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Admiral Mike Mullen on US Energy Security and the Shale Boom

By EDWARD DODGE

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Photo Credit: Foreign Policy Initiative and Securing America's Future Energy

Admiral Mike Mullen, retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke on U.S. energy security last Wednesday in Washington DC at an event hosted by the groups Securing America's Future Energy and the Foreign Policy Initiative.

Mullen was asked whether the US can take advantage of the surge in domestic energy production as a foreign policy tool.

Mullen answered, "Like it or not, sometimes it just isn't stated this bluntly, but our interests, the United States interests [in the Middle East] are directly tied to energy security... That's why we've been there, it's why we'll be there, and we're going to be there, I think, for some time."

Mullen said that the energy abundance that has emerged in the last four or five years, which was completely unpredictable, has given us leverage to improve our own energy security. "We need to take advantage of that, quite frankly, as rapidly as possible."

“Five or six years ago, none of us would have been talking about any of this... and we are not sure where we will be in five years from now.”

Mullen went on to say that we must take care of our own country and our own people first, security policy, jobs, and the welfare of our own people. But we are still interconnected to the rest of the world and must help support stability globally and particularly in the Middle East, which is not going well right now. “This is core to our interests.”

“It’s not about energy independence because we’re not going to control the price of a barrel of oil, and while we might have a lot more of it ourselves, in the end we’re still going to be dependent on that price.”

The shale boom gives us an opportunity, a reprieve, to improve global security while determining how to reduce dependence on oil. The boom has provided the flexibility to manage shortfalls in production from Libya, Iraq and Nigeria that have constrained global supplies while also enabling the ability to leverage sanctions against Iran. US oil production enabled us to take 1.5 million barrels of Iranian oil off the market with sanctions without seeing a price spike. Over the longer term, US natural gas and potential oil exports could provide European companies with some alternatives to Russian energy supplies.

Mullen called for a comprehensive energy policy to protect the nation’s long-term interests. “We shouldn’t just run to the extremes because we’re in a lot better position than we were a few years ago,” he said.

“We need a good energy security strategy and we don’t have one.”

The entire event can be [viewed here](#):

Topics: Admiral Mike Mullen, Energy Policy, Energy Security, Global Oil Market, Middle East, Oil Prices, Oil Supply, US Energy Security, us oil production