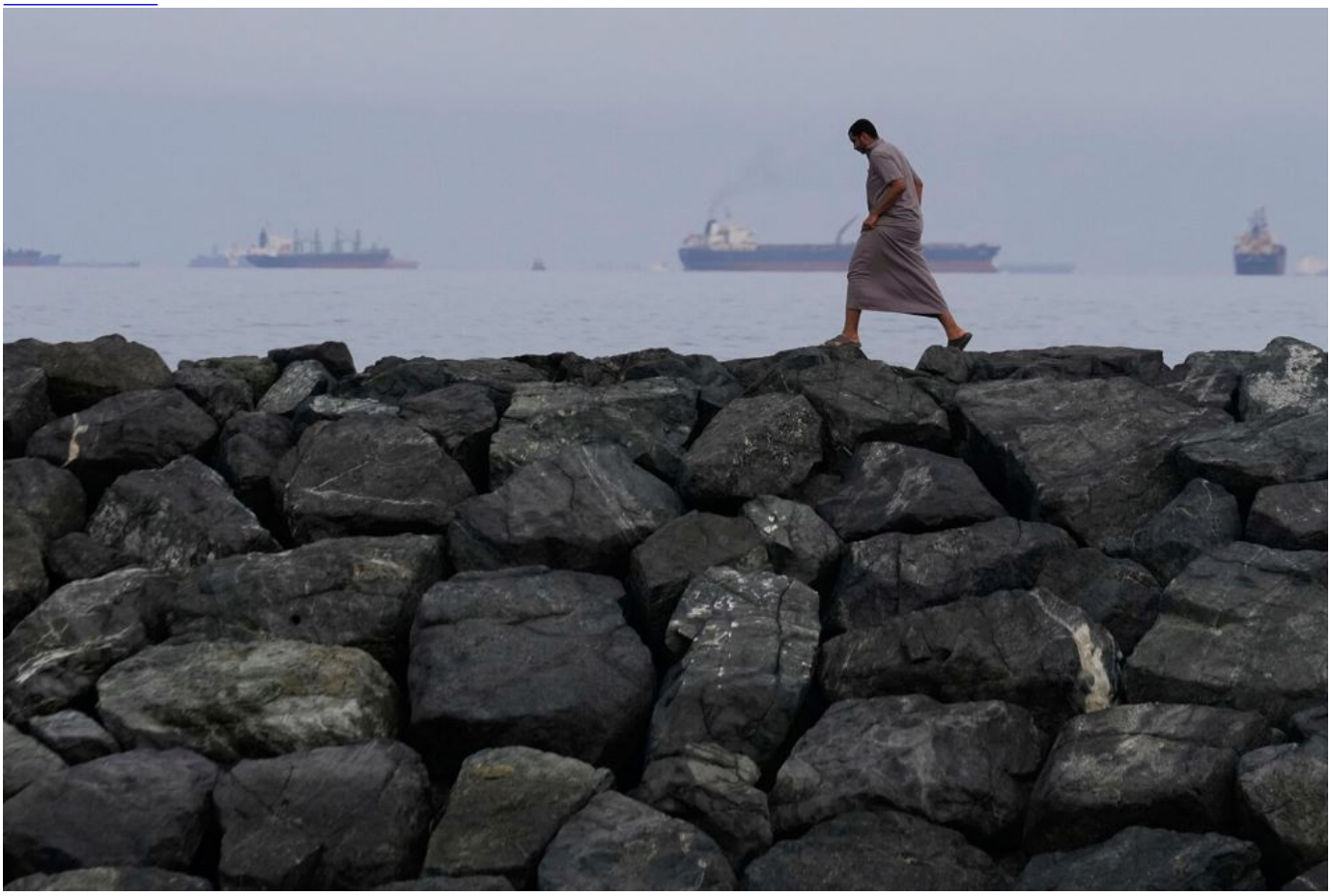
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A man walks along the shore as oil tankers and cargo ships line up in the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Khor Fakkan, United Arab Emirates, March 11, 2026. (RNS/AP/Altaf Qadri)



Thomas Reese

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The U.S.-Israeli bombing campaign in Iran is now in its third week, and the consequences of the war for Americans are beginning to hit home. Not only have we lost servicemen and women, we have expended billions of dollars on weapons and logistical costs. And the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of the world's oil and natural gas travels, has reduced exports, raising gas prices and, indirectly, almost all prices.

President Donald Trump's energy policy has left the country unprepared for his war. At a time when the country desperately needs alternatives to oil and gas, his policies have left us naked to the storms of war.

Pope Francis was a prophetic voice on behalf of peace and the environment, and Pope Leo XIV has taken up this mission. Diplomacy should always be preferred to war. And if Francis' warnings about climate change had been heeded by Trump, our country would be better prepared for the current energy crisis. Even if you do not accept the popes' moral arguments, green energy is not only good for the planet, it is good for national security.

The closing of the Strait of Hormuz has caused the price of crude oil to go over $100 a barrel. This means higher prices for gasoline, diesel and everything in the economy that runs on oil or is made from oil. Not only will it cost more to drive your car, it will cost more to deliver goods by rail and truck to consumers.

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Natural gas prices have also gone through the roof. This will lead to higher prices for electricity, fertilizers and other products.

This is good news for Vladimir Putin's Russia, which can now sell its oil and gas at higher prices to finance its war on Ukraine. It is also good news for oil and gas producers in the United States; they will make billions of dollars since their prices are set by global markets. But it is bad news for Americans who already think prices are too high.

It is also bad news for Detroit's auto industry, which has continued to focus on trucks and big cars as they currently are more profitable than the sale of smaller, fuel-efficient cars. Many companies are not ready to put electric vehicles on the market, especially since Trump told Detroit to forget about electric cars last year.

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Higher gasoline prices, however, always make consumers question their love affair with trucks and big cars. Don't be surprised when sales of trucks and big cars fall, followed by a fall in automotive stocks and jobs. Meanwhile, China is dominating the world market in electric cars. Soon, Detroit could have no future.

The president's energy policies have been bad for the Earth and bad for our national security. But it is not entirely his fault. Even before he entered politics, the Republican Party pampered the fossil fuel industries by protecting their tax loopholes and giving them cheap access to government lands. Meanwhile, they have opposed energy efficiency standards, wind turbines, solar energy or any form of green energy.

These national security hawks talked a good game but failed to protect the nest.

Yet without the energy standards that Trump and the Republicans attack, we would be much less prepared for today’s energy crisis.

Government fuel economy standards have saved over 2 trillion gallons of gasoline in the U.S. since 1975. Without these standards, the demand and therefore the price of

gasoline would be even higher.

LED lighting also uses roughly 75%-90% less energy than incandescent bulbs. Other government standards have made refrigerators and other electrical appliances more efficient. Imagine what our electricity needs would be if these standards had not been put in place.

Republicans have traditionally opposed government subsidies to alternative energy projects, and now that solar and wind energy is cheaper than fossil fuels, they are still using the government to stop green energy.

Trump has stopped the expansion of land-based and offshore wind farms, including five offshore wind projects on the East Coast. The president has also made things difficult for solar energy. Without Trump's tariffs, solar panels would be much cheaper.

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China, on the other hand, which is highly dependent on oil and gas from the Persian Gulf, has expanded green energy to the point that it has more wind and solar capacity on its grid than it does fossil fuel capacity. Other countries, like Pakistan, took advantage of cheap solar panels from China to reduce their imports of oil and natural gas.

Many farmers and ranchers are ahead of their Republican representatives because they see solar and wind energy providing a revenue stream that can help them keep their land.

And now, Trump's energy policies and his war of choice oppose each other. We are now reaping the results of his insane policies.

Trump believes he can stop the war whenever he wants, but that does not mean that Iran will immediately open the Strait of Hormuz. It could be months before the oil and liquid natural gas flow again. Keeping the strait open without Iran's cooperation will require more fighting and probably American boots on the ground in Iran.

Trump has made a terrible mistake by ignoring our need for alternative energy and going to war with Iran. For this, the country will suffer. He should have listened to

Popes Francis and Leo.

This story appears in the **War in Iran** feature series. View the full series.