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## **OTC2023: A successful energy transition requires security and optionality**

Indian Oil and gas news

July 6, 2023

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### **Body**

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July 06 -- Day 3 of the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston, Texas kicked off with an informative, passionate, and at times, chaotic presentation from Dr. Scott Tinker, Director, ***Bureau of Economic Geology***; State Geologist of Texas; Chairman, Switch Energy Alliance; CEO, Tinker Energy Associates, LLC.

During his thoughtful speech, Dr. Tinker highlighted three themes: 1) energy is vital for human advancement; 2) all forms of energy, including renewables, have pros and cons; and 3) energy security requires optionality.

Energy poverty keeps societies from thriving. Though faulty microphones and malfunctioning PowerPoints delayed the presentation, these speed bumps provided a perfect segue into Dr. Tinker's first point. These "first world problems," as he referred to them, are miniscule compared to the millions of people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that suffer with energy poverty.

Over 60% of the global population live in extreme energy poverty. From Vietnam to Colombia, communities are lucky to have one light bulb in a school, church or community center. It's no coincidence that the poorest nations in the world are also those without access to energy. Conversely, nations like the U.S. and Europe thrive under a booming energy sector that most people take for granted.

Citizens in underdeveloped areas rely on wood and fire to produce heat and light. Dr. Tinker revealed a shocking statistic, that 3 million people die every year from smoke inhalation caused by these primitive forms of energy. To put things in perspective, that's more deaths than the coronavirus caused since its onslaught in 2020.

"Rich countries" have the luxury of worrying about decarbonization and climate change; those struggling with energy security have different, more critical priorities. While energy itself won't bring communities out of poverty, Dr. Tinker insists that you can't bring people from the brink without the help of oil and gas.

The irony of the energy "transition." Dr. Tinker provided countless examples of irony surrounding the energy transition debate. It's easy to adorn anti-oil and gas gear on your cars, bags, and other apparel when you don't understand how the industry works and how integrated it is into everyday life. A photo of an airline passenger

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carrying a "no fossil fuels" bag while boarding a plane pulled laughs from a crowd who understand all too well how difficult balancing net zero ambitions and energy security can be.

Despite a slight dip in activity around COVID's emergence, globally, we are consuming more energy than ever before. While the renewables sector, particularly wind and solar, are growing at a rapid rate, energy security concerns keep fossil fuels in the conversation. Dr. Tinker says we must ask ourselves, "What's more important: energy security, or climate change?"

In fact, Dr. Tinker poised an interesting idea; no form of renewable energy is truly "clean." Offshore wind turbines wind up in landmines across the globe, and the infrastructure needed requires massive amounts of energy to build. Dr. Tinker asserts that the energy "transition" is less of a transition and more of an "energy addition."

The energy transition requires optionality. At the core of his argument lies one idea; in order to have a successful energy transition, we need options. The truth of the matter is that fossil fuels are a dense energy source and are more reliable than renewables. Those in the renewables sector must stop saying that wind and solar are cheaper; for consumers, they aren't.

Over 90% of the world uses fossil fuels to keep the lights on. In a poignant graphic, Dr. Tinker showed the crowd what the world would look like relying on the other less than 10%. "Getting rid of oil and gas looks like the past" said Dr. Tinker, as his map of the world dwindled into darkness.

Dr. Tinker ended his presentation asking the audience to be proud of their industry. While environmentalists may shame those in the field, the truth is that energy professionals are the backbone of every developed nation. "When people ask what you do, tell them, 'I work in oil and gas. I lift people out of poverty. What do you do?'"

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