

Preface

WHAT A DIFFERENCE a few years can make. When I began to conceptualize this project in 2003, few people evidenced concern about U.S. foreign oil dependence. That changed, however, as the price of a barrel of oil passed the \$30 mark, then more than doubled over the next two and a half years. Now it seems that the perils of dependence on foreign oil are recognized by almost everyone, and hardly a day goes by without the appearance of some new proposal for addressing them.

Alas, academic books are not often known for the timeliness of their contributions to policy debates, and given how quickly the public discussion has moved, this book may be no exception. Yet I believe that a careful scholarly analysis can still make a useful contribution, in part because the challenges posed by foreign oil dependence are complicated and will not be quickly resolved. Above all, we still need a full accounting of the costs to the United States of its foreign oil dependence, which is the principal goal of this book. Such an assessment is a necessary foundation for effective action. As the book tries to make clear, the costs have stemmed not just from the fact that the United States imports so much oil but also from the policies that concerns about high oil prices and unreliable foreign supplies have spawned. Thus attempts to reduce the costs should address those policy responses as well as the underlying economic conditions that prompted them. The book also emphasizes that the proper focus of efforts to reduce the economic costs and risks

of foreign oil dependence should not be imports per se but the more general dependence of the U.S. economy on oil, regardless of its place of origin.

The relatively rapid completion of this project was greatly facilitated by a number of institutions and individuals. I would not have been able to write this book as quickly as I did without the generous financial support of Georgia State University (GSU) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States. A Research Initiation Grant from GSU enabled me to start work on the project during the fall of 2003. The College of Arts and Sciences at GSU then awarded me a professional leave that allowed me to write full-time during the 2005 calendar year. During the second half of that year, a research fellowship from the German Marshall Fund of the United States supported me.

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I am grateful to my editor at Stanford University Press, Amanda Moran, for the early interest that she took in this project and for her assistance in moving the manuscript expeditiously through the review and approval process. From there, Mariana Raykov, my production editor, saw to it that the manuscript was smoothly and rapidly converted into book form.

Last but not least, I owe a special thanks to my wife, Cheryl, and to my children, who lovingly tolerated my preoccupation with completing the project and who did not complain too vociferously each time I slipped off to the basement study to work on the manuscript. I hope that my children in particular will understand, someday if not right away, that in writing this book,

I aspired to make the world at least a slightly better place for them and others of their generation, even as so much more remains to be done. That is why I dedicate the book to them.

JSD
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