



## Where Does the US Import Oil and Other Petroleum Products From?

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on October 19, 2008 - 11:50am

Topic: [Supply/Production](#)

Tags: [canada](#), [imports](#), [mexico](#), [net imports](#), [original](#), [peak oil](#), [saudi arabia](#) [[list all tags](#)]

We all know that the United States is an importer of petroleum products. The United States is also an exporter of petroleum products, primarily to Mexico and Canada. Both of these countries send us crude oil, and we export refined products back to them. We often hear that Canada and Mexico are our largest sources of petroleum product imports, but is this really true if we net out exports? Canada remains number 1 when we net out exports, but Mexico drops to fifth place in 2008. (Mexico drops to third place in 2008, without netting out exports, because of its declining volume.)

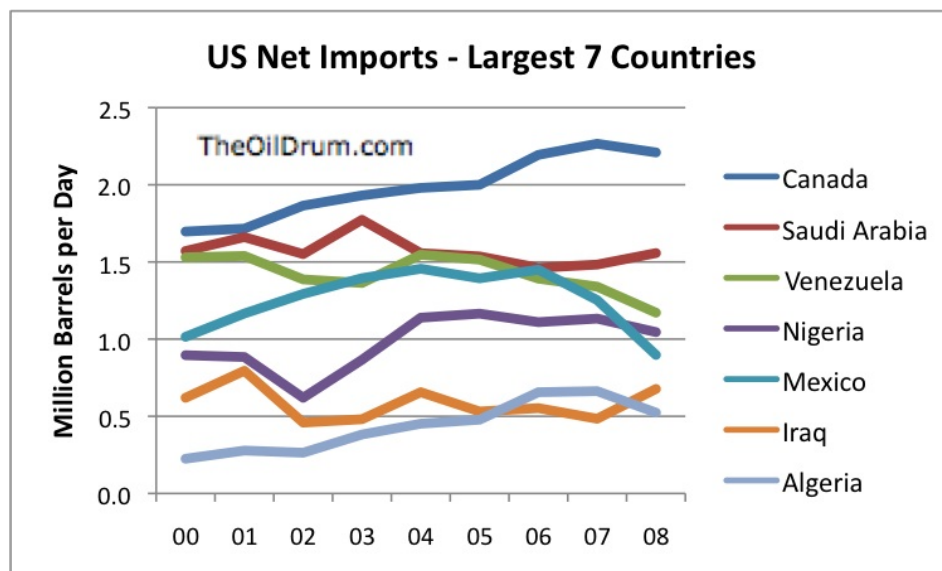


Figure 1: US Net Imports of crude oil and petroleum products, based on EIA data. 2008 is July 2008 YTD value.

The graph in Figure 1 is sort of "messy" with so many lines in it. If we look at US net imports from Mexico alone, this is the pattern we see.

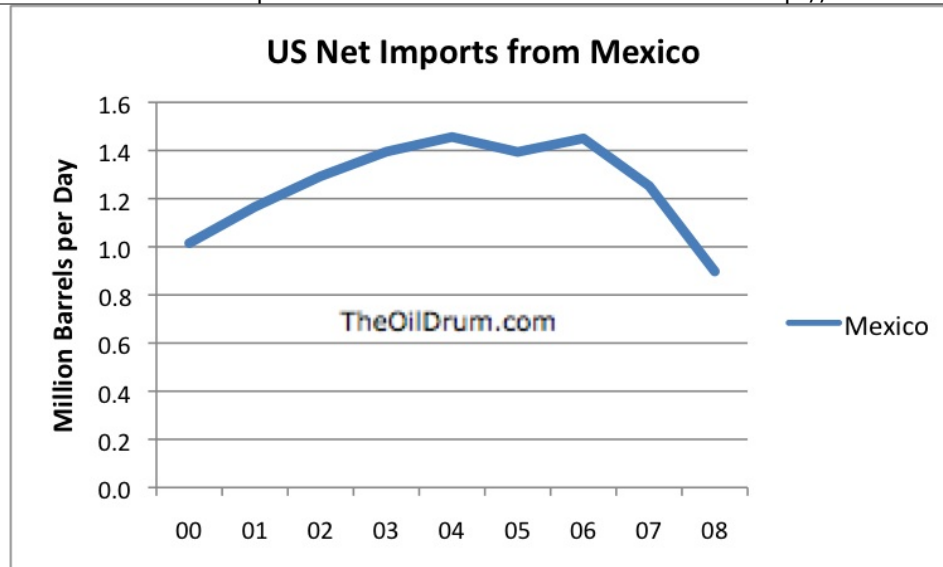


Figure 2: US Imports Net Imports of crude oil and products from Mexico, based on EIA data. 2008 is July 2008 YTD value.

We can see from this the rapid decline in imports from Mexico (exports from Mexico's perspective) that we have been hearing about. The 2008 value is the actual calculated value of 898,000 barrels per day through July (1,302,000 imports minus 405,000 exports), rather than a projected value at year end. If production continues to drop, it is likely to be lower at the end of the year than through July.

Looking back at Figure 1, there are several things that are interesting:

1. Net imports from Canada haven't been rising very quickly. Net imports for 2008 YTD are in fact down about 2.5% from the 2007 value.
2. In order, our largest sources of net imports in 2008 are Canada, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Mexico, Iraq and Algeria.
3. Except for Canada and Mexico, all of the countries on the list are members of OPEC.

Looking at the EIA data underlying the graph, the next two smaller countries in terms of net imports are Angola and Russia. Clearly a substantial majority of our net imports come from OPEC or Russia. At one time, we were importing oil from Norway and Great Britain, but this is rapidly declining with the decline of oil from the North Sea.

Figure 3 shows a graph of total US oil and petroleum product imports, both on an "imports not considering exports" basis, and on a net imports basis.

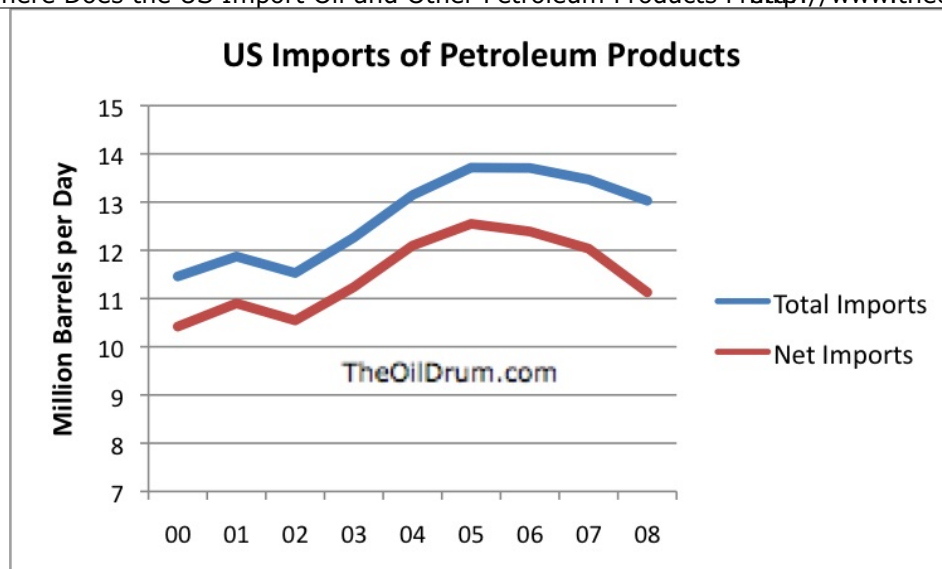


Figure 3: US Imports of crude oil and petroleum products, gross and net of exports, based on EIA data. 2008 is July 2008 YTD value.

We have been exporting more refined products in recent years, with the big recipients being Mexico and Canada. For all countries combined, this is the EIA graph of US petroleum products exports.

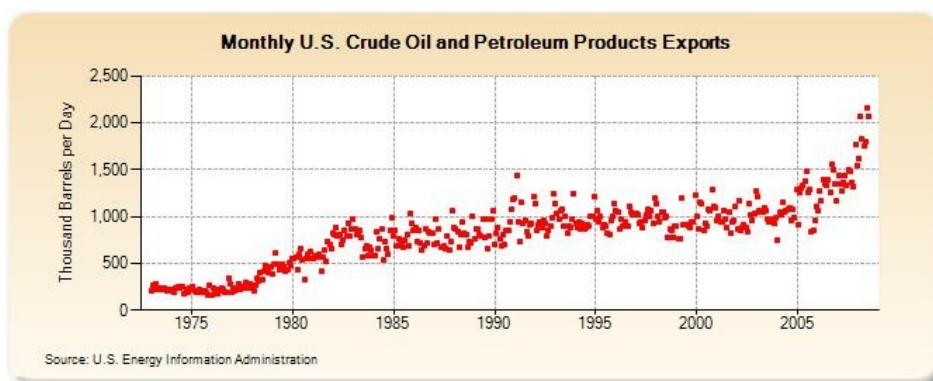


Figure 4: EIA Graph showing US exports of petroleum products.

Our biggest exports to Canada in 2007 were residual fuel oil, 32,000 bpd; crude oil, 27,000 bpd; and coke, 23,000 bpd. To Mexico, our biggest exports in 2007 were gasoline, 101,000 bpd; coke, 47,000 bpd; and distillate, 34,000 bpd. Of these, residual fuel oil and coke are byproducts that we have an excess amount of. Coke is used as a substitute for coal.

Clearly, exports have been growing rapidly. A few years ago, one could make the argument that exports were immaterial, and could be ignored. It seems to me that one needs to consider the combination of imports and exports in analyses today.

Robert Rapier wrote related post in April 2008 called [US Oil and Gasoline Import Statistics](#).



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