

Blood for Oil (Again)

The United States, with perhaps five percent of the world's population consumes fully one quarter of the world's refined oil.[1] Currently we import more than half of the oil we consume; the "Cheney report" on energy policy predicts this figure will rise to two-thirds by the year 2020.[2] Energy consultants predict current levels of oil production cannot be maintained beyond 2022; if oil demand grows by a meager 1.6% yearly, as predicted by the International Energy Agency, peak production could be reached before 2016.[3, 4, 5] Given the instabilities of the middle east, it is not surprising that nations with growing energy needs are looking to stockpile oil, or are signing agreements with Iraq (with 11% of the world's proven oil reserves) to buy crude when UN sanctions are lifted.[6, 7]

"Oil will permanently cease to be abundant." —Douglas-Westwood, Ltd[3]

The Bush administration, its palms liberally greased by Big Oil, is responding to these converging circumstances with classic American unilateralism. As long ago as April 2001, before there was a "war on terrorism," the Bush cabinet was discussing intervention in Iraq;[8] the case was made by a report prepared by the Baker institute for Cheney's energy policy group, a report which recommends that the US "should conduct an immediate policy review toward Iraq including military ... assessments." [9]

Lest anyone should mistake this report for a legitimate critical examination of 21st century energy policy, the Baker task force, comprised mostly of forward-thinking executives of American energy concerns like Enron CEO Ken Lay, proposes development of "every clean source of domestic fuel supply," including oil, natural gas, coal *and* nuclear; wind energy apparently isn't clean or domestic.[9] This report should be interpreted as lobbying for a publicly-financed military excursion to secure resources for the benefit of the American energy industry, at the cost of an unnamed number of American lives. Not content to rob us blind at the pump, through the wires, *and* at the tax coffers, Lay *et al.* propose that G.I. Joe die in the desert for "our" energy security.

"The United States should conduct an immediate policy review toward Iraq, including military, energy, economic, and political/diplomatic assessments." —Baker Report[9]

The Bush administration is all too happy to oblige the whims of the energy industry, a \$26 billion contributor to the Republican Party in 2000.[10] By broadcasting its hawkish intentions far in advance, the administration has helped destabilize the world oil market, which has responded with a nearly 50% increase in crude oil prices over the past 10 months.[11] In couching the debate in terms of security, Bush attempts to legitimize his war for oil. However, weapons of mass destruction are merely a ruse.

Thus Gulf War II may be summarized as follows: Cheney auctioned off American energy policy to the highest bidder; rather than curb foreign oil dependence, the unctuous energy execs prefer we "remove bottlenecks ... to energy supply;" [9] the aircraft carriers, laden with depleted-uranium cluster bombs, head to the Persian Gulf; in the name of safeguarding the earth against weapons of mass destruction, the American military juggernaut massively destroys Iraq, removing said bottlenecks; a newly installed puppet government nullifies existing oil contracts with Russia, France and China, rewarding its "liberators" with free-flowing oil; unable to challenge American unilateral military diplomacy head-on, worldwide voices of dissent are channeled into another terrorist strike on America; from their impregnable bunkers deep in the earth, Bush and Cheney weep with the nation.

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- [9] *Strategic energy policy: Challenges for the 21st century.* April 2001. URL <http://www.rice.edu/projects/baker/Pubs/workingpapers/cfrbipp.energy/energytf.htm>.
- [10] Political contributions by energy industry. URL <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.asp?Ind=E01>.
- [11] Crude Oil Index, ticker symbol, ^ IPCI.

