

Preparing African Countries for the Revolution in Global Energy Production. Lessons from the Energy Policies of the United States.

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Abstract: There is the widely held assumption that America has not had an energy policy for over 40 years and is desperately in need a government directed energy policy. Further, this omission has been detrimental to America economic growth and security. This paper explains that contrary to the assumptions, America for the last four decades, through Executive Orders has implemented successful energy policies that were consistent with positions taken by countries globally. The policies were based upon the scarcity or constrained supply of fossil fuels, the need to expand oil and gas exploration, invest in alternative fuels and consider environmental impacts. The policies were rather consistent from President Carter first addressing the oil embargo to Executive Orders from President Obama. Many of the high-level policies were implemented by the private sector with government incentives. Few policies were implemented through legislation. For the first time in more than 40 years a drastic energy policy change is needed. New technology has moved the world from energy constraints to abundance. We cannot modify the nation's energy policy unless we understand the reality of where we were and where we are with domestic and global energy supply and demand. Suggestions for a new energy policy are provided for the coming era of energy abundance.

African nations have been in a similar situation to the United States. There has been no coherent energy policy in 40 years. Yet, African nations are subject to the same global energy issues that drive policies in the United States. The existing philosophy is to seek global energy companies to develop natural resources for export and use foreign exchange for internal development. The results have provided minimal success and often failure. This export based model will find even less success with global energy abundance. Future African policy needs to rely upon a combination of natural resource export and the generation of internal demand for energy. Demand development is difficult, but necessary for sustainable growth and independence.

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