

Second Gulf War was about controlling oil

The second Gulf War was not about terrorism or disarming Iraq of its chemical and biological weapons that haven't been found yet. This recent conflict was also not about bringing democracy to the Iraqi people either, as our past actions of regime change defies that notion. Instead, the real reason was about ensuring American global hegemony or dominance through directly or indirectly controlling the world's largest and cheapest source of oil in the Middle East. Consider the following motives and circumstances that lead to this aggressive and irresponsible foreign policy.

In the 2000 election, the Bush campaign out raised the Gore campaign in all 10 major business sectors, accumulating almost \$200 million dollars. According to the Center For Responsive Politics, the oil industry alone gave over \$1.8 million to Bush, more than any other candidate in the last decade. Recently, in the 2002 elections, these oil tycoons gave over \$22 million to various candidates. Seventy-eight percent went to Republicans. In fact 41 members of the current administration's staff have had ties to the oil industry. Consider that President George W. Bush is from Harken Energy, Vice-President Dick Cheney is from the oil infrastructure corporation named Haliburton (contributed \$709,320 to Bush), and our National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, is from Chevron. Not only does our president count on the oil industry to fund a good part of his election campaign, but many of his staff can also count on plush jobs on the boards, as presidents, or as lobbyists for these companies upon leaving office.

The defense industry also has influenced the administration's

policy through donations, through lobbying, and through our adherence to the past Cold War military economy. Thirty-two Bush appointees have had ties to the defense industry. While defense companies only contributed \$180,775 to the Bush campaign, they spent almost \$15 million on candidates during the 2002 election. In addition, these defense contractors, looking for huge subsidies and handouts, spent over \$60 million on lobbying in 2000. For example, Boeing, one of the largest defense corporations, contributed \$7.6 billion in PAC and soft money in the last decade, but received over \$16 million in contracts from the military. Boeing's CEO was quoted after the events of 9/11 as saying, "The purse is now open." Unfortunately for us Rhode Islanders, it costs us 26 cents for every one of our tax dollars spent on our defense budget created a \$30,000 bill for every American household on average. And, you can imagine that with the Iraq war coming to an end, the Pentagon is already ordering plenty of more weapons to replace those used in this conflict.

Another major factor that has helped shape the Bush administration's policy in the Middle East is our nation's dependency on oil. Our economy depends on oil for everything from gasoline to plastic. The U.S. consumes almost 30 percent of the world's oil production and only has two percent of the world's proven reserves.

Experts speculate that consumption of oil in our country is going to increase by one-third in the next 20 years. In fact, according to the Institute for Analysis for Global Security, world oil consumption will rise 60 percent by 2020. The last three major hikes in the price of

oil were each followed by a recession. Maintaining access to the world's oil reserves is vital to survival in our current globally competitive economy. Our own vice-president during a 1990 Senate Armed Services Committee is quoted as saying, "Whoever controls the flow of oil in the Persian Gulf has a stranglehold on most nations in the world."

The reason that the Middle East is so important to this administration is that it holds about 67 percent of the world's oil that has been geologically surveyed. Many experts, including the Department of Energy, claim that Iraq alone may have as much as 200 billion barrels of oil under its oil, being that 55 of the country's 70 oil fields have yet to be developed. Also, Middle East oil is the cheapest oil to extract in the world. For example, oil would cost about \$1.50 per barrel to extract from Iraq, whereas Texas oil would cost anywhere from \$5 to \$10 per barrel to reap from the ground.

While the Carter administration's doctrine was to use "any means necessary, including military force" to give us unrestrained access to Middle Eastern oil, this has become increasingly complicated due to the OPEC cartel, the nationalization of the oil industry within many oil rich countries, and continued regional conflicts. If our government controls Iraq it can undermine the influence of OPEC by undercutting the price of oil.

The future puppet regime of Iraq will be coerced to privatize its oil fields avoiding nationalizing its oil industry. Also, in less than 10 years, Russia, China, Mexico, Norway, Brazil, and the U.S. will cease to be competitive in the world oil market making Middle Eastern oil that

much more attractive and essential. Countries like China, whose economy will catch up to ours in about 20 years, granted growth rates remain the same, can be controlled through its dependency on oil through our hold on the largest reserves. In other words, if the U.S. controls the largest sources of the world's oil it will indirectly control or maintain global hegemony over these countries.

To validate these reasons for this administration's aggressive policy it is illuminating to look at where our military has been placed in the world. Consider that we now have military bases in Afghanistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Georgia that ensure access to the Caspian Sea reserves of oil. These bases also help defend and create a buffer zone for the northern boundary of the more abundant Middle Eastern reserves. We also have a base in the incredibly small country of Djibouti in Northeast Africa that allows us to maintain control over the Babal-Mandab. This is one of the two most important shipping lanes for the transport of oil from the Middle East.

Oh, and by the way, before we bombed the Taliban regime into oblivion, the oil company UNOCAL and our government were negotiating a pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to gain easy access to the oil rich Caspian region via the Persian Gulf.

This \$3.2 billion pipeline deal has now been signed, now that the former UNOCAL consultant, Harmid Karzai, has been appointed the president of Afghanistan.

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