

# Where's Our Energy?

So, there I am pulling into a gas station in my town and Tarek is smiling. He owns the station and right now he's charging me \$4.25 a gallon. American motorists may not be better off than they were four years ago, but Tarek certainly is.

When President Obama took office the average price for a gallon of regular gas was \$1.84. That means gas prices have more than doubled on Mr. Obama's watch. But why?

The primary reason is that the system is rigged. Oil companies watch the worldwide speculation market, and if the traders are bidding the price of oil up because Iran misbehaves or something – up goes the pump price. When the speculators sell short, the price of gasoline drops but not nearly as much as it jumped. That cycle is repeated a few times a year.

Then there's OPEC, which raises prices every time the United States pumps dollars in the economy. Last week the Fed released \$23 billion dollars into the marketplace hoping the cash would spur lending by the banks. The oil sheiks well understand that flooding the zone with currency devalues the worth of the dollar, so they raise their prices to get more greenbacks in the hope of keeping their staggering profits stable.

Another reason Americans are getting hosed at the pump is that President Obama loathes the fossil fuel industry, and does everything he can to inhibit production. He stopped the oil pipeline from Canada, makes ocean drilling very difficult, and taxes the hell out of traditional energy. Of course, the folks pay the taxes.

Mr. Obama is a green guy and his administration has invested about \$100 billion taxpayer dollars in clean energy projects. In theory, that sounds good. Wind power, solar energy, electric cars, all would make the planet cleaner and the

sheiks poorer. The problem is that the technology is not developed yet. The President knows that but tilts at windmills anyway.

In truth, the USA does not have an energy policy. The Department of Energy apparently has a giant dartboard and whatever alternative energy industry is hit that day gets money. The bankrupt Solyndra solar company cost the taxpayer more than \$500 million dollars. Other failed Green enterprises have added to the incredible national debt as well.

A few people are riding around in electric cars (something that infuriates Tarek) but not many. Those automobiles are generally expensive, and the plug-in stuff complicated. American society is largely driven (sorry) by easy, convenient products. Risking electrocution in a rainstorm while ginning up a Prius might hold some folks back.

Finally, there may be big trouble ahead at the gas station. If Israel attacks Iran over nukes, worldwide oil prices will explode as well. \$8 a gallon? Could happen.