



Rockland Coalition
for Peace & Justice

Our deadly love affair with Oil

2003 is an unforgettable year. Our nation's hearts and souls have been bleeding since the Bush administration launched a pre-emptive strike on Iraq on March 20, 2003. Till now, no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq, but we have created such a loss of the Iraqi people and our own men and women.

U.S. Soldiers: 496 died (<http://lunaville.org>, 1/8/04)
2814 wounded (<http://lunaville.org>, 1/8/04)
11,000 medically evacuated (Medical evacuations from Iraq near 11,000, *United Press International*, 12/19/03)

Iraqi Civilians: 5,708 – 7,356 died (3/20/03 – 4/30/03)
2,049 – 2,209 died (5/1/03 - 11/14/03)
(estimated by Medact, US Stays Blind to Iraqi Casualties, *Boston Globe*, 11/14/03)

About three-fourth of the U.S. casualties occurred after Bush announced “Mission Accomplished” on May 1, 2003. Even after the capture of Saddam Hussein, the U.S. casualties just keep on mounting. It should not be surprise to anyone since no nation likes to be occupied, and Iraq is no exception. The Iraqi people are humiliated by the U.S. occupation, and resent their rich natural resource – oil (~10% of the world's oil), being controlled by U.S.

While our men and women are being shot at in Iraq, the Texas-based Halliburton Company, where Vice President Dick Cheney was chief executive, was awarded, without bidding, billions in reconstruction contracts. A Pentagon investigation has found evidence that the politically connected Halliburton Company overcharged the government by as much as \$61 million for fuel delivered to Iraq. A draft report by the Defense Contract Audit Agency had recommended that the Army Corps of Engineers seek reimbursement. (**U.S. Sees Evidence of Overcharging in Iraq Contract**, *The New York Times*, 12/12/03)

This is not the first time that the U.S. government tried to seize Middle East oil. According to a declassified British government document made public on Jan. 1 of this year, the U.S. government seriously contemplated using military force to seize oil fields in the Middle East. (**Britain Says U.S. Planned to Seize Oil in '73 Crisis**, *The New York Times*, 1/2/04)

As recent as April, 2001, Bush's Cabinet agreed that “Iraq remains a destabilizing influence to the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East” and because this is an unacceptable risk to the U.S., “military intervention” is necessary. (**US Oil at the Heart of Iraq Crisis**, *The Sunday Herald*, Scotland, 10/6/02) Bush finally invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq has inflamed much of the Islamic and Arab world and alienated our traditional allies. Worrying about revenge, we feel unsafe than ever. **It is time to pull out the occupation forces from Iraq, and let the U.N. assist Iraqis to rebuild their country. Iraqi oil belongs to Iraqis.**

U.S. Sees Evidence of Overcharging in Iraq Contract

by Douglas Jehl, *The New York Times*, December 12, 2003

A Pentagon investigation has found evidence that a subsidiary of the politically connected Halliburton Company overcharged the government by as much as \$61 million for fuel delivered to Iraq under huge no-bid reconstruction contracts, senior military officials said Thursday.

The problems involving Halliburton, where Vice President Dick Cheney was chief executive, were described in a preliminary report by auditors, the officials said. The Pentagon contracts were awarded without competitive bidding and have a potential value of \$15.6 billion. . . Michael Thibault, deputy director of the Defense Contract Audit Agency, said in a telephone interview that a draft report by the agency had recommended that the Army Corps of Engineers seek reimbursement.

High Payments to Halliburton for Fuel in Iraq

by Don Van Natta Jr, *The New York Times*, December 10, 2003

The United States government is paying the Halliburton Company an average of \$2.64 a gallon to import gasoline and other fuel to Iraq from Kuwait, more than twice what others are paying to truck in Kuwaiti fuel, government documents show.

In March, Halliburton was awarded a no-competition contract to repair Iraq's oil industry, and it has already received more than \$1.4 billion in work. That award has been the focus of Congressional scrutiny in part because Vice President Dick Cheney is Halliburton's former chief executive officer. As part of its contract, Halliburton began importing fuel in the spring when gasoline was in short supply in large Iraqi cities.

The government's accounting shows that Halliburton paid its Kuwait subcontractor \$1.17 a gallon, when it was selling for 71 cents a gallon wholesale in the Middle East.

In recent weeks, the costs of importing fuel from Kuwait have risen. Figures provided recently to Congressional investigators by the corps show that Halliburton was charging as much as \$3.06 per gallon for fuel from Kuwait in late November.

Iraqi's state oil company, SOMO, pays 96 cents a gallon to bring in gas, which includes the cost of gasoline and transportation costs, the aides to (Representative) Mr. Waxman said. The gasoline transported by SOMO — and by Halliburton's subcontractor — are delivered to the same depots in Iraq and often use the same military escorts.

The money for Halliburton's gas contract has come principally from the United Nations oil-for-food program, though some of the costs have been borne by American taxpayers. In the appropriations bill signed by Mr. Bush last month, taxpayers will subsidize all gas importation costs beginning early next year.

In an interview on Tuesday, Mr. Waxman responded to the latest information on to costs of the Halliburton contract. "It's inexcusable that Americans are being charged absurdly high prices to buy gasoline for Iraqis and outrageous that the White House is letting it happen," he said.

Britain Says U.S. Planned to Seize Oil in '73 Crisis

by Lizette Alvarez, *The New York Times*, January 2, 2004

The United States government seriously contemplated using military force to seize oil fields in the Middle East during the Arab oil embargo 30 years ago, according to a declassified British government document made public on Thursday.

The top-secret document says that President Richard M. Nixon was prepared to act more aggressively than previously thought to secure America's oil supply if the embargo, imposed by Arab nations in retaliation for America's support for Israel in the 1973 Middle East war, did not end. In fact, the embargo was lifted in March 1974.

The declassified British memorandum said the United States considered launching airborne troops to seize oil fields in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi.

Official: US Oil at the Heart of Iraq Crisis

by Neil Mackay, *The Sunday Herald* (Scotland), October 6, 2002

President Bush's Cabinet agreed in April 2001 that 'Iraq remains a destabilizing influence to the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East' and because this is an unacceptable risk to the US 'military intervention' is necessary.

Vice-president Dick Cheney, who chairs the White House Energy Policy Development Group, commissioned a report on 'energy security' from the Baker Institute for Public Policy, a think-tank set up by James Baker, the former US secretary of state under George Bush Sr.

Baker who delivered the recommendations to Cheney, the former chief executive of Texas oil firm Halliburton, was advised by Kenneth Lay, the disgraced former chief executive of Enron, the US energy giant which went bankrupt after carrying out massive accountancy fraud.

Join Rockland Coalition for Peace and Justice for weekly peace vigils
at Middletown Rd. & Rt. 59 in Nanuet, **every Saturday** 1-3 pm. For info:
www.rocklandaction.org, or call The Fellowship of Reconciliation at 358-4601