

From the 1953 CIA Overthrow of Democracy in Iran, to the Iraq War, to the Criminal Gulf Catastrophe and Deaths, BP Was There

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Theme: [Environment](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

Global Research, June 02, 2010

[Buzzflash](#) 30 May 2010

If you were to draw an oily line from the first exploitation of oil in the Middle East by the British in 1901 (they were in the process of converting their then world dominating naval fleet from coal to oil and were in desperate need of it) to the overthrow of the secular democratic leader in Iran, [Mohammed Mossadeq](#), in 1953, to the Iraq War, to the criminal environmental catastrophe in the Gulf, BP would have been there.

But the fourth largest company in the world wasn't always called BP. It used to be owned by the British Government (remember the navy armada in need of oil). It was named the [Anglo-Iranian Oil Company](#) when the CIA teamed up with the British because the Western style Iranian leader Mossadeq wanted to nationalize Britain's 100% owned and run giant oil concession in Iran, and the West would have none of that. So Eisenhower authorized "Operation Ajax," and the Shah of Iran was placed in power — ruling with an iron fist and the dreaded SAVAK, all the time fully backed by the U.S. — leading to the radical theocratic revolution that we still confront today. All the time BP, which formally adopted its current name in 1954, was there.

BP was there throughout the de facto colonization of the Middle East to provide oil to the West, the British and the U.S. remaining strong partners in keeping any recalcitrant nations in line. Which leads to the Iraq War and why many Americans and Brits were puzzled by Tony Blair's eagerness to go along with Cheney's secret oil committee plan to seize Iraq oil fields and Bush's belief that the war was Biblically justified. BP is the largest corporation in the UK and the third largest energy company. Do you have any more questions?

BP and its American counterparts are part of the corporate oligarchy that run governments when it comes to energy policy. They don't take orders from sovereign nations; they give them. They are unelected, but because of their hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue and profit, they run the show when it comes to oil policy, and profit comes first: forget about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Oil is their gold; we are just consumers who can be replaced at any time by more consumers, vassals to the oil company Masters of the Universe. There is no brake on their malfeasance, greed and criminal behavior, nor their ability to get nations to go to war, overthrow democratically elected leaders, and to get away with pollution of proportions beyond the imagination.

For over a century, whenever American and British GIs have died for oil, whenever pollution and toxicity have been let loose to ravage our shores, whenever residents have died of cancer caused by the oil refining process and spills, whenever Congress and White Houses

have loosened regulations to allow reckless and massively damaging behavior, BP was there, along with their American counterparts: companies so large that they are above the law and governmental control.

Most American presidencies and Congress — and particularly the Bush/Cheney Presidency — have regarded oil companies and the control of oil resources as essential to the survival of the American economy. As a result oil companies and the secondary businesses that support them — such as Halliburton and Transocean — are indeed able to call the shots and get the U.S. and the UK to do their bidding. In the UK, BP is the power behind 10 Downing Street when it comes to foreign policy, drilling, and all things oil; that is why Tony Blair could not refuse to join the Bush/Cheney (and Rumsfeld) attack on Iraq.

Which leads us to the catastrophe in the Gulf. Of course, BP was off drilling in waters too deep for them to have developed a plan in case the well blew. Of course, they had memos indicating that they valued profits over lives and the environment. Of course, they have lied about the size of the oil pollution and their ability to fix it from the moment that more than 10 men died as the well exploded. That is their job. It has been since 1901, when their predecessor company began exploration in Iran. During her “reign,” the iron maiden, Margaret Thatcher, allowed BP to be privatized, and it quickly — Pac Man style — gobbled up several other oil companies, including AMOCO.

For more than a century, we — citizens of a nation founded on democratic principles of citizens deciding their nation’s destiny — have been nothing but pawns in the war over access to oil, wherever it is or might be found.

And the forecast in any shift of power from oil governance to governance by the people is looking bleaker every day.

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