



The Saudi Systempunkt and the Vulnerability of the Oil Supply Revisited

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on August 24, 2005 - 8:04pm

Topic: [Supply/Production](#)

[In one of the early posts back at TOD 1.0](#), I blogged [a piece by John Robb over at Global Guerrillas on the lack of security with regard to oil supply](#) in Saudi Arabia and around the world. John Robb had said in his entry:

"The defense of energy infrastructure against well orchestrated systems sabotage will continue to be ineffective. Even if plans for sensor grids, UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles) patrols, and dedicated guards are fully realized, it will likely prove insufficient to stop ongoing sabotage. These defensive systems are extremely vulnerable to feints (false attacks) and counter-measures. Additionally, the very essence of systems sabotage works against effective defense." {...}"The only method demonstrated to work reliably over the last several years is rapid repair. This capability can contain the economic damage and societal dislocation caused by induced infrastructure failures to 20-30% of its potential. Unfortunately, global guerrillas are finding ways to trump this capability"

In response to that post, I said:

My response to this notion is this: I would have to say the flat or declining supply/ever-increasing demand of the oil curve at present (and forever into the future) only puts power into the hands of ANYONE who can disrupt the flow...and that's why I think, if this continues or accelerates (which it seems that we couldn't stop if we tried without serious investment of resources...), the effects of peak oil will be even more devastating than many are expecting.

Geopolitically, that means the US will be like a crackwhore and the oil supplying countries and the terrorists will both be our pimps and dealers...unless we reduce dependency as soon as possible...

Dystopic? Yes...but we cannot protect the supply lines...it's that simple. (it really does sound like the plot of Frank Herbert's Dune doesn't it?). To do so is going to raise the cost of oil even more, to a point of ridiculousness.

[Well now John Robb has put together a further analysis of Saudi Arabia's security system, here.](#)
A sample:

The bulk of Saudi Arabia's security system is allocated to the defense of oil system assets. Despite this effort, the system remains extremely vulnerable. The reason for this vulnerability is due to the effectiveness of new methods of warfare being developed in Iraq. A dictum from the newly emerging global guerrilla doctrine is: Avoid direct attacks on highly defended assets. Attack the target indirectly through adjacent systems.

Today's disruption (one of several of this type over the last year) of Iraq's oil terminal in Basra demonstrates how this is done.

May you live in interesting times.

[\(John also has a piece that he put together on his suspicions about disruptions in Saudi Arabia last summer that was also interesting\).](#)

Technorati Tags: [peak oil](#), [oil](#), [Saudi Arabia](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).