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THE NEED FOR A MANHATTAN PROJECT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

Since early 1980 America has slashed its research funding for renewable energy by over 75%.

The results have been grim. **American dependence on foreign oil has hit record levels.** In 1989 for the first time, the majority of oil consumed in America came from overseas. All indications are that this figure will rise sharply in the next ten years. (At the time of Pearl Harbor we were a net oil exporter.)

Meanwhile, the lack of safe renewable energy has forced the developing world to adopt energy policies that have totally disastrous environmental consequences. A key cause of deforestation is the use of fuel wood for energy in many key Third World states. This has had particularly grim results in arid areas, where there is little rain. In China and India air pollution levels are far above minimum safe standards for human health.

Without a technological advance in renewable energy, it will simply not be possible for the poor nations of the world to develop in a safe and sustainable manner. It will not be possible for the world to cut its carbon emissions without damaging economic growth.

Fortunately, there have been great technological advances in many areas in spite of a total lack of government leadership in America. The cost of wind and solar power has dropped dramatically in recent years.

There is, thus, strong reason to believe that a major national commitment would produce desired results.

At the moment renewable energy makes up a tiny part of world energy production. Without major

efforts in government action this will not change due to hundreds of billions of dollars of government subsidies to polluting energy technologies over the last 50 years.

In 1990 "expert" predictions said that only a tiny number of Americans would use the internet in the year 2000. Obviously, these predictions were nonsense.

We have the most advanced technology the world has ever seen. We have the money. In light of the near total neglect of renewable energy research in the last 20 years there is every reason to believe that a major national effort would produce dramatic results.

The following steps are needed:

I. REVIEW OF WHAT IS NEEDED

In order to make efficient use of government money there needs to be review of what is needed. A key question should be the nature of government incentives. Specifically, how much should go to tax incentives and how much should to government funded research?

II. PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

The President needs to bring together major business leaders and seek information as to what is needed to mobilize business for this task. The President must communicate to business in the strongest terms the urgency of this task and the commitment of the administration.

III. PERMANENT EXECUTIVE FOCUS

It is far from clear that the current tiny department of the Energy Department is up the huge job here. There needs to be a major reorganization of the Energy Department to deal with the huge national security goal at hand here.

IV. ADEQUATE FUNDING

If research fundind was restored to 1980 levels its would be about \$1.4 billion. We should be seeking at least \$1 billion a year for the next ten years. Business experts need to be mobilized to determine the manner in which the money should be spent. For example, what should be spent on direct research and what should be spent on tax credits.

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[The Huge Decline in US Renewable Energy Research Funding](#)

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CONCLUSION

People claimed that we could never win the Cold War. People said the budget deficit could never be tamed. When there is a mobilization of the national will, major achievements can be attained. In the quest for a national and global renewable energy revolution, defeat is not an option. This is something that must happen. America needs to devote at least one billion dollars a year on this for the next ten years and make this a top national priority for both the public and the private sector.

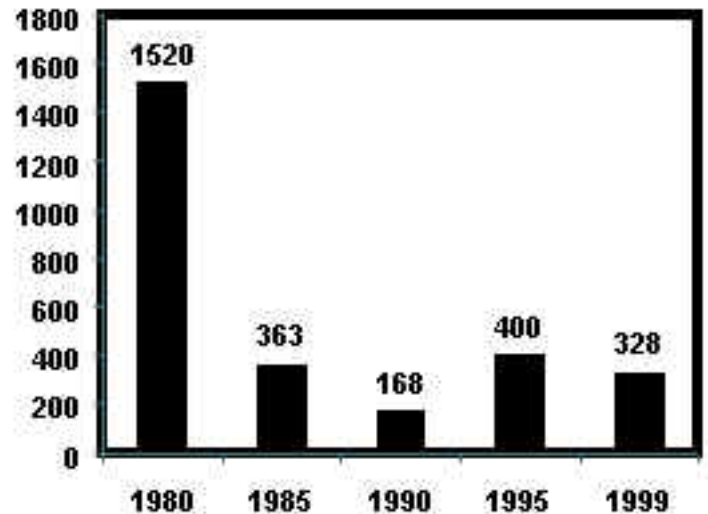
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THE COLLAPSE OF AMERICA'S COMMITMENT TO CLEAN, SAFE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY



RENEWABLE ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
BUDGET OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IN
MILLIONS OF CONSTANT 1997 DOLLARS

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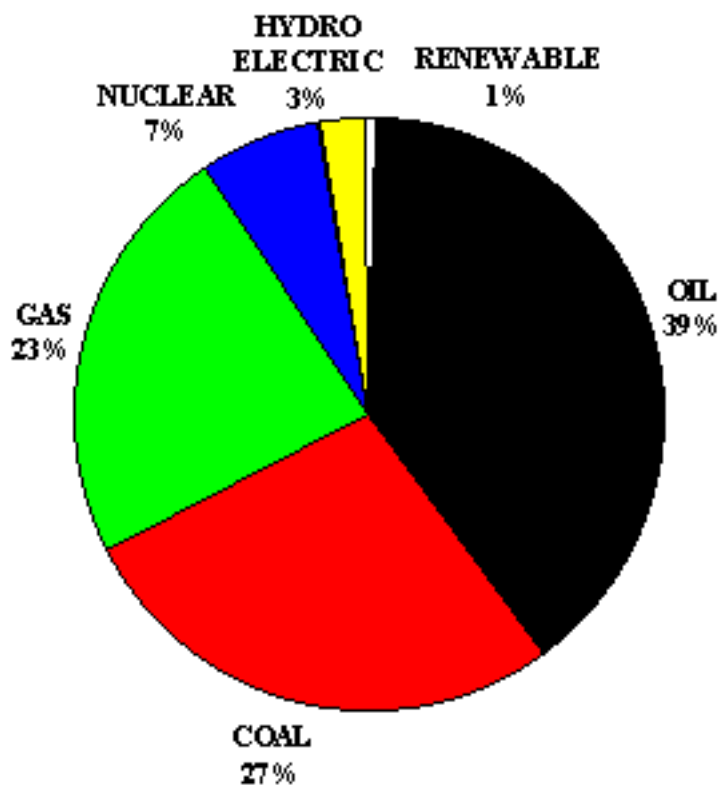
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WORLD COMMERCIAL ENERGY PRODUCTION



PERCENT OF TOTAL

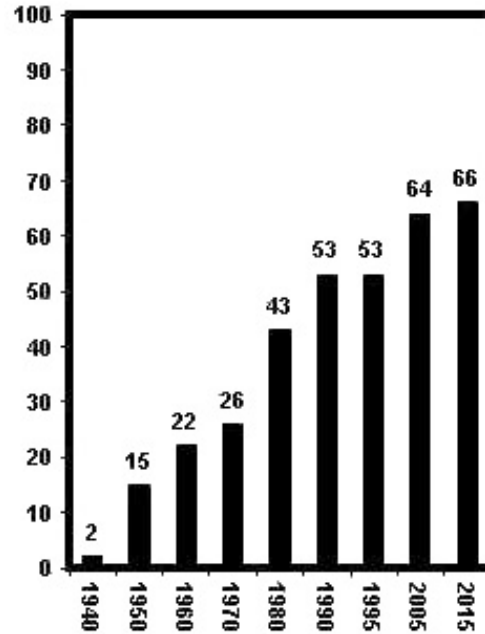
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**U.S. OIL IMPORTS
AS A PERCENT OF
CONSUMPTION**



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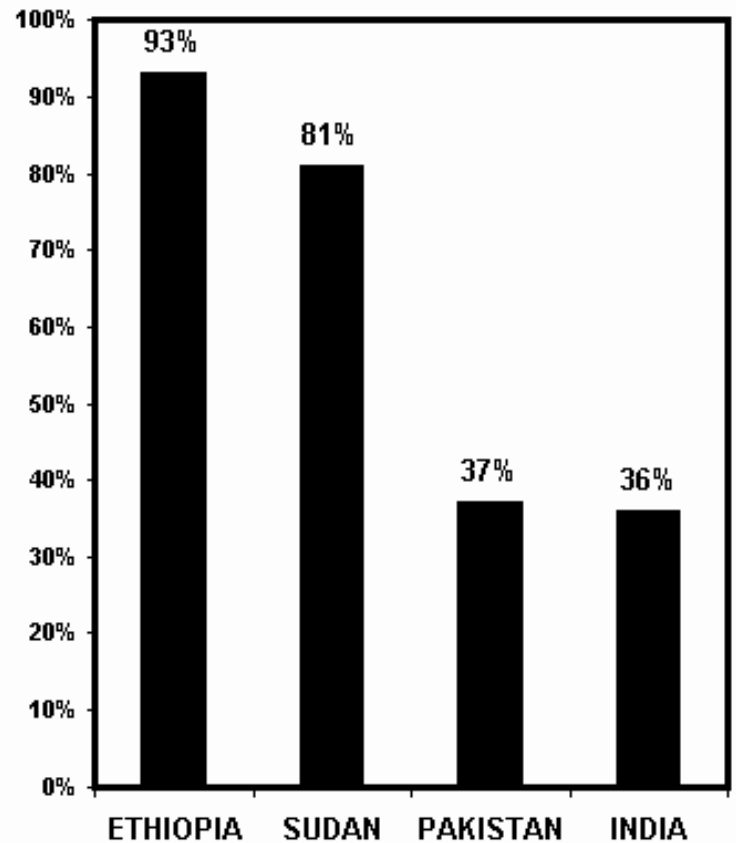
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THE DEPENDENCE ON WOOD FOR ENERGY

A KEY CAUSE OF GLOBAL DEFORESTATION

(WOOD BURNING AS A % OF TOTAL ENERGY USE)



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OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN DEFENSE OF MORE RENEWABLE ENERGY FUNDING BY TOP FORMER U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY LEADERS

June 3,1999

Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK)
Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV)
Senator Pete Dominici (R-NM)
Senator Jack Reed (D-RI)
Senator Christopher Bond (R-MO))
Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

Congressman C.W. Young (R-FL)
Congressman David Obey (D-WI)
Congressman Ron Packard (R-CA)
Congressman Peter Visclosky (D-IN)
Congressman James R. Walsh (R-NY)
Congressman Alan Mollohan (D-WV)

Dear Members of Congress,

We seek your support for the Department of Energy's FY2000 budget request for renewable energy and energy efficiency and the corresponding funding levels proposed to Senator Domenici by Senators Jeffords, Allard Bingaman and Roth, as well as 50 of their Colleagues.

Current conflicts in the Middle East and the Balkans and our stressed defense capability only reinforce our earlier concerns that our increasing dependence on imported oil has serious implications for national and energy security. Wars and terrorism strongly highlight the benefits of obtaining domestic, dispersed renewable energy systems and energy efficiency.

While the sources of oil imports are currently diversified, the underlying threat to our national and energy security is defined by our, and the rest of the world's growing dependence on imports from the volatile Middle East. This dependence does not bode well for the assured and continuous flow of energy. Since liquid fuel is one of the primary energy sources driving the world's economy, it is essential that we reverse our relentlessly increasing dependence on Mid East sources.

Fortunately, the United States has pioneered the development of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies. They have served our nation well, and strengthened its leadership position in the world.

Now is clearly the time to increase our coverage under this invaluable insurance policy for our security -- i.e., the availability of renewable resources and improvements in energy efficiency. Such a commitment will not only enhance national and energy security, but also bring with it global leadership, environmental and economic benefits, new industries, and high quality jobs.

This is the position taken by 54 U.S. Senators. We recommend this position to you, as do the majority of America's citizens -- attached are the results of a recent poll on this issue.

Thank you for your attention to an issue of vital importance to the security of America

Sincerely yours,

General Lee Butler, USAAF (Rep)
Former Commander, Strategic Air Command
Strategic Air Planner, Desert Storm

Robert C. McFarlane
Former National Security Advisor
to President Ronald Reagan

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Rep)
Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

R. James Woolsey
Former Director of Central Intelligence

CC:

Majority Leader Trent Lott
Minority Leader Tom Daschle
Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert
Minority Leader Richard Gephardt

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[EIA-Alternative and renewable fuels data](#)

[EREN - Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#)

[EREN - Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Budget](#)

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[Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth](#)

[Alliance to Save Energy - 20 Years of Leadership in Energy Efficiency](#)

[American Green Network](#)

[American Solar Energy Society](#)

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[Business Council for Sustainable Energy \(BCSE\)](#)

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