

UNIVERSITE DE NANTES

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U.F.R DE LANGUES
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE LANGUES
DEPARTEMENT Langues Étrangères Appliquées

SESSION 1- 1er semestre

DIPLOME LICENCE LEA NIVEAU 3 CYCLE

DATE : 12/01/2005

HEURE : 13h 30

SALLE : CIL 405 + 414

DUREE : 1 heure 30

INTITULE DE L'ÉPREUVE : VERSION ANGLAISE UE

Epreuve pour ~~DA~~ DA & ASSIDUS
(rayer la mention inutile)

TRADUCTION ÉCRITE B

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OBSERVATION DU PROFESSEUR : l'usage de dictionnaires n'est pas autorisé

THE DANGER OF SOARING OIL PRICES

One of the most alarming features of the current economic scene is the instability of world oil markets. The economic establishment appears to have convinced itself that the near doubling of oil prices over the past year will cause only minor disruption, and may well in any event prove short-lived as the international economy loses momentum next year. But it is much more likely that what we are witnessing represents a fundamental structural change in the balance of demand and supply in the oil markets, which may well drive oil prices still higher over the medium term, causing real economic damage.

A common claim is that there is "no shortage of oil". Oil reserves are vast - enough for decades to come. Another observation is that the past 12 months' "shock" has been much less fearsome than the oil crises of the 1970s - after inflation, the oil price is currently about half the level it reached in 1980. The economies of the developed world are less reliant on oil than they used to be, using probably one-third less oil per unit of output now than then, so the economic impact of high oil prices is much reduced.

Policymakers need to wake up to the dangers. Or perhaps they already have. Two types of development could help bring the demand and supply for oil into better balance, heading off high prices and the consequent damage to growth. One would be an increase in taxes on oil consumption, especially in America, but under Bush and Cheney this does not look especially likely. The other would be the emergence of a major new oil producer on the scale of Saudi Arabia, willing to allow its reserves to be developed at maximum pace by international oil companies. Nothing less will do, and as it happens, one is on the horizon. A stabilised Iraq under Western influence.

Based on an article by Christopher Smallwood, *The Independent*, 11 November 2004