

GOING GEOTHERMAL

R. James Woolsey – currently of Booz Allen Hamilton and formerly of, among other places, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of the Navy – recently testified about the “Geopolitical Implications of Rising Oil Dependence and Global Warming” before the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming of the U.S. House of Representatives. He argued for building what he called “a portfolio of approaches to breaking oil’s strategic hold on us.” He also offered a



useful and irresistibly entertaining typology of “Critics of Moving Away From Dependence”:

Broadly speaking there seem to be four main types of critics of developing a portfolio to move away from oil dependence.

The first, more or less characterized by a recent report by the Council on Foreign Relations, seems to be driven by a concern that in seeking to move away from oil dependence we will do foolish nationalistic things. For example, the report states that “[t]he voices that espouse ‘energy independence’ are doing the nation a disservice by focusing on a goal that is unachievable over the foreseeable future” But virtually no one who is working to reduce dependence on oil has as his objective a simple switching of buying patterns (*e.g.*, we buy more from Canada and Mexico, Europe buys more from the Middle East); this, of course, would have no major effect on the essentially world-wide oil market. Nor are those who wish to reduce dependence fixated on achieving at any cost total energy autarchy – the straw man the report creates, then argues against. The American people have met difficult challenges before – there is no reason not to use

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our capacity for technological innovation to reduce our oil dependence decisively while at the same time avoiding fantasies of finding single perfect solutions. The Council Report amounts to telling someone afflicted with alcoholism that he needs to remember that a glass or two of red wine a day would be good for his health. There is truth in the point, but it's not the main thing he needs to fix right now.

The second type is a few car buffs who have not kept up with battery technology and are somehow infuriated at the suggestion that electricity could be a useful and effective method of fueling transportation in place of gasoline. It is indeed difficult to rev loudly a car using electric drive – it just persistently stays quiet. If performance is the objective, however, the acceleration of which an electric motor is capable can be quite remarkable. The new Tesla all-electric roadster advertises zero to sixty in 3.95 seconds. I've driven it. It's true.

The third type of critic apparently prefers paying oil producing states in the hope that they will not generate terrorists rather than giving tax credits for producing alternative fuels in the US. For example, recently in the *Milken Institute Review* Messrs. Jerry Taylor and Peter Van Doren wrote that they didn't want to see greater use of alternative fuels lead to "smaller producer-state subsidies" to the "young" and "underemployed" of oil-exporting states since "reduc[ing] revenues flowing to Islamic terrorists might perversely increase the recruitment pool for Islamic terrorists" This might be called the "Billions for tribute, not one cent for oil alternatives" approach.

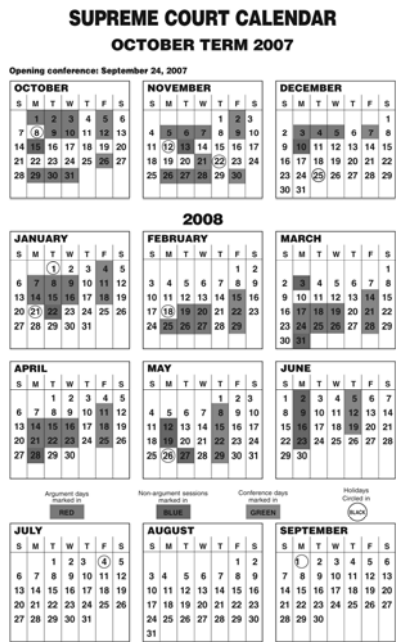
Finally, there is the new Satanism school. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* columnist Holman Jenkins recently accused me personally of "surrendering [my] soul upfront" and "rushing into a devil's bargain" by praising the use of ethanol rather than oil products, and then again that "Satan will insist on his due" even though I urge moving from corn to cellulosic biomass as a feedstock. I was really shocked at this allegation – not about me, since I would honestly have to plead guilty to at least second-degree ethanol support, but I was surprised to see Mr. Jenkins link the Devil to ethanol, even

outside the context of excessive recreational ethanol consumption. So I communicated to Mr. Jenkins that I had given him a call and the Devil had assured me that it wasn't true: "I'm totally," he said, "invested in geothermal."

- Testimony of R. James Woolsey before the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, April 18, 2007, globalwarming.house.gov/pdf/april182007woolseytestimonyfinal.pdf.

SUPREME COURT CALENDARS

This is what the Supreme Court's calendar for its next work year looks like. It is difficult to tell from this little black-and-white version, but the shaded dates indicate oral argument days (red), non-argument sessions (blue), and conference days (green). Holidays are circled. It is an admirably simple, clean, and functional design. Useful but, alas, not entertaining. Then there is the Court's other, more detailed, weekly calendar, commonly called the "Argument Calendar."



Between the two of them, they provide the Supreme Court practitioner or observer with all the essential, practical calendrical information about the Court.

But what about nonessential, impractical, but entertaining calendrical information? Until now there has been no such such resource for the Supreme Court. For a preview of the first effort to fill this gap, see the inside front cover of this issue.

- supremecourtus.gov/oral_arguments/07termcourtcalendar.pdf; Tony Mauro, Supreme Court 2008 (Museum Concepts 2007), www.supremecourthistory.org.