



## Activists' Ideological War On Energy

### Description

**USA: The conflict in Ukraine evokes a World War II strategy we had all hoped was gone forever: the purposeful victimization and killing of civilians to weaken and demoralize the opposition. Sadly, climate activists who seem to exert inordinate control over U.S. government policies are exacting an analogously high price from the American public in pursuit of their ideological goals. They are conducting what we call the War On American Energy, or WOAE (pronounced "WHOA!")**

The WOAE strategies include direct actions as well as less obvious "behind the lines" logistics and support functions. The most destructive is the attack on the nation's fuel supply. Biden administration officials have rescinded permissions for existing pipelines such as the Keystone XL; cancelled the sale of exploration leases in the Gulf of Mexico and off Alaska; and slowed the issuance of permits for collateral construction such as roads necessary to use existing exploration leases. Despite their own culpability for obstructions to drilling, they threaten early cancellation of "unused" leases.

To add insult to injury, President Joe Biden has called on energy to companies to [refine more and profit less](#) after disincentivizing investment in fossil fuels to achieve "cleaner energy." What kind of disincentivizing? Who can forget Biden's emphatic message during the election campaign about his energy policies if he were to become president: "No more subsidies for the fossil fuel industry. No more drilling, including offshore. No ability for the oil industry to continue to drill, period. It ends."

The results are predictable: Less investment in energy, diminished resilience against supply disruptions, and massive spikes in fuel prices. And earlier this month, the [EPA proposed](#) to reverse a Trump-era rule that limited the power of states and Native American tribes to block energy projects like natural-gas pipelines, a certain path to increasing costs and delays.

So much for the once much-vaunted phrase, "American energy independence."

Activists are also engaged in a relentless disinformation campaign to hide the challenges of renewable energy sources. Wind and solar power without sufficient fossil fuel or battery backup will produce rolling blackouts. Battery backup for just the region of West Texas that lost power for four days

in February 2021 would cost about \$20 billion (11,000 turbines times 96 hours times two megawatts per turbine-hour times \$100,000 per megawatt hour for batteries).

Also, building wind and solar farms consumes *millions of tons* of steel, concrete, plastic, etc., at a high energy cost. Furthermore, management of power grids is hugely complicated by the variable nature of power generation from renewables, including the mandated purchase of excess electricity from consumers with solar panels on their roofs.

Then there is the fantasy of electric vehicles (EVs) as a panacea. Expensive subsidies remain necessary, and *each EV* requires 250 tons of minerals to be mined with an energy expenditure of 86 million BTUs, which is equal to 1.5 person-years of *total* energy consumption. Many of the necessary rare earth elements and lithium are scarce and come from hostile or largely inaccessible parts of the world such as China, Congo, and Russia, and industrial-scale battery demands would exacerbate the problem. And although charging at single-family homes seems straightforward, neighborhood power transformers are generally intended to supply eight to 10 homes *without* EVs, presaging major renovations of local grids. Plus, are we willing to tear up our streets to install chargers for city dwellers? And who pays for and manages a vastly expanded garage charging infrastructure? And all this while we're producing less reliable and more expensive electric power.

Paradoxically, the ideal available clean energy – nuclear – continues to be disfavored and has long been headed for the WOEAE scrap heap. This is despite the potential of small modular reactors and even “nuclear batteries,” which can be used to power devices and machines of any size, from aircraft and rockets to charging electric vehicles. Perfectly safe and serviceable nuclear plants are being decommissioned at an alarming rate. Germany is now deeply regretting former Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to phase out nuclear energy.

Finally, there is the unreality of the entire underlying rationale for the WOEAE. While the United States produces 14% (and a decreasing fraction) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), China, India, and Russia account for 40%. How are our actions supposed to affect their practices? China and India have 1,400 coal power facilities, with their numbers growing, while the U.S. has 240, with the number declining. And the war in Ukraine has clearly exposed the national security implications of insufficient energy resources that can lead to energy blackmail.

The WOEAE is putting at risk America's security and economic well-being. And in the process, strategies to promote resilience from geopolitical or climatic challenges are neglected. Politicians should be devising approaches like coastal building restrictions, mass planting of CO2-absorbing trees, carbon sequestration technology, and a massive expansion of nuclear power. But the WOEAE consists largely of endless virtue-signaling and pinning medals on one another for imaginary victories. Its strategy is no better conceived or beneficial to the public than is Vladimir Putin's in Ukraine. We Americans need to find our Volodymyr Zelensky for this fight.

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## **Date Created**

06/28/2022