

Why are we going to war?

The Bush administration insists that its drive to war against Iraq is motivated by an effort to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and establish democracy. There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime is both dictatorial and dangerous, but Iraq has been effectively contained for eleven years and poses few immediate threats to the U.S. or its neighbors in the Middle East. As Nelson Mandela recently told *Newsweek*, the drive toward war in Iraq "is clearly a decision that is motivated by George W. Bush's desire to please the arms and oil industries of the United States."¹

The unilateralist drive to war against Iraq is a critical move that could potentially catalyze violent reactions across the region and create new enemies sympathetic to terrorist activity directed at our country. It could also lock the nation into a dangerous dependency on foreign sources of oil. If oil is the goal, the price in potential lives lost is not worth it. There is a better way.

It has been clear for some time that reducing our dependence on oil should be a national security priority. Although the United States possesses only 2% of the world's oil reserves, we account for 26% of the planet's daily oil consumption.² This amounts to 19.5 million barrels of petroleum a day. We import 9.8 million (51%) of those barrels.³



But the Bush Administration's plans will make our addiction to oil worse. Instead of guiding the country towards accelerated fuel efficiency standards that would reduce our consumption of oil, Vice President Cheney's national energy strategy, drawn up in secret with the aid of Enron and the American Petroleum Institute (the oil industry's trade association, which Cheney once led) forecasts that by 2020, we will need to import two-thirds of our oil, which will amount to 17 million barrels a day. Casting this as an inevitability, Cheney's National Energy Policy then recommends "that the President make energy security a priority of our trade and foreign policy."⁴

Where will all that oil come from? According to the National Energy Policy, 67% of all proven world oil reserves are in the Persian Gulf. No other region accounts for more than 9% of the reserves.⁵ With 112.5 billion barrels of proven oil reserves (and up to 220 billion in possible reserves), Iraq alone accounts for at least 11% of the world's oil.⁶ Only Saudi Arabia (262 billion barrels of proven reserves) is estimated to have more.⁷



Currently, Saudi Arabia is the only U.S.-friendly producer with spare capacity in the case of an emergency. (The U.S. strategic reserve of 592 million barrels would only last 51 days⁸). But Saudi Arabia is an authoritarian regime with power held by a few very wealthy members of the House of Saud. This is far from a stable political situation. Should an anti-U.S. regime take over, the United States would be in a real bind. Geopolitical strategists who are urging the U.S. to war believe that controlling Iraq's oil

fields would give the U.S. a much-needed back-up plan.

U.S. oil companies have been banished from direct involvement in Iraq for more than a decade. But Saddam Hussein recently awarded drilling concessions to French, Russian, and Chinese oil companies for land that contains an estimated 44 billion barrels of oil.⁹ U.S. oil powers, who are extremely influential in the Bush administration (see other side), would surely like nothing more than control over this oil. And a successful American-led "regime change" could accomplish just that.

But war will not solve our nation's energy problems. And increased reliance on oil will only make our national security problems worse, stretching our defense forces thin as we try to control foreign oil sources around the world instead of protecting Americans at home. Instead of relying upon oil to keep our economy functioning, we could become self-sufficient by investing the hundreds of billions of dollars that the war is projected to cost into supporting and developing fuel efficient technologies and alternative sources of energy. For instance, if we raised the fuel efficiency of our vehicles to 55-miles-per-gallon, we could save 5 million barrels a day, almost double what we import from the Persian Gulf.¹⁰ (see back for more solutions).



THE FACTS:

The United States consumes 19.5 million barrels of oil a day. Of those, 9.8 million are imported.

The U.S. has 2% of the world's oil reserves, but consumes 26% of the world's oil.

The Department of Energy estimates that without adopting new technologies, by 2020 we will need to import 17 million barrels a day, accounting for 2/3 of our daily consumption.

Iraq possesses known oil reserves of 112.5 billion barrels, about 11% of the world's proven reserves. Yet U.S. oil companies are currently banished from drilling in Iraq.

Increasing fuel efficiency to 55 miles per gallon using hybrid and other technologies could save 5 million barrels a day, almost twice the oil the U.S. imports from the Persian Gulf.

Notes:
1. "Nelson Mandela: The United States of America is a Threat to World Peace," *Newsweek*, September 10, 2002; 2. Union of Concerned Scientists, "Dangerous Addiction: the risks of dependence on foreign oil"; 3. U.S. Energy Information Administration "Energy Data Rankings"; 4. U.S. Department of Energy, "National Energy Policy" (chapter 8: Strengthening Global Alliances); 5. *ibid*; 6. U.S. Energy Information Administration "World Crude Oil and Natural Gas Reserves"; 7. *ibid*; 8. "U.S. fails to Curb its Saudi Oil Habit, Experts Say," by Jeff Gerth, *the New York Times*, November 26, 2002; 9. See "Oiling the Wheels of War," by Michael T. Klare, *The Nation*, October 7, 2002; 10. See Union of Concerned Scientists, "Dangerous Addiction: the risks of dependence on foreign oil"

An oiligarchy is leading us into war

Any discussion of war in Iraq must examine the close ties between the Bush administration and the oil industry.

A total of 41 members of the administration have close ties to the oil industry¹, including the President and the Vice President, who are both former oil executives (see chart). President Bush received more than \$1.8 million in campaign contributions from the oil and gas industries in the 2000 election. That's more than the industry gave any federal candidate over the course of the entire decade.² Twenty-eight Bush "Pioneers" (campaign contributors who pledged to raise at least \$100,000) came from the Energy & Natural Resources sector.³

Bush has paid his oil industry supporters back in spades, refusing to acknowledge global warming and pulling out of the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001. In April 2002, Bush removed Dr. Robert Watson as Chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), shortly after ExxonMobil had requested Watson's removal in a secret memo to Bush. Under Watson, the IPCC had pointed to rising evidence of global warming.⁴

Vice President Cheney has refused to release key documents from the Energy Task Force's meetings with oil and other corporate officials. However, the National Resources Defense Council found that Cheney had 714 direct contacts with energy industry representatives compared to only 29 contacts with non-industry representatives. That's a 25-to-1 ratio.⁵

Cheney's move through the revolving doors of government and industry epitomizes the nexus between oil and war. As Secretary of Defense during the first Gulf War, he launched one of the largest privatization efforts in the history of the Pentagon. In 1995, he went to Halliburton and cashed in on the contracts he made possible.⁶

Reducing our dependence on oil

Reducing our dependence on oil is key to a sane national security policy. Instead of relying on military ventures in unstable countries to keep our economy functioning, we must deploy technologies that make us a self-sufficient and environmentally sustainable nation.

Since cars and trucks currently account for 40% of U.S. oil consumption⁷, the simplest way to reduce our dependence on oil is to accelerate the introduction and use of fuel efficient vehicles. Currently, the average mileage of our new cars and trucks is at its lowest level in 20 years. The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) estimates that if we raise fuel efficiency standards for our car and light truck fleet to 40-miles-per gallon by 2012, we can save nearly 2 million barrels a day; increasing the fuel efficiency to 55-miles-per gallon by 2020 could save 5 million barrels a day, almost twice our current imports from the Persian Gulf.⁸ According to UCS and the National Academy of Sciences, this could be done by mass-producing hybrid-electric cars, which get double the mileage of today's cars, and increasing the fuel efficiency of conventional gasoline-engine technology.

We could also reduce our dependence on oil by using "renewable" fuels, such as ethanol produced from crop wastes, developing hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles, and increasing mass transit options.

Reducing our dependence on oil would also benefit our economy by reducing the trade deficit. The U.S. spent \$106 billion on oil in 2000, about 29 percent of the total trade deficit.⁹ Over the past 30 years, U.S. consumers have transferred almost \$1.2 trillion to oil-producing countries.¹⁰

It's clear that we must stop the war in Iraq and embark on the path to a sane national energy strategy, before it's too late.

Fueling the madness

(a look at the Bush administration's oil ties)



George W. Bush
President
Former director, Harken Energy (energy services)

Dick Cheney

Vice-President

Former director, American Petroleum Institute

Former CEO, Halliburton (energy services)

Under Cheney, Halliburton subsidiaries sold Iraq \$23.8 million worth of oil equipment.



Condoleezza Rice
National Security Adviser
Former director, Chevron Corp. (oil)

Donald Evans

Commerce Secretary

Former CEO, Tom Brown Inc. (oil drilling)



www.targetoil.com



www.citizenworks.org

Notes: 1. See "War in Iraq: The Oil Factor," by Miriam Pemberton, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, September 2002; 2. Center for Responsive Politics, www.opensecrets.org; 3. Texans for Public Justice, "The Pioneers," www.ctj.org; 4. Greenpeace, "A Chronicle of ExxonMobil's Efforts to Corrupt the Debate on Global Warming"; 5. National Resources Defence Council, "Data Shows Industry had Extensive Access to Cheney's Energy Task Force"; 6. See "Cheney Makes a Bundle Off War," by Robert Bryce, *Texas Observer*, October 6, 2002; 7. Union of Concerned Scientists, "Dangerous Addiction: the risks of dependence on foreign oil"; 8. *ibid*; 9. *ibid*; 10. *ibid*.