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## President Obama's Three-Front War On Energy

By Robert Bradley Jr. - 11/5/2012

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President Obama sure claims to love carbon-based energy. We have “increased oil production to the highest levels in 16 years.” Production of natural gas is “the highest it’s been in decades.” And coal? “We have seen increases in coal production and coal employment.”

Such statements led the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* to conclude: “One of the feats of President Obama’s re-election campaign is its ability to describe his record in a way that bears little or no relation to the reality of the last four years.”

Such half-truths are a pernicious way of lying because the whole truth is being hidden under a pretense of honesty. This is why in the court of law, persons are required to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

But Obama used the above words to describe the state of American energy during a recent debate with Mitt Romney. Left-environmentalists cringed, and free-market side cried foul.

The truth, of course, is that Obama has spent the past four years talking down and regulating up oil, coal, and even natural gas.

Demonizing the alleged global-warming industries may play well with a key Obama constituency, but it has come at the expense of taxpayers as bankruptcies pile up with wind, solar, and battery firms. But by waging war on America’s energy core, the President has held back scores of would-have-been jobs, contributed to layoffs, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

For example, the President has been fond of saying that he has boosted oil production to its highest level since the mid-1990s. But as the fact checkers noted, the good news pertains to private land, which happened *in spite* of Obama thanks to a technology boom. On federal land, production is down.

Obama says he is dedicated to opening new federal lands for drilling, yet no President has ever offered fewer offshore leases. Even Jimmy Carter, not exactly

an oil man, did better: Leases during Carter's term numbered 36. During Obama's? Fifteen.

Not content with just offering fewer leases, this President has actively canceled leases promised during George W. Bush's presidency. The administration has executed on only 11 of the 21 sales scheduled for 2007 to 2013.

Obama's opposition to oil even informed his response to the Deepwater Horizon disaster. Instead of shutting down drilling exclusively in the immediate region of the explosion, the President shut down all drilling in the Gulf. For comparison, imagine the FAA grounding all flights in the United States because of a single crash in Florida. The court system eventually had to intervene to get the White House to loosen up.

The price for these anti-drilling policies goes beyond higher energy prices and increased dependence on foreign governments. A recent survey by Greater New Orleans, Inc., a public-private economic policy group, found that the halt in drilling is forcing small- and medium-sized business in the Gulf to shed workers or leave the region entirely.

Less subtle than Obama's war on oil is his campaign against coal. Back in 2008, Obama said he favored a cap-and-trade system so severe it would effectively prohibit the construction of new coal plants.

"If somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can," he told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "It's just that it will bankrupt them because they're going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted."

With 486 billion tons of extractable coal, the U.S. has enough supply to meet its electricity needs for the next 500 years. And wind power, a noted energy fetish for the President, costs 75 percent more than coal.

And when it comes to natural gas, this President has moved to the left even of Al Gore. Not so long ago, Mr. Gore was among the many environmentalists who deemed natural gas the fossil fuel of the future because it emits considerably less CO<sub>2</sub> than coal or oil. And thanks to recent technological advances in so-called "fracking," extracting the abundant pools of natural gas in the United States is cheaper and easier than ever.

But President Obama has designs on squashing natural gas, too. This summer, White House energy aide Heather Zichal announced that the Interior Department would issue new, restrictive rules for fracking after the election. You can bet they won't be in favor of more drilling.

If you only watched the debates or the President's stump speeches, you could be forgiven for thinking Obama does actually support an "all of the above" energy

policy. But a closer look reveals the lengths his administration has gone to fight against fossil fuels — and to conceal this agenda from voters.

Mr. Obama works hard to hide his record and deep-seated agenda. The time has come for a concrete pro-energy agenda based on market incentives, not rhetorical tricks.

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