

War for Oil

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*Section 2 of The "War on Terror" and the Quest For US Dominance of the Arab World*

In September 2013 U.S. President Obama told the UN General Assembly his country "is prepared to use all elements of our power, including military force, to secure our core interests in the [Arab] region ... as we did in the [1991] Gulf War".

Critics familiar with the horrors of the Gulf War and its aftermath, which killed 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of five according to UNICEF, expressed shock.

In his speech Obama identified 'oil' as a primary interest of the US, saying his administration will "ensure the free flow of energy from the region to the world" – a continuation of a decades-old policy.

This fits a pattern where US intervention in the Arab world, military and otherwise, has been a permanent feature of the region since mid-20th century.

Very few experts disagree that oil has been the main concern for Western powers in the Arab world.

As early as 1944, top State Department planners considered Middle-Eastern oil "a stupendous source of strategic power" and "one of the greatest material prizes in world history", show released government documents.

By about the same time U.S. President Roosevelt established intimate relations with the monarchy of Saudi Arabia, which at the time held the world's largest oil reserve. Ever since relations between the countries have been predicated upon the primacy of U.S. interests in Saudi oil policies in exchange for US military protection of the House of Saudi dynasty. In 1943 Roosevelt declared "the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States."

Two years later, the US established Dhahran Airbase on Saudi soil followed by a permanent training mission of the Saudi security forces in 1951. Other countries in the oil-producing Gulf region, such as Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, have followed the Saudi example.

The Gulf is now dotted with U.S. military bases, from which the US can deploy substantial military force to any oil well in the region within a few hours. The U.S., moreover, exerts virtually exclusive military control over oil routes and pipelines in and from the region.

In fact, with over 30 known U.S. military bases in and around the Arab world, the US is the dominant military power in the Arab region.

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