

Gigantic Crises Demand Out-of-the-Box Solutions

Today's world civilization, with over seven billion people, is facing the early end of a short epoch dependant in all ways, directly or indirectly, on finite fossil fuels.

The primary energy source, including the context for all other energy systems, as well as nearly all modern transportation and food supplies, is oil. At the present rate of one billion barrels extracted and consumed every eleven days, there cannot be more than forty years left in the oil age as it has been in the last eighty years.

Starting with this premise that the world is facing the imminent decline of oil, we can now understand in hindsight why this geological limitation underlies and transcends all of today's urgent news concerns including: climate change, world geopolitical unrest, U.S. military presence, terrorism aimed at the U.S., stagnated economic growth, food stamps, and especially, growing income/wealth inequality.

The U.S. public is especially implicated in this morass of related issues because we consume one-fourth of the world's oil with only four-percent of the population. This egregious anomaly equates, per capita, to twenty-two barrels of oil for each American per year, versus the world average of four barrels per person per year.

In fact, American gasoline consumption at ten barrels (or four hundred gallons) per person per year, just for gasoline (!!), is the number one consumer bloc in the world equal to all of China's, or all of Eurozone's, total oil consumption.

This explains why oil extraction did not "peak" and begin to decline in 2005 as predicted. Instead, higher gasoline prices temporarily supported the higher costs required for increased production from "non-conventional" sources like hydraulic fracturing, deep off shore, polar, tar sands, and natural gas condensates.

In this same time frame, U.S. gasoline consumption did concurrently level off despite increasing population. Our government and most Americans went into ever-increasing debt to perpetuate our profligate lifestyle. Much of American gasoline consumption is for frivolous and inefficient travel while we quickly consume our most precious finite resource. The oil we use today will not be there for near-term future requirements for food, for our kids, and to support a smooth transition to other lower-energy sources, all with a steadily-increasing population.

The only meaningful response ("solution") to the terminal oil crisis we now face is nation-wide gasoline rationing. An electronic-coupon, tradable, fuel allotment to each registered driver would extend what's left of the oil age and mitigate all the other related issues mentioned above. All Americans would share equally and the surplus income and wealth would divert to revitalizing the rest of our economy.

John G. Howe (See: solarcarandtractor.com for details from new book) 7/1/2015