## AT: Oil Independence

**US dependent on Middle Eastern oil – domestic production insufficient**

**Cavell 12** – Assistant Professor at the University of Bahrain (Dr. Colin Cavell, Center for Research on Globalization, “America's Dependency On Middle East Oil”, 4/11/12, http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=30177)

Currently, approximately 35% of the world’s seaborne crude oil extracted from the Earth in the countries of the Middle East is brought to global markets through the Strait of Hormuz between Iran on the Northeastern side of the Strait and the United Arab Emirates with the Omanian enclave of Musandam on the Southwestern side of the Strait, representing about 20% of oil traded worldwide (“Strait of Hormuz,” January 16, 2012). Under pressure from economic sanctions by the U.S. and the European Union, Iran’s government has vowed to block the Strait of Hormuz if the West places additional economic sanctions on their government.¶ North America is the largest consumer of oil regionally, followed by Asia (primarily Japan), Europe, and then other world regions. Importing over 13.5 million barrels of oil per day, the U.S. is easily the world’s largest oil importer, accounting for over 63% of total U.S. daily consumption. “Oil from the Middle East (specifically, the Persian Gulf) accounts for 17 percent of U.S. oil imports, and this dependence is growing,” wrote Heritage Foundation researcher Ariel Cohen in April of 2006. ¶ Though the U.S. is a top producer of crude oil, its current rate of petroleum consumption is between 18 and 19 million barrels of oil per day, and its domestic production cannot handle the demand, hence its reliance on imported oil. As President George W. Bush stated in his 2006 State of the Union Address to the nation: “Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. And here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world” (January 31, 2006). From the mouth of the nation’s top leader, the U.S. suffers from an addiction. Most modern machinery runs on oil and its utility is seen in everyday products from plastics to cosmetics, from paint to lubricants, and, most especially, as a source of fuel for the modern combustion engine. Over time, to feel “normal”, the addict develops an abnormal psychological dependency on the addictive substance and will utilize any means to obtain the drug in spite of cultural or moral restraints. In the case of oil, this abnormal dependency has led the United States to engage in bribery and corruption to obtain oil, from control of markets to the exclusion of countries from such commerce, from the overthrow of regimes deemed belligerent because of their attempts to take control of their own oil resources to outright murder, assassination, and war. Indeed, few Americans today doubt that the recent eight-year war on Iraq (2003-2011) was conducted primarily to obtain oil. And this is why veteran scholar on the politics of oil, Dr. Michael Klare, concludes in a recent article that: “the Strait of Hormuz will undoubtedly remain the ground zero of potential global conflict in the months ahead” (January 31, 2012).¶ When a U.S. President refers to the necessity to import oil from “unstable parts of the world,” what he means is that some regions of the world are asserting their sovereign right to control their natural resources, e.g. oil, and they are neither subordinate nor answerable to the U.S. government, especially as regards how much oil is produced and available for purchase on world markets and how much they wish to charge for this oil—hence, the nomenclature of “instability”. ¶ The world’s top oil producers are depicted in the table below [Table I], and it is not coincidental that major areas of U.S. foreign intervention over the past 50 years are focused on these countries.¶ As well, the following countries [Table II], listed by rank, are estimated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to possess the most proven oil resources still remaining in the ground. These areas are likewise regions of heightened U.S. foreign policy interests and will continue to be so as long as the world economy is carbon-based.¶ With the recent American military "departure" from Iraq, it is becoming evident that the days of kowtowing to U.S. military dictate are over. Hence, there will be many “unstable” areas in the world in the years to come.¶ Given an ever-increasing demand for oil, because of its “addiction”, and given its limited domestic sources of crude oil, the U.S. will remain dependent on imported oil well into the future. U.S. policymakers, by their past and present actions since the end of WWII in pursuing this addiction, have apparently concluded that the nation’s interest in oil and other ‘strategic’ resources outweighs the nation’s avowed values to support democracy.

**HSR is a larger internal link to oil independence than fracking**

**Drum 6/29**/12 – Writer of environmental and international issues (Kevin, “We Could Stop Importing Oil From the Middle East Today if We Wanted To”, http://www.motherjones.com/transition/inter.php?dest=http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/06/big-oil-news-isnt-fracking-its-efficiency)

#3: The main source of lower oil imports comes from better fuel economy and other efficiency measures, not from fracking.¶ There are two charts below. Take a look at the one on the left. In the 25 years between 1980 and 2005, U.S. oil consumption increased by more than 5 million barrels per day. Now take a look at the projection for the 25 years from 2010 to 2035. EIA forecasts an increase of only about 1 million barrels per day.¶ That's a difference of more than 4 million barrels per day — and it's by far the biggest contributor to our projected reduction in imports. The chart on the right shows the real explanation for declining imports: It's because we're using energy a lot more efficiently, and per capita energy use is therefore forecast to be on a steady downslope. Fracking may be sexy these days, but as always, it's drab old energy efficiency that has the biggest potential to lead the way toward energy independence. It may be boring, but if we paid even more attention to it, it would reduce energy imports far more than fracking ever will.

The US is oil dependent now – self-sufficiency fails, only a transition from oil solves

**Schlesinger et al 6** - \*James R. Schlesinger is the former Secretary of Defense and was the first Secretary of Energy, a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), a member of the Defense Policy Board, member of the Arms Control Nonproliferation Advisory Board of the Department of State, and a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council, \*\*David Victor is the Director of the Program on Energy and Sustainable Development at Stanford University and Adjunct Senior Fellow for Science and Technology at the Council on Foreign Relations, \*\*\*John Deutch is an Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, served as Undersecretary of Energy, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Director of Central Intelligence (Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force Report #58, “National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency”, http://www.cfr.org/energy-security/national-security-consequences-us-oil-dependency/p11683)

\*Note: The task force includes 20 more equally qualified people, these are the chairs of the report.

The challenge over the next several decades is to manage the consequences of unavoidable dependence on oil and gas that is traded in world markets and to begin the transition to an economy that relies less on petroleum. The longer the delay, the greater will be the subsequent trauma. For the United States, with 4.6 percent of the world’s population using 25 percent of the world’s oil, the transition could be especially disruptive.

This report concentrates on the next twenty years, a period long enough to put necessary policy measures into place but not so distant as to encounter a wider range of future geopolitical or technological uncertainties. During this next twenty years (and quite probably beyond), it is infeasible to eliminate the nation’s dependence on foreign energy sources. The voices that espouse ‘‘energy independence’’ are doing the nation a disservice by focusing on a goal that is unachievable over the foreseeable future and that encourages the adoption of inefficient and counterproductive policies. Indeed, during the next two decades, it is unlikely that the United States will be able to make a sharp reduction in its dependence on imports, which currently stand at 60 percent of consumption. The central task for the next two decades must be to manage the consequences of dependence on oil, not to pretend the United States can eliminate it.

A popular response to the steep rise in energy prices in recent years is the false expectation that policies to lower imports will automatically lead to a decline in prices. The public’s continuing expectation of the availability of cheap energy alternatives will almost surely be disappointed. While oil prices may retreat from their current high levels, one should not expect the price of oil to return, on a sustained basis, to the low levels seen in the late 1990s. In fact, if more costly domestic supply is used to substitute for imported oil, then prices will not moderate.

Yet the public’s elected representatives have allowed this myth to survive, as they advocate policies that futilely attempt to reduce import dependence quickly while simultaneously lowering prices. Leaders of both political parties, especially when seeking public office, seem unable to resist announcing unrealistic goals that are transparent efforts to gain popularity rather than inform the public of the challenges the United States must overcome. Moreover, the political system of the United States has so far proved unable to sustain the policies that would be needed to manage dependence on imported fuels. As history since 1973 shows, the call for policy action recedes as prices abate.

These problems rooted in the dependence on oil are neither new nor unique to the United States. Other major world economies that rely on imported oil—from Western Europe to Japan, and now China and India—face similar concerns. All are having difficulties in meeting the challenges of managing demand for oil. But these countries do not share the foreign policy responsibilities of the United States. And the United States, insufficiently aware of its vulnerability, has not been as attentive as the other large industrialized countries in implementing policies to slow the rising demand for oil. Yet even if the United States were self-sufficient in oil (a condition the Task Force considers wholly infeasible in the foreseeable future), U.S. foreign policy would remain constrained as long as U.S. allies and partners remained dependent on imports because of their mutual interdependence. Thus, while reducing U.S. oil imports is desirable, the underlying problem is the high and growing demand for oil worldwide.

The growing worldwide demand for oil in the coming decades will magnify the problems that are already evident in the functioning of the world oil market. During that period, the availability of low cost oil resources is expected to decline; production and transportation costs are likely to rise. As more hydrocarbon resources in more remote areas are tapped, the world economy will become even more dependent on elaborate and vulnerable infrastructures to bring oil and gas to the markets where they are used.

**More oil production inevitably fails – only a shift from oil solves**

**Schlesinger et al 6** - \*James R. Schlesinger is the former Secretary of Defense and was the first Secretary of Energy, a consultant to the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), a member of the Defense Policy Board, member of the Arms Control Nonproliferation Advisory Board of the Department of State, and a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council, \*\*David Victor is the Director of the Program on Energy and Sustainable Development at Stanford University and Adjunct Senior Fellow for Science and Technology at the Council on Foreign Relations, \*\*\*John Deutchis an Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, served as Undersecretary of Energy, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Director of Central Intelligence(Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force Report #58, “National Security Consequences of U.S. Oil Dependency”, http://www.cfr.org/energy-security/national-security-consequences-us-oil-dependency/p11683)

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Myth #4: There’s plenty of low-cost oil ready to be tapped. Unlikely. For the past 150 years the world has used low-cost oil, such as in Saudi Arabia and East Texas. Over the long run, progressively higher-cost sources of oil will need to be tapped. That, on average, will translate into higher oil prices. The world cannot ‘‘drill its way out of this problem.’’