

# Carter's energy plan ignores nuclear thorn

Analysis by  
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Pres. Jimmy Carter's long-awaited address was delivered with the pained awareness that a concerted national effort for developing a reasonable energy scheme is definitely overdue.

The speech was dubbed a much-needed "pep talk" by international bankers, and though praised for its honest, forceful delivery, the talk was faulted for a lack of real leadership in the

ominously unmentioned Sunday night.

California Gov. Jerry Brown commented, "I have a hunch that lurking in all that rhetoric there is an attempt to expand nuclear power," a choice which both Brown and Oregon Sen. Mark Hatfield suspect will be revealed gradually with political caution. If this is indeed the presidential plan, it would constitute a flagrant contradiction of his appeal for honesty in this time of crisis.

A healthy selection of softer

"He refuses to say, 'On the one hand, if we're going to burn coal, we're going to have to lower air quality standards,' " said Packwood. "Instead he says, 'We're going to burn lots of coal but there won't be any harm to the environment.' That isn't true. It can't be true. America ought to be given that choice."

Carter allowed that the nation would face, despite its finest efforts, the effects of short-term shortage and long-term struggle. Shortage carries greater credibility tomorrow than today; it appears shockingly real. One profound crunch will occur as domestic oil resources dwindle in the coming decades. As explained by Harvard's economist Mel Horwitch, coal simply won't run cars — our only "salvation" will be real conservation. Clearly, we cannot afford the nearly exclusive dependence on petroleum for much longer.

In his six-point plan, Carter has not ignored conservation: on Monday morning we learned that \$16.5 billion will improve public mass transit over the next ten years. And we remember that a 'mere' \$24 billion put Americans on the moon. Following in line are loans for making houses more energy efficient, funds for development of energy-saving cars, elimination of energy waste in federal and local government, and climate control in public areas, such as restaurants.

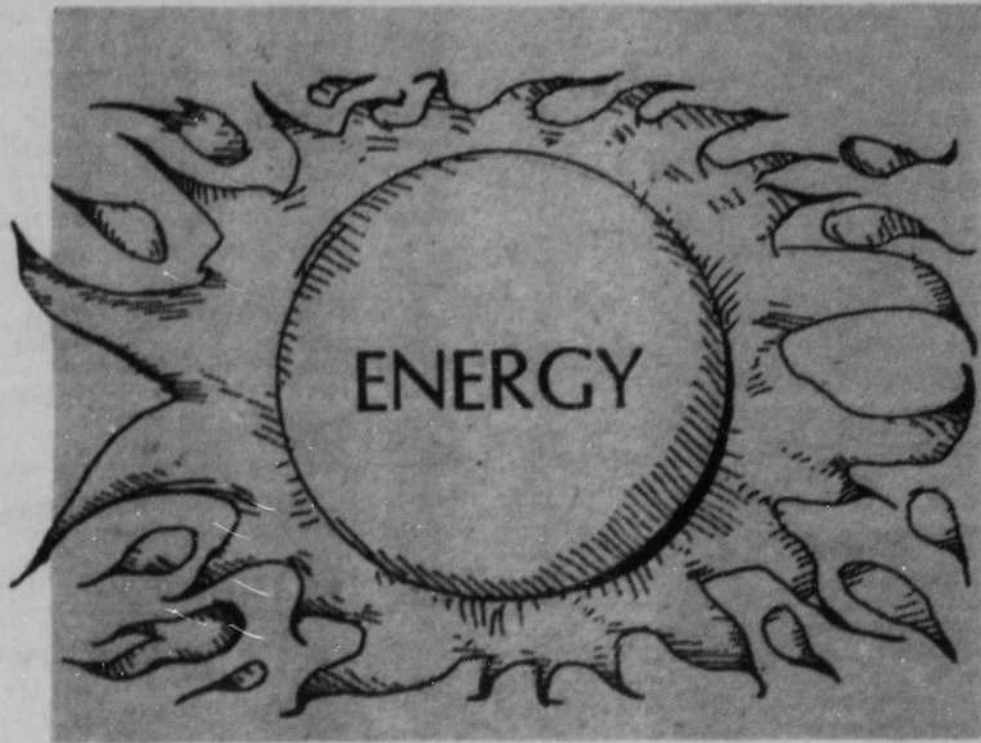
This conservation plan may well seem half-hearted in comparison to the real and imminent 'sacrifices' that lie ahead. We will need a fundamental reorientation of energy usage norms. "The president doesn't seem able to present those choices," says Packwood.

The suspected pronouncement that nuclear power *must* play an important role in our energy futures came in the

Kansas City speech, while the autocratic control of the warlike Energy Mobilization Board presents a poorly veiled threat to ecological sensibility. The president has raised more than one challenge here. Primarily, Carter declared that we must produce energy. But if we are to resist dangerous and irrevoca-

ble shortcuts that would destroy our environment, we'll need to begin effective conservation of our safe and available energy resources, and the immediate development of appropriate, non-nuclear technology.

In the rhetoric of Carter's energy war, a battlefield for a landscape is all too real a threat.



Emerald graphic

form of specific plans. The ten days spent at Camp David made it clear that "easy solutions" are elusive at this point, especially as the president waits uncertainly for the conclusions to the Three-Mile Island investigations. And, unfortunately, alternative energy sources remain somewhat tentative and essentially unproven — if due only to prior neglect.

Within Carter's six-point program, a full commitment to explore alternative energy sources was outlined for the first time. It is too early to know how this country will be weaned from dependence on petrol derivatives. This concerns a pair of time tables: the first for resource depletion, the second for development and implementation of the alternatives. The extent to which nuclear power will be propagated was left

appropriate technologies were given a positive commitment. Standing out on that list was gasohol production from organic waste materials and a 20-percent solar energy contribution targeted for the turn of the century. However, insistence on a last-drop policy, one sanctioning the marginal coal and oil shale recovery operations, appears a blatant threat to sound ecological planning.

"We will protect our environment," Carter said in his only reference to this sensitive area, but dams and pipelines will not be held up — his emphatic tone betrayed the anticipated showdown with environmentalists.

Hatfield responded that "we don't need to obliterate the progress that we have made on the environmental front," a fear echoed by Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood.

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