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MONDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2004

Oil, Gas Guzzlers and National Security

by Michael in New York on 10/04/2004 09:58:00 PM

A fine New Yorker article by John Cassidy weaves together the difficulties of **achieving energy independence**, our current quagmire, the hidden gas tax we pay via our Defense Department budget, President Carter's foreign policy that everyone has followed since and much more.

One absurd fact:

"A quicker and less costly way to conserve fuel would be to tighten up the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency standards, which President Ford introduced. The fuel-efficiency requirements—27.5 miles per gallon for cars; 21 miles per gallon for light trucks—**have hardly been raised since 1986**. Moreover, many S.U.V.s are officially classed as light trucks, which means they are subject to less stringent requirements. If this loophole was closed, at least according to some estimates, demand for gasoline would drop by a million barrels a day—two-thirds of what we import from Saudi Arabia."

We've done nothing to demand more fuel efficient cars in almost 20 years and haven't closed the loophole involving SUVs, the most popular category today? That's insane.

President Kerry (God willing) should call in the big auto makers and tell them it's their duty to the nation to do everything they can. He shouldn't ask them, he should tell them they **MUST** improve fuel efficiency dramatically and make those cars widely available (they're not keeping up with demand for hybrids).

And Kerry should publicly tell them he'll inform the American people that **WHATEVER** company introduces an affordable, significantly more fuel efficient car will get his endorsement that it's our **PATRIOTIC DUTY** to buy that car -- whether it's made by Ford or GM or Toyota or Hyundai or Honda. And if the losers don't like it they can make one just as competitive themselves and he'll add it to the list. Just a thought. And don't tell me this won't solve the problem. Every drop of oil (and blood) counts.



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