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## Business

### Hart rips U.S. use of foreign oil

**Speaking at a Denver energy conference, the ex-senator urges boosting conservation programs and renewable-energy sources.**

By Andy Vuong  
The Denver Post

Former Democratic U.S. Sen. Gary Hart on Monday blasted America's dependence on foreign oil and the country's willingness to go to war for the energy source.

"We will continue to import up to 70 percent of the oil we consume from abroad, including from the most dangerous region of the world, the Persian Gulf, to fuel energy-inefficient and wasteful vehicles," Hart said during a keynote speech at the 2008 National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference in Denver. "We will sacrifice the lives of our sons and daughters to get the oil. That is America's energy policy."

Hart said the country can change that policy by boosting conservation programs and renewable-energy sources such as wind and solar power.

Greg Schnacke, president of Americans for American Energy, a domestic energy-advocacy group, said in a separate interview that the country is trying to reduce its dependence on foreign oil. He noted efforts to lift the moratorium on energy development in

the Outer Continental Shelf areas off the U.S. coasts, although Congress recently shot down the proposal.

"(Hart) does make a point in that a portion of our petrodollars that we spend on imported oil, some of that money goes to countries that are hostile to the United States and support terrorist groups, and we should try to do all that we can to develop more American energy here at home to lessen that dependence," Schnacke said.

A record 700 people from the public and private sectors are attending the four-day conference, which runs through Wednesday and is aimed at finding help for low-income households with their energy and utility bills.

The large turnout is a result of rising heating costs and skyrocketing gasoline prices. Those two things combine to make it "a very difficult situation for the low-income household," said David Fox, executive director of the National Low Income Energy Consortium, one of the organizers of the conference.