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A lack of economic realism [1]

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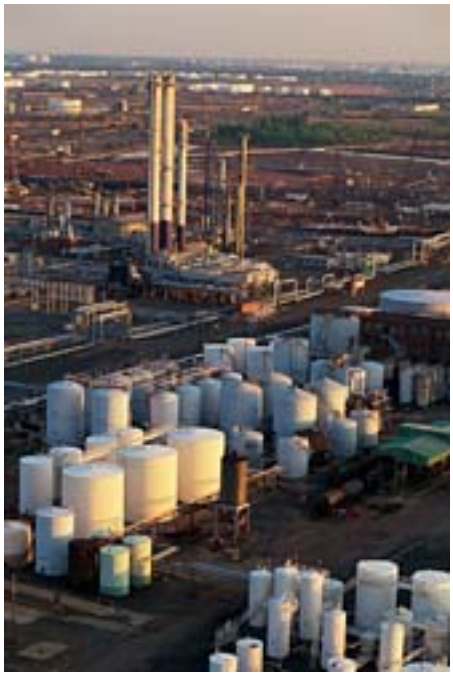

In addition to issues like foreign policy and taxation, energy (and its illegitimate cousin, environmental policy) has become a central figure of campaign platforms and stump speeches for US presidential candidates. Classically, Republicans want to increase domestic fuel supply primarily as an aim of foreign policy, while Democrats want to pursue ?alternative energies?, mandating better fuel efficiency and stricter emissions limits for environmental reasons.

However, candidates from both sides have failed to grasp the economic realities of the situation beyond their own pandering positions. Even as oil prices stretch up to $100/barrel, most Americans still drive personal cars as their primary or only means of transport. And while factions remain that advocate environmental standards or nationalist economic policy, most Americans aren?t ready to drastically change the regular functioning of their lives for far-reaching government agendas ? all they really value is lower gas prices.

The National Center for Policy Analysis has found [3] that a major and overlooked culprit of high gas prices is not foreign oil or greedy companies but the lack of refineries, a result of clean air legislation and ethanol quotas which creates a bottle-neck in petrol production. Republicans, usually in favour of the de-regulatory policies that would increase the number of refineries, choose instead to advocate policies in line with their foreign policy, while the Democrats are apparently yet to meet an environmental regulation they don?t like.

Once again, the presidential candidates have passed over sound economics in exchange for manipulative policies that achieve their own foreign and domestic goals, leaving the American voter in the dust.

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