



Breaking Defense has a great piece on how fracking, climate change, and solar energy may reshape United States foreign policy.

The piece recognizes that advances in fracking have helped place the U.S. in a much more stable position with regard to its foreign policy because of the tremendous amount of oil and gas that we are producing along with the corresponding decline in imports. Even with these developments, national security is, however, still affected by foreign energy disputes and by changing environmental conditions.

For instance, Saudi Arabia alone has about 266 billion barrels of high-quality and cheap-to-produce oil in its reserves. Meanwhile, the U.S. has about 44.2 billion barrels of expensive-to-produce oil reserves. Even with the advances in fracking, the U.S. is still at a considerable disadvantage in the international energy game. Our domestic oil reserves may cap the upper end of where OPEC can currently set pricing, but we may still be beholden to Middle East oil for many years and the U.S. will likely maintain a presence in the region for that duration.

Climate change was another interesting area that the article recognized will have implications for our national security objectives. China is in the overdue process of addressing certain greenhouse gas emissions. This is challenging because the Chinese government requires "huge and fast economic development," which is contingent upon cheap fuel. It is unlikely, although not impossible, that the Chinese government will agree to world and domestic pressures to cut heavy greenhouse gas-emitting fuels when it will have the effect of harming China's economic growth.

And, as the article notes, China is not the only country that is likely to continue increasing the use of environmentally-unfriendly fuels: India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are similarly following suit in the hopes of quick economic development.

The biggest takeaway from the article, though, is fracking's impact on our national security may be shorter-lived than we had all hoped.



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