other political entities and especially vulnerable to hostile Middle East countries. While conservation can do some good, there will undoubtedly be a push for developing further energy sources in this country. The primary use of imported petroleum is in the area of motor gasoline. So it is in this area the country must look for new internal sources, replacement sources, and conservation methods. United States uses about 9 million barrels a day of motor gasoline. Total petroleum imports amount to about 12 million barrels a day so it can be said that nearly all of our motor gasoline usage is from imported sources. It is impractical to assume that any method of conservation or replacement will supplant that amount of oil in the foreseeable future so this article will concentrate only on the amount of oil that comes from the Persian Gulf Region. This amounts to around 2 million barrels/day or about 18% of the imported oil.

Looking at the replacement arena, bio fuels are, to a large degree, expensive and unreliable for the massive energy demands of this country. Ethanol is not a realistic alternative in that it is questionable if enough energy is gained from the product to even offset the energy required to produce it. Solar, wind, nuclear, and hydro electric power will also be increased but will not offset the demand to any great degree. Combined, all these approaches will be a help, but not a solution. So the major improvements towards energy independence will be in the conservation and new source arenas.

The most realistic approach towards conservation will be as it is anywhere else in the world that energy is expensive. In most of these regions, the preferred mode of travel is compact automobiles with boosted diesel engines. Their fuel economy is around 50% higher than the present CAFÉ and twice as good as the truck average. However, there are 200,000,000 cars and trucks in the country with the cars averaging roughly 20 MPG as a group and the trucks averaging around 16MPG. Replacement of this fleet, even if legislated, will take substantial time. Even at a 10% replacement of the fleet, it would take nearly 6 years to gain the 18% improvement in fuel consumption to replace just the Persian Gulf oil. And that is assuming no increase in the fleet size and no vehicles were sold except 10 million new small diesel cars per year.

So everyone who has a precious little piece of nature they have been watching over and it has oil underneath it, pucker up. The country will be coming after that oil and there is nothing you can do to stop it. It is critical that we learn to extract energy for precious places without destroying them. Anyone who goes to his conservation meeting and leaves in his pick-up and goes to his 2000 square foot home had better

take measure of himself. He is part of the problem, not the solution. Next time you are in such a situation, look for compromise. Because where wild places are concerned, it is compromise or die.

Be aware that compromising is not just in the environmentalist court. Companies seeking to harvest energy for us to use have a sacred trust under their knife. They must also compromise. Energy recovery sites should look as if they were never there. Methods must be developed to mitigate spillage, and noise, and odor, and other un-nature like symptoms.

Hard times are ahead. Godspeed.

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