

CASUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OIL AND US GOVERNMENT'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY

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Abstract

International oil politics introduces a new dimension in International Relations in which those developing nations that are disadvantaged in international politics exercise control over reserves and production of oil. Countries in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe that are not placed in the First World have the advantage in both reserves and production of oil. To strengthen the advantage that such developing nations have on oil, the consumption rate is minimal thus creating such substantial reserves that could be supplied needy nations. On the other hand however, the developed, technologically advanced, industrialized nations in North America and Western Europe have major and substantial disadvantages that further worsen their situation in oil politics. It can therefore be stated and categorically too, that a sort of dependency for the first time in international relations tilted against developed nations. Interestingly however, oil has continued to be critical to the economy and civilization of developed nations such as the US. It is therefore the criticality of oil, coupled with its deficiency that makes oil producing nations important to the United States. This work is aimed at critically analysing the extent of the US shortage in oil, the criticality of oil to its economy and civilization and by implication, the importance of an oil rich Middle East to a United States.

Keywords: Oil, Middle East, Policy, International Politics, Strategic Position

INTRODUCTION

The United States has for over fifty years, been dependent and reliant on one of the most critical, essential and significant products to its economy and its civilization. This has, gradually but consistently introduced a serious necessity to ensure that oil is not, at any point in time, both now and in the future used to put the United States at a dangerous position. To an appreciable extent, the United States had since 1973, viewed the Middle East as a potentially dangerous oil

producing zone. This is because it could conveniently be used to deny the US of a product that it not only consumes a large proportion of but in which its production is made smaller in relation to the consumption. To worsen it all, the Middle East had for a long period of time been violent prone as it has witnessed wars, that are not only irrational by ways of reasoning, but which could have ordinarily been averted. This has again greatly affected the United States' adequate and regular supply of a product it was in dire need. It has therefore become inevitable that the Middle East become critical and significant to the United States foreign policy, if it (the United States) could expect a continued regularity in the supply of the product. It is the focus of this paper to assess the extent at which the United States Middle East policy is fashioned and manipulated by its oil interest in the region. It views the general importance of oil to the global community, while also narrowing down to indicating both the Middle East and the Northern reserves and production in relation to their consumption rates. A section of the work is then devoted to a linkage in the US' interventionist policy to the strategic importance of the Middle East to United States.

Importance of oil to the global community

Natural resources including energy are unevenly distributed in the world and very few countries have been endowed with an abundant commercial energy base. Invariably, therefore, commercial sources of useful energy and their distribution among nations vary considerably over time. This makes energy a commodity of paramount importance to individuals, enterprises and nations. (*Alnasrawi,; 1973:188–207*). Becht and Belzung both agree that “known resources per person including mineral and forest wealth are far greater in some countries than in others.” (*Becht and Relzung:1975: 82*). This further confirms the fact that the blessings of nature are not evenly distributed throughout the world.

In contradiction to assertions of writers on Great Power- Small Power relation and in agreement with the view of Becht and Belzung above, the introduction of oil as a raw material of immense value to the economies of the world has been given adequate attention by various authors to indicate the position of the raw material in changing the asymmetrical nature of international economic relations. Ikein for instance describes oil as a critical product to Northern economy, (*Ibid,85*) an assertion that Doran (*Doran; 1977:58*), Fried and Schultz (*Fried and Schultz 1975*), (*Ali; 1976: 25-27, 52, 92*), (*Willrich; 1975: 1*), (*Aribisala; 1986: 82*), (*Fisher and Ridker; 1973: 63..2: 8*)., (*Hansen; 1974: 51-52*) and (*Frankel; 1981: 111*) all agree with.

The Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) (2001) actually describes oil as Black gold; declaring that;

It is the energy source that dominated the 20th Century and will continue to be pivotal for the foreseeable part of the 21st Century. It is the most versatile energy source available today. It is the most political of energy sources, the resource that makes countries go to war, the resource that countries must have to wage war. It is the single largest commodity in international trade and has been one of the most volatile (IPAA; 2002: 15).

The industry is a unique industry, with characteristics which distinguish it from every other sector. Oil is the lifeblood of the developed industrialized world, providing readily accessible power and heat, as well as a vast array of consumer, commercial and industrial products. (Silva – Calderon; 2003: 3). Oil holds numerous benefits as a product and over other commercial energy sources such as accessibility, versatility, transportability and cost, (Ibid. 5). Oil was the major global energy fuel and is likely to remain so for the next 30 years, at least. Fossil fuels dominated the energy supply in the second half of the last century and will almost certainly continue to do so in the second half of this century. (Amuzegar; 1999: 142).

The promise of new and renewable energy sources and its great expectations were not realized and are unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future. New energy fuels, like biofuels proved to be uneconomical, and new energy carriers – hydrogen energy and fuel cells are still in the research laboratories rather than in markets and are unlikely to have a dent on the energy scene for years to come (Hisham; 2004).

Oil as a Southern weapon of bargaining is fundamentally represented in Zindani's description of the commodity as the element of blue tactics in the Third World's economic and political struggle vis-à-vis the Western World. (Zindani,;1977:207). Henry Kissinger once noted that "oil is the world's most strategic commodity", (Kissinger; 1974:15). an evaluation that must have been made after critical analysis.

As a result of the economic significance of this commodity, it has also acquired a great strategic significance in international politics. The focus of the world on the Middle East and especially on the Persian Gulf is mainly because these areas primarily export the largest amount of oil to non-communist countries. The West, headed by the US could not afford that these areas be controlled by the communists, during the cold war era, for this might result in a likely economic warfare by the communists to squeeze and strangulate the economies of the West. Even after the cold war era, focus and attention of the United States have remained on the Middle East. This is why the United States has jealously guided the Middle East and has persistently built military bases to act as deterrence.

It is also because of the importance of oil that developing countries attempted to link energy matters to the North- South dialogue. Discovering the importance of this resource, the oil exporting developing nations realised they could use oil to redress the imbalance between the haves and the have-nots. This was the origin of the oil crisis of 1973, which caused some major changes in relations of the North and the South.

Natural crude oil has therefore, since the early 1970s, remained a major source of commercial energy. It is expected to maintain its role as a standard of value and of reference, especially in view of obstacles in the way of developing substitutes, ranging from close substitutes such as synthetic crude, to partial substitutes such as nuclear power. Mikdashi actually identified three major obstacles in the way of substitutes to oil; namely, that it requires large-scale investments, advanced technology and long lead times. (*Mikdashi;1996: 1*).

UNITED STATES' DEPENDENCE ON OIL: A FOUR DECADE ANALYSIS

By natural endowment, reserves of oil are in the South, while the need for it and the appreciation of its criticality are in the North. This is because the North uses oil more than other nations in other hemisphere. It is on this basis that oil is said to have placed and introduced an element of power on the South over the North. In fact, it seems that oil by its reserves and need that are concentrated in different parts of the globe, in relation to the North and the South, is the only product that threatens to challenge the power, control and authority that the international economic system places on the North. (Ibid)

Table 1: World Proven Crude Oil Reserves By Region, 1960-2004 (M B)

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
North America	36,613.2	36,758.5	35,989.2	36,645.0	36,271.5	38,852.4
Latin America	25,060.0	24,705.0	24,225.0	24,305.0	25,525.0	25,170.0
Eastern Europe	24,832.8	24,653.0	30,176.5	33,202.0	34,201.0	36,166.0
Western Europe	1,810.0	1,824.0	1,904.0	2,295.0	2,755.0	2,585.0
Middle East	183,060.0	188,104.0	193,828.0	207,004.0	211,434.0	214,838.0
Africa	7,999.5	9,609.5	12,275.0	16,325.0	19,515.0	23,195.5
Asia And Pacific	11,791.7	11,642.8	12,332.8	12,573.9	12,820.5	12,960.3
Total World	291,167.2	297,296.8	310,730.5	332,349.9	342,522.0	353,767.2
OPEC	218,100.0	223,600.0	231,875.0	247,950.0	254,675.0	260,375.0
OPEC						
Percentage	74.9	75.2	74.6	74.6	74.4	73.6

	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
North America	39,702.1	40,168.5	40,607.1	38,413.9	49,751.3	46,511.3
Latin America	27,099.0	26,906.0	28,782.0	29,179.0	26,170.8	30,485.8
Eastern Europe	38,994.0	36,934.0	60,877.5	61,000.0	61,014.0	58,796.0
Western Europe	2,425.1	2,771.0	2,637.0	2,433.0	6,926.0	9,626.0
Middle East	234,607.0	248,451.0	270,050.0	332,847.0	336,221.0	346,377.4
Africa	32,609.6	42,436.8	44,567.9	48,384.8	51,107.0	54,634.6
Asia And Pacific	13,974.7	13,981.7	16,624.0	15,692.3	17,262.1	24,853.2
Total World	389,411.5	411,649.0	464,145.5	527,950.0	548,452.2	571,284.3
OPEC	290,206.0	310,372.0	331,628.0	391,616.0	399,436.0	410,973.4
OPEC						
Percentage	74.5	75.4	71.4	74.2	72.8	71.9
	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
North America	46,539.4	44,724.0	43,650.0	39,782.1	37,142.2	35,486.4
Latin America	31,367.8	29,458.3	30,548.3	36,072.0	32,572.7	40,223.0
Eastern Europe	55,921.0	52,339.0	59,341.0	61,878.0	62,900.0	62,000.0
Western Europe	10,555.0	17,489.5	25,726.0	25,639.7	24,857.8	27,594.5
Middle East	350,046.0	349,950.9	403,358.2	387,071.0	380,169.4	376,766.3
Africa	59,487.2	61,569.1	60,479.1	59,085.7	55,019.1	53,718.0
Asia And Pacific	25,105.2	27,123.0	31,423.5	33,313.0	35,613.9	34,889.7
Total World	579,021.6	582,653.8	654,526.1	642,841.5	628,275.1	630,677.8
OPEC	417,171.0	419,326.4	482,168.0	463,050.6	453,560.0	447,875.6
OPEC						
Percentage	72.0	72.0	73.7	72.0	72.2	71.0
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
North America	33,803.8	36,610.0	36,610.5	35,409.0	34,547.0	34,167.7
Latin America	41,488.5	57,129.5	74,032.5	84,186.7	89,526.7	90,715.7
Eastern Europe	61,438.0	62,878.0	65,800.0	65,695.0	65,384.0	65,255.0
Western Europe	24,415.0	23,837.4	22,761.0	22,332.7	21,340.3	21,984.8
Middle East	370,715.0	362,655.3	362,910.0	365,244.0	388,591.6	397,053.3
Africa	52,883.6	53,221.3	52,468.2	56,353.6	57,876.8	57,309.4
Asia And Pacific	35,747.5	33,202.5	33,305.0	33,994.0	34,045.0	35,382.9
Total World	620,491.4	629,534.0	647,887.2	663,215.0	691,311.4	701,868.8
OPEC	443,133.5	435,556.2	434,614.2	438,311.6	467,370.8	475,295.0
OPEC						
Percentage	71.4	69.2	67.1	66.1	67.6	67.7

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
North America	34,415.2	34,176.4	32,829.2	33,169.4	32,958.5	32,400.8
Latin America	92,883.7	118,528.9	119,118.8	121,915.0	121,956.6	121,498.7
Eastern						
Europe	64,662.0	64,233.0	62,135.0	60,369.5	59,787.6	59,591.8
Western						
Europe	22,578.8	22,066.6	19,822.1	17,187.8	17,845.5	16,892.1
Middle East	431,005.8	431,427.7	537,183.6	566,768.3	655,829.6	663,348.2
Africa	56,255.2	56,199.6	57,264.6	57,063.2	57,838.6	58,022.9
Asia And Pacific	36,309.0	37,096.0	37,087.4	37,716.3	38,249.0	33,674.6
Total World	738,109.7	763,728.2	865,440.7	894,189.5	984,465.4	985,429.1
OPEC	509,998.0	535,797.8	643,015.9	674,020.0	760,484.0	764,829.9
OPEC Percentage	69.1	70.2	74.3	75.4	77.2	77.6

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
North America	31,839.1	29,973.6	28,838.1	27,992.5	27,355.5	27,244.6
Latin America	122,745.7	125,506.2	130,182.5	131,354.1	131,316.8	132,375.7
Eastern						
Europe	58,568.0	58,534.0	58,952.8	58,931.6	58,968.4	58,960.8
Western						
Europe	16,890.4	16,950.4	17,385.1	17,877.3	19,785.6	20,990.4
Middle East	662,018.9	662,460.8	663,307.0	663,485.0	665,765.6	665,394.4
Africa	58,648.7	59,987.5	60,842.1	60,841.1	63,511.1	70,877.1
Asia And Pacific	34,228.4	35,272.3	35,444.6	36,366.8	35,851.1	35,701.1
Total World	984,939.2	988,684.8	994,952.2	996,848.4	1,002,554.1	1,011,544.1
OPEC	765,879.0	771,947.0	773,702.3	774,541.4	777,400.2	785,065.7
OPEC Percentage	77.8	78.1	77.8	77.7	77.5	77.6

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
North America	26,856.2	27,476.8	25,910.8	26,468.8	26,900.9	27,101.1
Latin America	138,791.1	140,889.3	123,838.2	125,714.6	122,202.6	124,593.0
Eastern						
Europe	67,365.6	67,373.9	73,714.4	77,132.7	79,558.7	81,431.4

Western						
Europe	18,540.4	18,751.4	18,348.3	18,885.1	19,250.6	19,410.3
Middle East	675,946.4	676,600.3	677,606.2	678,536.9	694,578.9	698,638.3
Africa	73,451.6	73,811.5	76,178.5	84,258.4	92,415.2	95,876.5
Asia And						
Pacific	35,992.2	36,949.7	39,027.3	38,890.8	39,477.5	39,711.9
Total World	1,036,943.5	1,041,852.9	1,034,623.7	1,049,887.3	1,074,384.4	1,086,762.6
OPEC	802,818.7	805,967.0	810,264.3	818,247.0	840,537.7	847,883.6
OPEC						
Percentage	77.4	77.4	78.3	77.9	78.2	78.0

	2002	2003	2004
North America	27,167.0	27,200.0	26,191.0
Latin America	117,529.0	117,045.2	118,952.2
Eastern			
Europe	87,408.5	90,433.5	91,467.5
Western			
Europe	18,403.5	18,037.6	17,391.6
Middle East	730,102.3	735,083.3	739,135.6
Africa	103,859.3	111,205.2	111,645.6
Asia And			
Pacific	39,836.5	39,416.7	39,229.7
Total World	1,124,306.1	1,138,421.5	1,144,013.1
OPEC	881,678.8	890,713.8	896,659.1
OPEC			
Percentage	78.4	78.2	78.4

Sources: OPEC Statistical Bulletin 2000, 2003 and 2004.

Table 2: World Crude Oil Production By Region, 1960-2004 (1000 b/d)

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
North America	7,599.1	7,841.7	8,060.2	8,310.1	8,431.1	8,676.6	9,251.5
Latin America	3,725.3	3,903.7	4,246.0	4,334.5	4,494.0	4,603.7	4,572.9
Eastern Europe	3,246.8	3,607.2	4,021.9	4,361.8	4,785.7	5,182.3	5,628.5
Western Europe	305.9	332.0	354.2	379.7	412.2	441.5	434.4
Middle East	5,330.4	5,712.4	6,255.6	6,886.4	7,681.4	8,424.7	9,388.8

Africa	282.3	489.3	808.3	1,169.5	1,704.4	2,217.0	2,812.9
Asia and Pacific	551.4	567.5	634.5	649.3	696.3	784.0	870.4
Total world	21,041.1	22,453.7	24,380.6	26,091.2	28,205.1	30,329.8	32,959.4
OPEC	8,674.0	9,340.9	10,484.7	11,489.7	12,955.3	14,306.5	15,734.3
OPEC percentage	41.2	41.6	43.0	44.0	45.9	47.2	47.7
	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
North America	9,856.6	10,204.9	10,411.1	10,963.4	11,010.7	11,061.1	10,950.3
Latin America	4,880.6	5,023.0	5,090.3	5,172.9	5,067.4	4,835.8	5,138.2
Eastern Europe	6,101.0	6,509.6	6,922.6	7,411.2	7,802.6	8,223.9	8,814.4
Western Europe	459.3	474.1	494.7	469.5	444.0	462.4	472.5
Middle East	10,055.0	11,275.5	12,460.8	13,779.4	16,163.9	17,941.5	21,052.6
Africa	3,121.9	3,962.1	5,052.2	6,032.1	5,689.7	5,684.1	5,888.0
Asia and Pacific	981.5	986.1	1,338.2	1,544.0	1,907.0	2,381.8	2,924.6
Total world	35,456.0	38,435.2	41,770.1	45,372.6	48,085.2	50,590.5	55,240.6
OPEC	16,774.6	18,688.7	20,802.1	23,300.1	25,208.0	26,891.1	30,629.5
OPEC percentage	47.3	48.6	49.8	51.4	52.4	53.2	55.4
	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
North America	10,408.9	9,755.3	9,387.0	9,507.6	9,956.7	9,945.3	9,891.0
Latin America	4,797.5	4,289.8	4,334.8	4,532.4	4,759.4	5,260.2	5,569.0
Eastern Europe	9,564.4	10,227.8	10,750.3	11,321.9	11,810.2	12,066.5	12,388.6
Western Europe	485.7	637.3	921.1	1,431.4	1,792.2	2,334.0	2,518.7
Middle East	21,705.2	19,438.3	22,046.7	22,223.4	21,122.7	21,568.8	18,345.1
Africa	5,382.0	4,944.6	5,893.9	6,276.5	6,065.7	6,584.3	6,061.1
Asia and Pacific	3,298.0	3,696.5	4,111.0	4,555.6	4,726.3	4,990.5	4,916.7
Total world	55,641.6	52,989.7	57,444.7	59,848.7	60,233.2	62,749.5	59,690.2
OPEC	30,350.7	26,771.1	30,327.1	30,848.1	29,394.8	30,511.3	26,501.5
OPEC percentage	54.5	50.5	52.8	51.5	48.8	48.6	44.4

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
North America	9,730.2	9,775.6	9,857.6	10,148.8	10,221.8	9,809.8	9,586.8
Latin America	5,945.9	6,226.2	6,101.2	6,161.1	6,082.7	6,041.9	6,053.4
Eastern Europe	12,528.9	12,636.3	12,699.5	12,605.9	11,986.3	12,309.1	12,448.4
Western Europe	2,728.5	2,988.9	3,357.3	3,696.8	3,853.1	3,930.9	4,064.4
Middle East	15,556.3	12,929.7	11,149.8	10,518.3	9,724.8	12,102.9	11,920.0
Africa	4,642.2	4,403.2	4,442.5	4,609.0	4,871.1	5,149.5	4,789.0
Asia and Pacific	4,851.7	4,622.8	4,798.4	5,251.2	5,529.9	5,747.2	5,743.3
Total world	55,983.7	53,582.6	52,406.3	52,991.2	52,269.6	55,091.3	54,605.3
OPEC	22,183.2	18,734.4	16,615.6	15,933.7	14,921.0	17,660.2	16,741.5
OPEC percentage	39.6	35.0	31.7	30.1	28.5	32.1	30.7
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
North America	9,419.7	8,836.3	8,562.4	8,611.7	8,406.8	8,143.0	8,012.3
Latin America	6,103.6	6,334.3	6,861.0	7,140.7	7,271.4	7,347.9	7,562.3
Eastern Europe	12,367.7	12,037.7	11,275.9	10,140.6	8,844.5	7,922.2	7,168.6
Western Europe	4,046.3	3,896.2	4,098.4	4,317.1	4,559.3	4,823.0	5,585.9
Middle East	14,149.9	15,133.7	16,076.9	15,896.5	17,563.1	18,264.5	18,808.5
Africa	4,949.4	5,541.6	5,961.6	6,212.2	6,324.7	6,166.9	6,121.2
Asia and Pacific	5,853.2	6,004.3	6,269.5	6,417.6	6,362.2	6,462.5	6,630.7
Total world	56,889.9	57,784.1	59,105.8	58,736.4	59,332.1	59,130.0	59,889.5
OPEC	18,841.4	20,406.3	22,021.1	22,253.6	23,845.1	24,230.5	24,609.4
OPEC percentage	33.1	35.3	37.3	37.9	40.2	41.0	41.1
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
North America	7,939.8	7,865.8	7,865.7	7,679.4	7,227.1	7,213.1	7178.9
Latin America	7,689.3	8,138.6	8,481.5	9,477.1	9,124.7	9,303.4	9319.0
Eastern Europe	7,050.3	6,930.8	7,093.0	7,083.3	7,212.0	7,629.2	8246.9
Western Europe	5,812.0	6,181.1	6,202.2	6,109.1	6,176.9	6,287.5	6033.6
Middle East	18,856.3	19,028.3	19,608.0	21,120.9	20,285.3	21,423.1	20789.7

Africa	6,199.6	6,419.4	6,589.8	6,705.0	6,348.5	6,769.8	6620.9
Asia and Pacific	6,774.9	6,929.2	7,051.0	6,965.7	7,024.7	7,166.1	7123.7
Total world	60,322.1	61,493.3	62,891.2	65,140.4	63,399.1	65,792.1	65,312.7
OPEC	24,600.8	24,769.2	25,431.8	27,739.7	26,227.8	27,745.0	26,873.5
OPEC percentage	40.8	40.3	40.4	42.6	41.4	42.2	41.1

	2002	2003	2004
North America	7191.3	7140.1	6835.5
Latin America	9463.5	9544.0	9928.9
Eastern Europe	9034.9	9939.3	10736.0
Western Europe	5949.6	5626.6	5367.4
Middle East	18650.0	20467.9	22015.3
Africa	6452.4	7270.3	8385.5
Asia and Pacific	7182.0	7174.8	7306.9
Total world	63923.7	67163.1	70575.4
OPEC	24322.5	26884.6	29577.7
OPEC percentage	38.0	40.0	41.9

Sources: OPEC Statistical Bulletin 2000, 2003 and 2004.

Table 3: World Consumption of Refined Products By Region, 1960-2004 (1000 b/d)

	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
North America	10,035.0	10,257.9	10,614.0	11,011.7	11,328.3	11,839.1	12,364.7
Latin America	1,424.7	1,510.5	1,602.8	1,569.8	1,697.2	1,781.0	1,914.9
Eastern Europe	2,617.4	2,855.0	3,207.9	3,515.6	3,791.5	4,076.4	4,366.3
Western Europe	3,690.9	4,149.3	4,827.0	5,590.0	6,409.6	7,175.7	8,018.5
Middle East	231.5	247.7	265.7	266.3	307.4	341.5	376.7
Africa	323.3	339.9	347.5	390.6	460.0	483.2	511.0
Asia and Pacific	1,453.1	1,714.5	1,910.5	2,224.7	2,568.7	2,950.6	3,359.5
Total world	19,775.9	21,074.7	22,775.4	24,568.7	26,562.7	28,647.5	30,911.6
OPEC	317.7	336.9	342.7	364.7	411.5	472.6	494.8
OPEC percentage	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
North America	12,914.1	13,672.3	14,347.7	15,204.2	17,176.6	18,471.5	19,482.3
Latin America	2,038.5	2,247.4	2,500.7	2,699.8	2,572.4	2,779.5	3,086.7
Eastern Europe	4,783.8	5,117.4	5,549.4	6,028.5	6,223.8	6,735.2	7,356.8
Western Europe	8,684.1	9,666.0	10,650.3	11,695.4	12,472.5	13,324.4	14,318.3
Middle East	405.3	489.1	499.3	510.7	544.9	593.8	683.8
Africa	486.3	547.6	576.4	631.0	710.6	781.3	849.3
Asia and Pacific	3,928.4	4,605.5	5,466.9	6,623.0	6,898.4	7,347.6	8,324.9
Total world	33,240.5	36,345.2	39,590.7	43,392.6	46,599.2	50,033.3	54,102.1
OPEC	522.3	572.0	617.7	651.6	713.4	824.8	964.9
OPEC percentage	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.8
	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
North America	18,777.5	18,128.1	19,297.0	20,591.6	20,886.7	20,420.9	18,839.4
Latin America	3,225.4	3,313.0	3,527.6	3,674.3	3,887.7	4,120.2	4,267.2
Eastern Europe	7,853.9	8,766.5	9,055.3	9,434.1	9,813.6	10,141.7	10,350.2
Western Europe	13,481.9	12,889.0	13,691.1	13,547.6	14,102.9	14,446.6	13,435.4
Middle East	766.1	888.2	1,045.1	1,207.8	1,330.6	1,477.5	1,694.5
Africa	874.7	943.2	1,026.2	1,113.2	1,178.4	1,246.6	1,339.0
Asia and Pacific	8,424.2	8,376.9	9,039.6	9,598.0	10,130.1	10,436.7	10,000.0
Total world	53,403.6	53,304.8	56,682.0	59,166.6	61,330.0	62,290.3	59,925.6
OPEC	1,064.4	1,238.3	1,472.2	1,702.4	1,857.4	2,116.7	2,480.4
OPEC percentage	2.0	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.0	3.4	4.1
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
North America	17,963.9	17,096.5	16,737.9	17,219.7	17,153.7	17,670.7	18,126.1
Latin America	4,343.3	4,378.1	4,204.0	4,229.2	4,308.8	4,513.7	4,677.6
Eastern Europe	10,416.2	10,376.8	10,335.2	10,226.6	10,134.5	10,162.3	10,235.8
Western Europe	12,432.0	11,940.0	11,747.1	11,797.4	11,678.1	12,067.1	12,202.4
Middle East	1,854.0	1,998.4	2,204.0	2,400.6	2,455.5	2,277.9	2,379.3

Africa	1,422.7	1,474.0	1,551.6	1,597.5	1,609.3	1,621.1	1,698.3
Asia and Pacific	9,670.4	9,553.8	9,673.7	9,944.7	9,994.8	10,341.5	10,798.9
Total world	58,102.5	56,817.7	56,453.4	57,415.8	57,334.6	58,654.4	60,118.4
OPEC	2,689.8	2,884.7	3,052.4	3,216.1	3,277.2	3,348.0	3,427.8
OPEC percentage	4.6	5.1	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.7

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
North America	18,747.8	18,843.6	18,369.0	18,030.7	18,341.4	18,627.3	19,173.7
Latin America	4,754.3	4,907.9	4,944.6	5,052.2	5,207.9	5,270.5	5,519.9
Eastern Europe	10,161.3	9,973.1	9,739.4	9,234.6	7,900.7	6,780.3	5,878.8
Western Europe	12,454.6	12,478.2	12,632.9	12,996.5	13,072.5	13,073.6	13,157.6
Middle East	2,449.5	2,476.7	2,582.4	2,646.5	2,950.8	3,333.8	3,427.3
Africa	1,765.3	1,754.2	1,778.3	1,748.0	1,796.8	1,799.1	1,790.7
Asia and Pacific	11,550.7	12,302.1	12,935.9	13,597.2	14,419.6	15,092.1	15,962.2
Total world	61,883.5	62,735.7	62,982.5	63,305.6	63,689.6	63,976.7	64,910.0
OPEC	3,566.4	3,700.2	3,808.3	3,918.1	4,222.2	4,320.9	4,396.7
OPEC percentage	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.2	6.6	6.8	6.8

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
North America	19,186.8	19,815.4	20,277.4	20,551.6	21,193.8	21,407.9	21,521.7
Latin America	5,623.8	5,787.5	6,095.9	6,351.7	6,323.9	6,435.0	6,404.8
Eastern Europe	5,778.0	5,418.9	5,555.7	5,401.3	5,146.9	4,862.9	5,060.1
Western Europe	13,417.4	13,701.0	13,786.6	14,030.6	13,956.9	13,865.9	13,988.3
Middle East	3,450.1	3,526.2	3,628.4	3,734.2	3,789.1	3,873.3	4,011.7
Africa	1,897.9	2,025.5	2,086.3	2,136.7	2,209.0	2,219.8	2,340.9
Asia and Pacific	16,794.6	17,741.4	18,617.7	18,009.5	19,010.3	19,667.8	19,801.1
Total world	66,148.6	68,015.8	70,048.0	70,215.6	71,629.8	72,332.5	73,128.7
OPEC	4,426.5	4,605.8	4,802.6	4,859.4	4,888.9	5,102.4	5,310.3
OPEC percentage	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.8	7.1	7.3

	2002	2003	2004
North America	21,924.9	22,258.0	22,857.8
Latin America	6,281.2	6,281.0	6,452.4
Eastern Europe	4,865.7	4,958.0	4,932.3
Western Europe	13,905.6	14,093.0	14,189.8
Middle East	4,156.7	4,342.1	4,603.6
Africa	2,382.2	2,438.3	2,506.1
Asia and Pacific	20,382.9	21,215.4	22,400.0
Total world	73,899.1	75,585.7	77,942.1
OPEC	5,448.6	5,653.7	6,000.2
OPEC percentage	7.4	7.5	7.7

Sources: OPEC Statistical Bulletin 2000, 2003 and 2004.

By 2003, Table 1 shows that reserves in North America had increased from twenty-six billion, nine hundred million barrels which it was in 2000 to twenty-seven billion, two hundred million barrels. Production according to Table 2 had however, reduced from the 7,213,000 barrels per day of 2000 to 7,190,000 barrels per day in 2003. Consumption had again increased by 2003, as indicated in Table 3, from its initial 21, 419,000 barrels per day of 2000 to 22, 332,000 barrels in 2003. In essence, by 2003, the North America dependence on outside oil was over fifteen million barrels per day (Ibid)

Middle East, with a reserve of six hundred and ninety-four billion, seven hundred and five million barrels in 2000 had increased to seven hundred and thirty-five billion, eight hundred and sixty-six million barrels of 2003 while production of 21, 430,000 barrels per day of 2000 had however, reduced to 20, 451,000 barrels a day in 2003 as reflected in Tables 1 and 2. Since consumption by 2003 in the Middle East was only 4, 199,000 barrels per day as shown in Table 3, an excess of over sixteen million barrels still existed in the Middle East for which it could supply needy nations of North America, Western Europe and Asia (Ibid).

By 2004, Table 1 shows that reserves in North America had reduced from twenty-seven billion, two hundred million barrels that it was in 2003 to twenty-six billion, one hundred and ninety-one thousand barrels per day. Production according to Table 2 had equally reduced from 7, 190,000 barrels per day in 2003 to 6, 835,000 barrels per day (OPEC Statistical Bulletin 2004).

Consumption had again increased by 2004, as indicated in Table 3, from its initial 22, 332,000 barrels per day of 2003 to 22, 857,000 barrels per day. In essence, by 2004, North American dependence on outside oil was over sixteen million barrels per day (Ibid).

Middle East, with a reserve of seven hundred and thirty-five billion, eight hundred and sixty-six million barrels of 2003 had increased to seven hundred and thirty-nine billion one hundred and thirty-five million barrels of oil by 2004, while production of 20, 451,000 barrels a day in 2003 as reflected in Tables 1 and 2 had increased to 22, 015,000 barrels per day in 2004.. Since consumption by 2004 in the Middle East was only 4, 603,000 barrels per day as shown in Table 3, an excess of over 17, 500,000 barrels still existed in the Middle East for which it could supply needy nations of North America, Western Europe and Asia (Ibid).

Invariably, by 2003, an excess of over twenty-four million barrels per day existed in the four regions that were at gross disadvantage in the international economic system that could serve as an element of power over the Northern developed nations (Ibid). By 2004, an excess of over twenty-nine million barrels existed everyday for which the Northern developed nations could not but depend on the South. It can therefore be deduced that if oil producing nations in the South had utilised the oil power as a political force rather than mainly for economic benefits which it presently represents, it is more likely than not that the dependence as illustrated above would have changed the North- South relation to the benefit of developing nations. This is because as revealed in the Tables, for forty four years, consumption of developed nations have not been met by production and reserves. This implies that dependence on Southern oil has remained for the past forty four years and with the exception of the 1973 event in which the oil power was utilised as a political force, the South has been incapable of utilising the global crude oil reserves, production and consumption pattern to reverse the economic status quo. The problem at effectively utilising the Northern dependence to Southern benefit is because oil remains the means to only an economic benefit, and does not assume its role of a political force which introduced remarkable achievements in the 1973 oil embargo days.

One of the most interesting issues of oil politics amongst nations however is that the Northern developed nations have, in realization of the facts above continued to introduce strategies to reduce, if not totally eliminate the dependence on the South. One can therefore understand why the North consistently takes measures that clearly imply very deep and fundamental oil interests and at the same time works strenuously at reducing, if not totally eliminating the Southern oil power.

THE US' INTERVENTIONIST POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The United States had since 1974 been working at the possibility of a military action against the Middle East. Ismael, for instance claims that in an event of an oil disruption, “the United States might expect pressure for an American Military Intervention from many who are already urging that we seize the oil production of the Middle East to save the West from bankruptcy. (Ismael;1974:74).” This threat, Ali believes was real as the US Military troops actually undertook desert maneuvers in 1974 in the Middle East, for the first time in 40 years (Ali; 1976:133).

The justification for American invasion of the Middle East according to Ali was the deprivation of a nation's access to basic resources which has been historically considered a caucus belie. In his speech to the World Energy Conference in Detroit on September 23,1974, President Ford of the United States echoed that: “Throughout history, nations have gone to war over natural advantages such as water, food or convenient passages on land or seas(Ibid)..

Ismael claims that the United States had by 1974, made a contingency plan ready for an expedition in the Arab Word. This invasion plan drawn by the Pentagon was revealed by a Washington – based Professor and defense consultant, who declared that the US invasion plan, code – named Dhahran option four, had been approved by the US National Security Council (headed by the US President himself). Lending credence to the assertion, the then US Secretary of State in an interview with the Business Week of January 13, 1975, declined to rule out the use of force in the Middle East (Ismael, op cit. 242).

Ali claims that the American plan is drawn up in such a way that in the event of a fifth Arab – Israeli war and another oil embargo, one marine division of about 14,000 men would be sent to the Persian Gulf. At the same time, a second task force consisting of nine infantry battalions of the 82nd airborne division, based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, would be flown to the Israeli airbase in the Northern part of Neger. From the Israeli Airbase, American C-5A and C-141 jet craft would carry paratroopers accompanied by an escort of Phantom fighters to complete the final 1,000 mile journey, arriving at Dhahran airfield at least three days before the sea borne marines (Ali, op cit. 134).

The job of the paratroopers would then be to seize Dhahran airfield, evacuate American personnel from the area and call in reinforcements to capture oil tankers at Ras Tanura. Once this has been accomplished, the paratroopers would move inward to occupy the carpets oil fields at Ghawar, only 70 miles from Dhahran. The marines' job would be to complete the occupation of Ghawar and nearly Abqaiq oil fields and send patrols North toward Kuwait and toward controlling the Strait of Hormuz on the Persian Gulf. The Strait was very important to the United States plan as around 23 million barrels of oil a day ware carried by tankers which passed through the shallow 26 – mile – wide strait.

After the Victorian experience, the Americans have not been too willing to spill their blood for other peoples' wars, but it would be a lot easier to engage in the Middle East war as it would not be a war to meet the interest of the American Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, but would be directed toward the prevention or the use of oil for destruction and of the financial and economic system of the Western World. According to Ulman "the US cannot again permit oil to be used as an essential Military weapon without a suitable Military response. (Ulman;1975: 287-288).

Non-economic strategies have consistently been utilised, such as military intervention by industrial powers in oil-exporting countries as a so-called "crisis approach" of controlling the flow of oil supplies at terms acceptable to these powers. The United States and France have reportedly set up special expeditionary corps, trained to intervene in Gulf oil-exporting countries (Ibid).

Even though, it is generally agreed that the instruments of force are most effective threats, yet once applied, it is feared they could prove counter-productive, since they could invite retaliation. Availability of energy supplies could thus be reduced, and consumers and producers would both be worse off.

In fact, the use of force by industrialised nations precedes the end of the cold war. Military preparations, as observed by Mikdashi are not therefore solely prompted by the objective of dissuading OPEC countries from espousing nationalistic or radical policies as it was also motivated by the necessity of fending off any possible direct or indirect actions by the Soviet Union, which had hegemonic designs over Middle Eastern countries. (Mikdashi, op cit. 115). Oil and the strategic location of the Middle East, has therefore always been a factor of enticement for control, and a source of rivalry between major powers.

In condemning the interventionist strategy of the industrialised nations, the leader of then Soviet Union, Brezhnev declares that,

Those who believe they will succeed with the help of a "quick intervention force"... this now purely imperialistic creation ... to lead Arab countries to renounce their sovereign right of controlling their own natural resources are mistaken ... The recurrence of imperialistic gunboat politics in its modern form can only create new dangerous focal points of tension, aggravate those already existing and worsen the international situation. Attempts to revive the inglorious policy of colonisers are doomed to failure, providing the people remain vigilant and resist them strenuously enough and in time.(Mikdashi, op cit. 115).

Reactions of the Gulf nations to the super power rivalry in their region are the same; anxiety. Even a conservative statesman, the UAE President, Shaikh Zayed considered "the presence of US' forces in the area (as) something (not expected of) a friendly country like the US. The

peoples of the world would co-operate and live in peace if it were not for the intervention of the big powers, so these powers must work to keep the Gulf region clear of their rivalry” (Ibid).

Interventionist strategies have in fact, prompted contingent confrontation strategies on the part of the oil - exporting countries. One contemplated measure is the sabotage of few key parts of the production process. The cost in some US quarters, could well be some years of distribution of oil flows from the Gulf, a situation that Mikdashi says would be catastrophic for Europe, Japan, and the United States. The reaction of the World economic leaders to a “choke off” by the oil exporting countries is predictable. In 2001, a short news item in the London Guardian noted that Saudis, when polled, feared nuclear weapons in the current situation. Guardian Oct 18 2001. While the article did not say from whom, there have been a lot of crazy commentators in the USA who have talked about using nuclear weapons in the current situation (Mikdashi, op cit. 115). The most frightening scenario which Davey perceives, is one in which a radical Islamic revolution did “choke off” the United States (and other industrial) economies, by denying them oil, only to be followed by a nuclear strike in retaliation (Davey, Brian; 2003).

The situation is that American policy in the foreseeable future, and especially after the September 11 attack will continue to antagonize OPEC, using the international war on terrorism as the main cause and excuse, making it clear that the Arab nations which are all united in their opposition to American’s plan to attack and change the government of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, is a coalition sympathetic with terrorism. It would therefore be legitimate, in America’s own understanding to cut down that reliance on Middle East oil.

With the September 11 attacks on the United States, Davey claims that the American government was forced to review its entire international relations, stating that the fact that the Middle East was viewed as the main source of anti- Americanism and terrorism meant that relations with that volatile region would have to undergo some surgery. Interestingly all that this translated into was using the excuse of “September 11” as the basis for attacking certain Middle East countries as it did against Iraq. Unfortunately, such actions by the US are only viewed as an opportunity to control certain critical and sensitive oil producing nations and thereby reduce its dependence on Southern oil producers (Ibid). This is because apart from terrorist threats, the Middle East is paradoxically the main source of oil supplies to the US and the entire North, with Saudi Arabia alone supplying 1.4 Million barrels a day (Ibid).

The attack and possible occupation of Iraq could therefore be an avenue at considerable reduction of the Southern oil power. It can only be assumed that if the Iraqi nation’s mass reserves were to come under the control of the United States, a principal aspect of the Southern oil power would have been checked and in essence the status quo may have been maintained.

CONCLUSION

There is a direct link and relationship between the United States' foreign policy and the control that the Middle East has over oil. It can in fact be stated that the United States might probably have had very little or no interest in the Middle East if the control and reserves present in the region were not there. The criticality of oil to the United States and its consumption that unfortunately does not meet with production and reserves have continuously introduced a reliance and dependence which automatically has made the United States vulnerable. It can be understood that a United States which ordinarily cuts the shot in the global community and international relations in general would not ordinarily want to sustain such vulnerability. It is therefore in this that its interest and a focal point foreign policy on the Middle East is premised and substantially until oil is either found at a level that the United States does not have to search around for it or where its criticality, importance and significance considerably reduce, a United States interest in a region like the Middle East cannot but continue unabated.

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