



Oil fires in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm

Congressman David Obey yesterday [called for a war tax](#) to pay for troops in Afghanistan. While the idea of a war tax makes all the sense in the world (if health care can't add to the deficit, why should our wars?), Obey's proposed tax on upper-income earners is aimed at the wrong source. Instead of an income tax, why not a carbon tax to pay for our wars in the Middle East? After all, much of the reason for our military involvement in that region comes from our desire to protect and exploit its rich oil and natural gas resources. A carbon tax to pay for our involvement there would only be fitting. And if the carbon tax is so politically unpalatable in its pure form, perhaps marrying it to a patriotic, heartland-type cause would boost support. We'll need to pay for these wars somehow, and the tax would help wean us from the product that got us into this mess. And it would also provide substantial environmental benefits: less driving, less energy consumption, and more energy efficiency and clean tech innovation.