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Davis Robinson

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AN ENERGY POLICY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Introduction – Davis Robinson[†]

I have the privilege of serving as the presider for a panel entitled “An Energy Policy for the 21st Century.” This panel is a panel of one, the distinguished David Jhirad, who I will introduce to you in a moment.

I must say I found the last presentation really frightening. I am not an energy authority, and I want to commend Henry and his illustrious colleagues for once again having organized a very timely and important conference, and I think we all owe all of you an enormous debt of gratitude, so we thank you for that.

I must say, reading the name of this session, “An Energy Policy for the 21st Century,” I do not really understand the title because it seems to be an oxymoron. We do not have any energy policy. I do not see how our two countries can share an energy policy. When the disparities between our views and our disagreements are so intense in each of our two nations, I do not see how you would get those two countries to some form of commonality as to our energy policies when we do not seem to agree about anything at all. We do not agree about whether the decisions we make should be based on the market, or the environment, economic security, employment, or conservation, or whether it ought to be on all of the above or a mixture of some of those factors.

I must say, as a former U.S. government official, I am horrified to remember the time after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. You may remember that, under President Ford, we had Project Independence,¹ and then we had the Synthetic Fuels Corporation.² At that time, the United States was importing about 30 percent of its overall energy needs. Here we are now, 30

[†] Partner, LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae, New York City, New York. B.A., *magna cum laude*, Yale University; LL.B., *cum laude*, Harvard University.

¹ The goal of Project Independence, first started by President Richard Nixon in 1973 after the oil embargo, was to achieve energy self-sufficiency by 1980. See *Department of Energy: About Us*, at <http://energy.gov/aboutus/history/timeline79.html> (last visited July 11, 2002). See also *Some Questions for a Questionable “Project Independence,”* 4 *Envtl. L. Rep.* 10111 (1974), available at <http://www.elr.info/articles/vol4/4.10111.htm>.

² The Synthetic Fuels Corporation was established during the Carter Administration by Pub. L. No. 96-294, §§ 115-123, June 30, 1980, 94 Stat. 636, 636-682, codified as 42 U.S.C. §§ 8711-8795. The Corporation was terminated by Pub. L. No. 99- 272, § 7403(b), Apr. 7, 1986, 100 Stat. 144 (noted at 42 U.S.C. § 8791).

years later, and we are importing about 55 percent of our needs.³ The Synthetic Fuels Corporation, a venture on which we spent hundreds of millions of dollars, is no more. There is no Project Independence; next Thursday, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia is paying a visit to the President on his Texas ranch.⁴ What if Saudi Arabia decided to do in the year 2002 what the Arab Gulf States did in 1973? I am assuming that will not occur, but when you think about it - if Saudi Arabia were to turn off the switch - such an event would be fairly cataclysmic.

With that, I really look forward to our speaker. David Jhirad is now a visiting professor of science technology and international affairs at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. He also works as Executive Vice President of The Gemstar Group.

David has a very, very distinguished background. He was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Energy Policy, Trade and Investment in the Clinton Administration. In the past, he was a vice chairman of the Governing Board of the International Energy Agency. He has also served as a senior advisor to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and he worked as a research physicist for both IBM and for Cal Tech. He holds degrees from Delhi University in India, from Cambridge University, and from Harvard University in the United States. I now will hand the podium over to David Jhirad.

³ If we use crude oil as a proxy for energy imports, in 1975, the U.S. received 14,431,000 barrels of crude oil per day, and 6,056,000 barrels per day (43.1%) were from foreign sources. In the year 2000, the U.S. received 16,927,000 barrels of crude oil per day, and 11,093,000 barrels per day (65.5%) came from foreign sources. See *Petroleum Imports by Country of Origin, 1960-2000*, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/aer/txt/tab0504.htm> (last visited July 11, 2002), *Crude Oil Production and Oil Well Production, 1960-2000*, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/aer/txt/tab0502.htm> (last visited July 11, 2002).

⁴ See Jeanne Cummings, *Cheney Trip Forces Change In U.S. Plan*, WALL ST. J., Mar. 18, 2002, at A11, available at 2002 WL-WSJ 3388938.