

Introduction

In 2008 when I published *The Braking Point: America's Energy Dreams and Global Economic Realities*, I expressed my view that America and the world were facing an energy crisis. The good news was that America's energy problems could be solved. The bad news was that our country's energy crisis did not exist in a vacuum, was not temporary, and would not fix itself. At that time I stressed that failure to effectively deal with this problem would threaten our nation's economic prosperity and compromise our national security, and could radically alter our way of life. The book's title, *The Braking Point*, said it all: America needed to put on the brakes, stop, and assess the entire energy picture to see where our country was headed.

Five years later, the United States still does not have a strategic energy plan. From President Nixon in 1970 up to President Obama in 2012, we have been told time and again that an energy policy is in the works and a national energy plan is on the way. However, this lack of urgency comes as no surprise to me. For the first thirty years of my career in the energy industry, very little serious attention was paid by the media or government officials to energy policy and issues. That complacency finally began to change about the same time that I wrote *The Braking Point* as politicians sensed that energy security had emerged as a critical issue.

In 2008 former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich broke ground in his book, *Drill Here, Drill Now, Pay Less*, noting, "America

is suffering from an artificial energy crisis that is also a dangerous national security crisis—artificial, because America is gifted with enormous reserves of energy.”¹ In 2011 President Clinton took up the topic in *Back to Work*, insisting, “The surest way to create jobs, cut costs, enhance national security, cut the trade deficit by up to 50 percent, and fight global warming is to change the way we produce and consume energy.”² Most recently, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee addressed security aspects of energy policy in *A Simple Government*, cautioning, “Let’s not forget about the national security threats that we face every day because of our dependence on foreign oil. Countries like Saudi Arabia that make billions from us like to showcase glittering new public works projects and the like. But behind the walls they are also funding the very schools, or madrassas, that recruit, radicalize, and then train impressionable children for what is essentially the Future Terrorists of the World Club.”³

As the national debate over energy policy escalates, the tendency is to point fingers at companies in the energy business or a lack of will among elected officials to come to grips with the situation. It’s been them vs. us, with “them” not always clearly defined. I contend, however, that for too long we have been wasting time blaming the energy industry or the government for failure to adopt a national energy strategy when we, the people, should be responsible for creating the plan. As consumers of energy, we should drive the process, evaluating how we can best leverage our natural resources here at home to assure long-term energy independence and security.

Devising such a plan begins with the recognition that the United States has not independently advanced itself from the Industrial Revolution to the Information Age to become reliant on foreign oil—let alone from known enemies. Not a one of us would think to ask for a cup of sugar from a neighbor who is hostile or whom we fear. Yet America is now paying for its energy resources from nations we do not trust, and in some cases, nations that openly advocate our downfall.

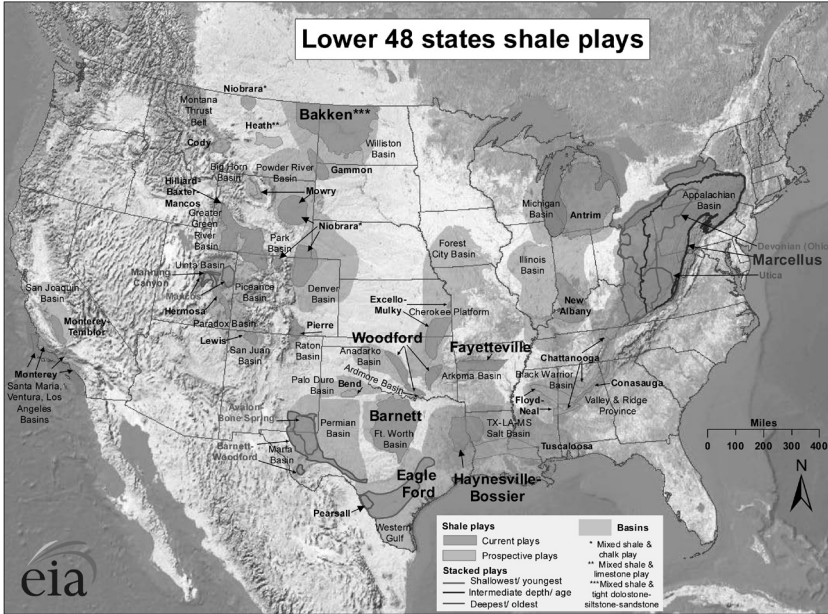
Our national security has long been one of the most important assets we cherish. For that reason we cannot afford to become addicted

to energy at any cost. Today, nothing in America moves without energy, but the definition of energy security also extends to power generation. To be independent means not just avoiding foreign oil, but creating a forward-thinking infrastructure that provides for our lifestyle needs. Whenever we flip a light switch in this country, the lights turn on. Many people overseas do not enjoy that certainty. For instance, while visiting the Czech Republic not long ago, I rode in an elevator that would stop and then start again due to intermittent energy. Americans would never tolerate that kind of situation. We take our energy security for granted—an attitude that ultimately could prove dangerous for our economic and national security well-being.

Second, we have to accept that a viable energy plan requires the private and public sector to work together. Since I entered the energy business in 1977, the industry has continually been forced to defend itself. For example, in 1985 I testified before the US Senate and Natural Resources Committee in a forty-three-page report on the potentially devastating effects that proposed regulations would have on the oil and gas industry in Oklahoma, in terms of job loss and reductions in drilling expenditures, at a time when this vital industry most needed support. American oil and gas companies have a history of being major contributors to their communities by providing funds for local schools, hospitals, and charities. To achieve energy independence, the American people must rally behind these companies and recognize the essential role they play in powering our lives 24–7 at home and work.

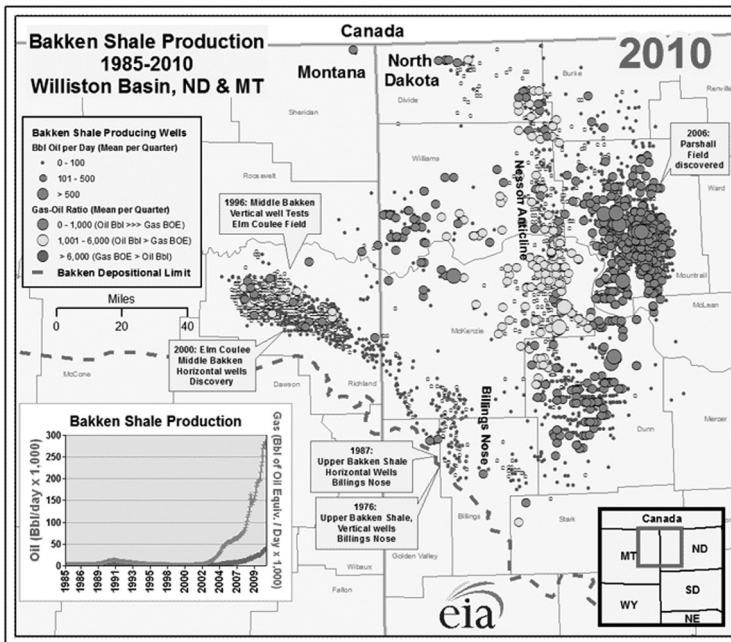
Third, as the title of this book advocates, America needs America's energy. This is not just a concept, but a truth. In the four years since *The Braking Point* was published, several significant advances in the energy business hold promise of helping us establish energy independence. For starters, there has been a dramatic increase in natural gas supplies in our nation due to shale gas drilling that uses a technology known as hydraulic fracturing. As Chart 1 illustrates, the lower forty-eight states contain a potential wealth of shale plays.

Chart 1



Simultaneously, we are enjoying a tremendous increase in our oil reserves due to activity in drilling, primarily in the Bakken play in North Dakota and Montana.

Chart 1a



As Chart 1a shows, this activity is not only helping offset a decline in oil production from the long-established oil field in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, but also driving a boom in jobs and newfound prosperity for communities in these two states.

Despite these positive signs, the need for an energy plan is more urgent than ever. Why? Because it takes so many years to build an effective, efficient infrastructure. The best analogy is our interstate highway system. If not for the vision of President Eisenhower back in the 1950s to construct this massive infrastructure, the road system we so heavily rely on today wouldn't exist. Contrast that with the 1978 Fuels Act under President Carter, who insisted we didn't have enough natural gas, so we needed to go back to coal. Such unwillingness to confront the problem set us back years, the consequences of which we are still suffering today. That is why we can no longer wait. We must develop a strategic energy plan for the future or we will reach the point where we regress to the status of third-world countries with brownouts, or even worse, blackmail and subjection to price control by enemy states. America cannot and should not ever find itself in the position of having to ration power simply because we don't have the willingness to plan.

The good news is that some people here aren't waiting for a mandate. As I travel the country educating people about the need for America to deploy its own energy resources, I've discovered cities are already looking at different approaches. For instance, Austin, Texas is testing a smart grid, a biomass plant is operating in Wichita, Kansas, and up in North Dakota the emphasis is on oil. Other cities in Texas are looking at wind power, while Oklahoma is focusing on natural gas. A national plan doesn't mean we all rely on natural gas, or wind, or solar power, but that we tailor our approach based on the resources indigenous to our area, along with expanding into other energy sources that are easily transported. Even though energy in Oklahoma is centered on natural gas, we have an abundance of natural gas nationwide that will enable us to build an infrastructure clear across the country that everyone can tap.

These examples are but a few of the signs on the horizon that the issue of energy security is at last reaching critical mass. This book is dedicated to the proposition that we need an energy revolution in this country right now, and the leaders should be we, the people. By turning to new technologies, innovation, and the enduring American spirit that has enabled us to overcome every challenge this nation has faced since our founding, the goal of total energy independence can be achieved before it is too late. And we are the ones who will have to do it, because our societal institutions have proven they are not up to the task.

With that as inspiration, I invite you to join me in part 1 as we explore the fundamental facts about our energy picture, then and now. In part 2 I provide you with basic background information on the wide array of alternative and renewable energy forms available, along with their pros and cons. Part 3 is where you kick-start the planning process for the People's Energy Plan by evaluating your personal energy use, which will give you a good feel for the variables involved in creating an umbrella national plan. In the back of the book you'll find additional helpful material, including web links, references, a glossary of energy terms, and recommended reading.

Another resource that will inspire you to get involved in creating the People's Energy Plan for America is *The Grand Energy Transition (The GET)*, a powerful new documentary film released in 2012. Based on the book of the same name by Robert Hefner III, founder and owner of GHK Exploration, who pioneered deep and ultra-deep natural gas exploration, *The GET* forecasts the continuing decline of coal and oil, and predicts the coming "Age of Energy Gases." In Hefner's opinion, America's abundant natural gas will serve as the major bridge to this new energy age, along with wind and solar power, to create a new, hydrogen-based economy. The film was directed by Emmy award winner Greg Mellott and produced by Gray Frederickson, who won an Oscar for coproducing *The Godfather: Part II*. To learn more about *The GET*, visit www.The-GET.com.

As you can already tell, encouraging the people of America to take up the cause of energy independence has become a passion of mine, so as you join in this journey, I'd like to hear from you. Just send me an email at info@energyadvocates.org. I also welcome you to visit www.EnergyAdvocates.org, where you can get informational materials on the subject as well as a bumper sticker sharing our message that, now more than ever, "America Needs America's Energy." Future generations are depending on us to keep the American dream alive.

Notes for the Introduction

1. Gingrich, Newt. Introduction to *Drill Here, Drill Now, Pay Less*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc. 2008.
2. Clinton, Bill. *Back to Work*. New York: Knopf Publishing. 2011. p. 142.
3. Huckabee, Mike. *A Simple Government*. New York: Sentinel HC. 2011. p. 120.
4. US Senate. February 15, 1985. Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. *Impact of Treasury Department Tax Reform Proposal on Oil and Gas Industry*.