

EDITORIAL

Drilling not quick, not a fix

As gas prices creep higher, so too does the rhetoric from our political leaders. The problem is that the buzzed-about solution this week — offshore drilling — is just pie in the sky, according to experts.

In his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush flatly stated, “America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world. The best way to break this addiction is through technology.” He later mentioned important goals about investing in alternative

energies including ethanol, clean coal and nuclear plants and expansion of solar and wind energy production.

Strangely absent from the list? Offshore drilling.

But in a speech last week, John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, said that his drilling plan would “be very helpful in the short-term resolving our energy crisis.”

Reality, as is usually the case in the energy debate, suggests otherwise.

According to most independent analyses, the benefits from coastal drilling the country could possibly see will not be realized for 10 years or more if the decades-old ban was lifted immediately.

One CNN report highlights that oil companies are not even close to fully utilizing the lands they have access to now. The sheer amount of money and manpower it takes to gauge how much potential these areas have now is nothing compared to the difficulties of deep-sea exploration. The truth is, few people re-

Our Opinion

Editorials represent the majority opinion of The Daily Illini Editorial Board, whose members are Steve Contorno, editor in chief; Susan Kantor, managing editor; Kathleen Foody, assignment editor; Andrew Mason, opinions editor; Meghan Montemurro, assistant assignment editor; Wes Anderson, copy chief.

ally have a solid idea of how much impact more exploration will have, especially considering skyrocketing global demand and a leveling off of oil production around the world.

If America is indeed addicted to oil, as the president says, then anyone should be able to recognize that a sudden eagerness to drill our way out of our problems is not just a fix in the drug sense of the word but not even a particularly quick one.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

RJ MATSON, ROLL CALL



Russert's death more than symbolic

One and a half weeks ago, Tim Russert, the renowned television newsman, passed away. While political and news personalities alike have coalesced to mourn his passing, the biggest loser is the American public. In the modern media market, Russert was extraordinary, unique in his relative impartiality and trustworthiness, and his passing embodies the symbolic changing of the guard in the media from establishmentarianism to open source egalitarianism.

Decades ago Americans trusted not only the nightly news but also their politicians to give them the “Straight Talk,” as Sen. John McCain would say. Now, this concept is laughable. Politicians supersede even lawyers in their ability to obfuscate, blur and outright lie about the truth. How often are we promised better transportation, cheaper and more effective education, a more stable economy, less corruption, lower crime, lower taxes, and a mythical blend of world peace and American global supremacy? To be fair, voters ask and expect these promises, never realizing that with a finite amount of money and time, even the most effective leader can resolve only a few big issues in a term.

Because of the non-stop toxic stream of platitudes spewed forth from politicians' mouths, the greatest nation in the world is beginning to weaken under the weight of its leadership's failures (and this is not an indictment of recent politicians; the federal government has been reinforcing this attitude for over three decades).

Sadly, politicians' manipulation of the American psyche extends to the news media, which perpetuates the cycle of poor leadership. The mass media enables and encourages this leadership and determines political frontrunners, anoints successors and feeds the public all the information on scandals and policies that it can digest. News media, though, remains a business with an interest. To further their interests, they select which



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details, stories, and topics to cover and how to report them.

Russert was inarguably a structural part of this machine, but not a participant. He was one of the very few who questioned Democrats and Republicans alike. Certainly, he, like everyone else, was not perfect in his coverage, but he tried to give both sides of an issue equitable representation. And the public respected that.

In 2008, his death embodies the structural change the media is now undergoing. Bloggers and independent sites are gaining popularity and receiving some of the privileges once reserved for famous reporters (i.e. access to sports locker rooms). Tired of consuming biased, or allegedly biased, mass media reports, the public has enthusiastically embraced the everyman as a superman reporter.

While the increased breadth of the new system allows for a plethora of opinions, there are dangers to the unskilled performing a difficult task. Would you trust an untrained person to design and construct your home? Yet, we are doing exactly that by embracing the nameless Internet news as equally valid as mass media. To thwart the transition is to try to swim up Niagara Falls, but now even more than ever, people must consider the source of their information.

Lee is a recent graduate who laments that days are now shortening.

Readers' opinions

The Daily Illini reserves the right to edit or reject any contributions. Summer letters must be limited to 200 words. Contributions must be typed and include the author's name, address and phone number.

University students must include their year in school and college.

Inquiries about possible guest columns should be submitted to opinions editor Andrew Mason via e-mail or by calling 217.337.8366.

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