

# A Strategy for Tomorrow

(Draft Discussion Document)

Timothy E. Wirth

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The September 11 terrorist attacks highlight the need for a new and broader national security strategy. The terrorists' goal is to radicalize the Middle East and Persian Gulf, thereby disrupting oil supplies to America, Europe, and Japan. Osama bin Laden has vowed to increase world oil prices six-fold. The result would be a global economic disaster, to which we have allowed ourselves to become increasingly vulnerable. The fight against terror must be fought on many fronts. But one component should be a Strategic Energy Initiative that reduces our petroleum dependence and insulates us at least somewhat from the toxic politics of the Middle East.

As President Bush said earlier this year, "national security is energy security." He failed to add, however, that there will be no real long term energy security unless we rapidly wean ourselves from an overwhelming reliance on oil and other fossil fuels. The 1973 Arab oil embargo caused long gas lines and triggered a recession in the West. When the Shah of Iran was toppled six years later, oil prices tripled and we suffered the worst economic downturn in half a century. More recently, gyrating oil prices have complicated the financial planning of governments and businesses alike, generating uncertainty and inhibiting growth. Then came September 11.

The challenge of fossil fuels is complicated enough in these geo-political terms. The environmental overlay makes our energy future even more complex. Just as the facts of oil dependence are jarring, so is the compelling information about the environment, especially global warming. If we do not slow and stabilize our emissions of carbon into the atmosphere by 60-75%, we will cause the temperature of the earth to rise by 6-12 degrees Fahrenheit. In other words, we are frying our world.

Equally alarming is the trend in global population. Last year the world's population reached six billion people. In a decade and a half, another billion will be sharing our planet, and the world's population will grow to nine billion by 2050. Nineteen out of twenty of our new neighbors will be born in the developing world, most in societies dependent on oil they do not have and cannot afford. The impoverished young will join the 1.3 billion people now living on less than a dollar a day. In such a world, it will not require an Osama bin Laden to recruit criminals and terrorists.

The solution includes development that enables countries everywhere to prosper and grow. The traditional energy path is incapable of fueling this kind of development because it is so unevenly distributed and so polluting. If we put a billion gas-belching SUVs on Asian highways, we'll all choke to death. And most people in the fastest growing regions of the world have little if no access to centrally powered energy grids--and even if they did, most of the electricity would be generated by burning coal, the most carbon intensive fossil fuel with the greatest impact on global warming.

This triangle of energy - global warming - poverty presents the world with huge challenges: can we stabilize the politics of oil, slow global warming and help the growing numbers of the world's poor - all at the same time? The answer is yes, but only if we are willing to think and act much more creatively and urgently.

First oil. Seventy-five percent of our oil is used on transportation, a dependence, which we can help to alter by sharply increased efficiency in the short term, by much more far reaching transportation alternatives in the mid-term, and by alternative fuels over time. Our average fuel efficiency is worse now than it has been in twenty years; Congress can reverse this trend tomorrow. Mass transit, particularly rail, is in demand in every metropolitan area in the country, and provides an excellent opportunity for real jobs with real economic impact. And hydrogen as a basic fuel has moved from dream to reality, and is the energy source of the future for Detroit.

Second, global warming. Alternative transportation strategies are critical to both energy security and environmental security. But in order not to fry, we also must change our central power systems. In the short term we can close our dirtiest coal generating power plants (as required by the Clean Air Act) and incorporate the so-called Four-Pollutant control strategy proposed by then-candidate Bush during the 2000 campaign. In the mid-term we can accelerate the inclusion of wind power, which is now economically competitive with most other power generation technologies. And over the long term, we can adopt to a renewably generated power system (wind, solar, fuel cells, bio-mass) whose components are well known, cost-competitive, and clean.

Third, help for the poor. The desperate and dangerous chasm between rich and poor will only be closed through a development strategy. Central to development is energy, and this energy has to be both secure and clean. The same technologies that we must employ are those that are essential to the poorest, largely rural populations of the world. Forty percent of the world's population is in China and India, and their opportunities are closely linked to the development of our best technologies.

This new global security framework will not be easy to reach, but the ingredients are there, as is the political coalition needed to get the job done. Just as he has built a military coalition for the war on terrorism, President Bush can cobble together an unlikely coalition for the future of our globe. Mass Transit brings in major elements of organized labor and most big city mayors. As the new CEO at Ford, Henry Ford can help to bring accelerated change to the auto industry. From BP (now Beyond petroleum) energy industry leadership can be catalyzed. The grass roots capacity of the environmental movement can become an ally rather than an opponent of the President. And global political leaders like UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and President Enrique Cardoso of Brazil can be enlisted to help engage the eager developing world and Tony Blair can certainly be counted upon to continue the enlightened environmental leadership that has characterized the UK for the last decade.

The President has found willing partners for one challenge, and would discover the same support for this other complex global challenge were he to ask. Members of this new coalition would surely blend their single purposes into a broad strategy, if they receive appropriate leadership and vision.

It is said nine-tenths of wisdom is being wise in time. Obviously, this transition will take time. Oil will have a role in our energy picture, albeit a diminishing one, for decades to come. Oil-exporting countries will have ample opportunity to adjust. But other countries will welcome the chance to grow in steady, sustainable and self-sufficient ways. And American workers, business people, consumers and just plain citizens will benefit from the creation of new jobs, the development of new industries, the protection of the environment, and the lessening of danger caused by our oil dependency.