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## World Events Again Underscore Critical Value of Renewable Fuels

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The explosions from at least 20 drones and several cruise missiles striking Saudi Arabian oil facilities early last weekend continues to reverberate around the globe following reports the blow shut down half the Saudis' oil output – some 5.7 million gallons per day, or five percent of all global daily oil production.

Despite Saudi claims Tuesday that it can soon restore lost production levels, the attack serves as yet another reminder of the vulnerability of much of the world's oil supply. And given what may be an astonishing 20-cents-per-gallon spike in gas prices here by the end of the week, the attack brings into question the continued assertions by some that the United States is now energy independent.

The attack brings into focus once again the exposure long experienced by our nation's transportation fuel supply to elements far beyond our control. Much of the petroleum we use to fill our gas tanks continues to come from countries with whom we have what could generously be called "tenuous" relationships.

According to the DOE's [Energy Information Administration](#), the United States imported about 9.93 million barrels of petroleum per day from about 86 countries. U.S. exports to 190 countries and 4 U.S. territories amounted to about 7.59 million barrels, resulting in a net import amount of 2.34 million barrels daily.

Among our top five sources of petroleum imports in 2018: Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Iraq.

The growth in the production of biofuels in this country has played a large part in the falloff of U.S. dependence on foreign oil supplies. In 2005, the amount of foreign crude petroleum and petroleum products imported into the United States peaked at more than 12 million barrels per day, more than 60 percent of the total petroleum then consumed in the U.S. daily.

Of course, vast technological advances have greatly enhanced U.S. production of its own oil supplies, subsequently decreasing the nation's dependency on imported oil. Nonetheless, there remain significant environmental issues from our own drilling, not only with the emissions that emanate from petroleum-based fuels, but with the oil excavation sites themselves in this age of "fracking" – horizontal drilling that has caused minor earthquakes and endangered underground water reserves.

Following the adoption of the Renewable Fuels Act as part of a wider energy bill passed by Congress in 2005 (a stronger version was passed in 2007), the volume of net U.S. imports began to decline, and it has continued to fall in most of the ensuing 14 years.

The events in Saudi Arabia underscore the U.S.'s lingering vulnerability. As Ohio farmer and SfL Co-Chair Fred Yoder points out, "Given the volatility of the gas prices we are seeing – and they will only get worse over the weeks ahead – we are far from the energy independence that those who are in – and who support – the fracking industry would have us believe."

Even with growth in domestic oil production, the U.S. allocated some \$18 billion in a wide range of expenditures in Saudi Arabia last year, essentially to ensure the Saudis' deliver some 330 million barrels of petroleum. Furthermore, the United States imported 2.8 billion barrels of crude oil last year, equivalent to 45 percent of the oil processed by U.S. refineries. California imports nearly 60 percent of the oil it uses from outside the United States, with nearly half coming into the state via the Middle East's Strait of Hormuz.

Solutions from the Land promotes the growth of the U.S. biofuel industry as a major effort in reducing the nation's greenhouse gases that contribute to change in climate. But just as important is the need to diversify our nation's liquid fuel supply to fend off the volatile price hikes that can occur due to circumstances far beyond our control.

The events of recent days underscore how disruptive recent policy decisions made in Washington have been to our nation's biofuel production capacity. It is our fervent hope that the White House looks on the renewable fuel sector as more than a voting bloc, recognizing those in this country who produce ethanol, biodiesel and other critical biofuels are contributing to the very security of our nation in an often-unpredictable world.