Written by Kevin Rosner
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This first-year anniversary issue of the Journal of Energy Security (JES) coincides with August 27, 1859 anniversary of Colonel Edwin Drake's striking oil in Titusville, Pennsylvania. While oil has fueled economic growth and personal mobility in the form of the automobile, Gal Luft, Executive Director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, asks 'Whose birthday is it really?' It's high time we re-evaluate oil's role not only in the transportation field but also on its potential impact 150 years from today. On changing the transportation landscape away from oil to newer fuels, particularly electricity, Keith Evans one of the world's leading experts on lithium dispels the myth that there isn't enough of this material to go around. Battery materials aside, the JES will run a number of articles on critical materials applicable to the entire energy complex over the next twelve months in effort to examine in real detail some of the material-related complexities of the energy security debate.

Keeping with our commitment to covering energy security from experts around the globe, conflict in Nigeria's Niger Delta is examined from an African perspective from JES contributor Dr. Victor Ojakorotu in South Africa. Dr. Ojakorotu offers up not only poignant analysis of how militancy in the Delta has spiraled out of control but what steps states and oil companies can take in order to avoid the calamities that the Nigerian people and government have experienced. From the Niger Delta we turn to Southeast Asia to examine critical energy infrastructure protection within an ASEAN context. Collin S.L. Koh and colleague Alvin Chew, at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University point out some of the region's risks to its own critical infrastructure even as it constructs a Trans-Asian Energy Network.

From ETH Zurich's Center for Security Studies contributors Matthew Hulbert and Anahita Arian examine how oil producing states have largely avoided political catastrophe against the backdrop in the 2009 plunge in the price of oil and the unfortunate lessons they may take from this experience into the future. Finally, the overlooked issue of Russian coal is examined. Russia is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of steam and coking coal. It is also one of the world's most energy intense economies. The question being asked is whether European consumers, having selected natural gas as the fuel of choice for power generation, may drive natural gas-rich but production-stagnant Russia to opt for new coal fired power generation in the future? These issues and more give us pause to consider the risks and rewards of sorting through our own energy conundrum. As the American science fiction writer Frank Herbert is to have said, "The beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand."

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