



No Longer Dependent on OPEC!

New procedures for extracting oil and natural gas from the earth have skyrocketed the United States to now producing as much as comes out of Saudi Arabia. And the U.S. could soon easily eclipse the Saudis. [North Dakota's Bakken shale field](#) is only one region where hydraulic fracturing (fracking) has made tremendous resources available. Other known locations where fracking can lead to production have yet to be tapped.

For decades, our nation has been yanked around by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Our nation's need for energy continued to grow and our dependence on OPEC members to sell it to us has always placed the U.S. in a bind, financially and diplomatically. OPEC surely took advantage of our dependence, both in the prices Americans had to pay and in the conduct of our nation's foreign policy. [But all of that is changing.](#)

Oil prices have been halved over the past year, much to the delight of America's industrial sector and the millions who drive an automobile and use oil to heat their homes. Natural gas prices have likewise come down — or not risen as expected. And there seems now to be a virtually limitless supply of both types of energy within our borders.

As reported by the *New York Times*, Jason Bordoff, former energy advisor to President Obama and now director of Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy, has noted that "with a global glut and prices cratering, the United States is in the driver's seat." All aspects of energy production have not completely changed however. The [hurdle known as environmentalism](#) remains. There are [areas within the U.S.](#) where fracking has been prohibited. Construction of the Keystone pipeline that would transport Canadian oil from its tar sands to refineries in the U.S. is still being blocked by the Obama administration due to environmental claims.

With much of the Middle East in turmoil, with U.S. supplier and OPEC member Venezuela unpredictable, and with needs for energy rising not falling, . Being independent of others for critical energy will strengthen our nation's position financially and diplomatically. What remains to be seen is whether U.S. leaders will take advantage of this remarkable development to reassert political independence as well.

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