

US-NATO Using Military Might To Control World Energy Resources

Pentagon's Global Mission To Secure Oil And Gas Supplies

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The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's 2009 Year Book documented that international military expenditures for 2008 reached \$1.464 trillion. The denomination in dollars is germane as the United States accounted for 41.5 percent of the world total.

Earlier this month the Congressional Research Service in the U.S. reported that American weapons sales abroad reached \$37.8 billion, or 68.4 percent of all global arms transactions. The next largest weapons supplier was Italy at \$3.7 billion, less than one-tenth the U.S. amount. Russia was third at \$3.5 billion. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, however, asserted that Germany had superseded Britain and France and become the world's third largest weapons exporter.

Western nations in general and the U.S. overwhelmingly among them dominate the global arms market.

21st century weaponry is daily more technologically advanced, more linked with computer networks and satellite communications, and progressively approaching a blurring of conventional and strategic, terrestrial and space-based capabilities.

And in the U.S. and allied nations the notion of so-called preemptive warfare has advanced precariously to include cyber and satellite attacks that can cripple a targeted nation's communications, control and air defense centers, thus rendering it both helpless and toothless: Not able to fend off attacks and unable to retaliate against or even forestall them with a secure deterrent force.

The vast preponderance of American and other NATO states' arms are sold to nations neither in North America and Europe nor on their peripheries.

They are sold to nations like Saudi Arabia, India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Egypt, Taiwan, South Korea, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Kuwait, the Philippines, Morocco and other Western client states and military outposts far removed from the much-vaunted Euro-Atlantic space.

The weapons along with the military technicians, trainers and advisers that inevitably accompany them are spread throughout nations in geostrategically vital areas of the world, near large oil and natural gas reserves and astride key shipping lanes and choke points. In many instances Western-fueled arms buildups are accelerating in nations bordering Russia, China, Iran and Venezuela. Geopolitics in its most transparent, cynical and brutal

manifestation.

The growing sales of Western arms in the Persian Gulf, the South Caucasus, South America (Chile and Colombia most pronouncedly), Africa, Far East Asia and the South Pacific (Australia in the first instance) are an integral element of American and general Western plans to gain access to and domination over world energy resources.

The campaign is not limited to efforts to muscle into nations and regions rich in oil and natural gas (and uranium), nor to employing fair means or foul, peaceful or otherwise, to seize the commanding heights of the international energy market.

The overarching objective is to control the ownership, transport and consumption of energy worldwide. To determine who receives oil and natural gas, through which routes and at which prices. And to dictate what the political and military quid pro quo will be for being invited to join a U.S.-dominated international energy transportation and accessibility network.

Those who are allowed to exploit, sell and transit hydrocarbons to the Western and ultimately world market are levied for a handsome share of their energy-derived revenues for unprecedented acquisition of arms and for the stationing of U.S. and other NATO states' military forces on their soil. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and Georgia are salient examples. The last two-named nations have increased their military budgets by well over 1,000 percent in the first case and by over 3,000 percent in the second in the span of a few years.

A United Press International report of August 25, 2009 estimated that Middle Eastern nations would purchase \$100 billion worth of arms over the next five years, with the lion's share going to the oil-rich Western client states of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq.

There are six major areas in the world that the United States and its allies have targeted in history's largest scramble for hydrocarbons and, it's important to remember, against a recent backdrop of diminishing energy consumption, plunging prices and both the discovery and presumption of oil and natural gas reserves hitherto unexploited.

They are the Persian Gulf, the southern rim of the Caribbean Basin, the Gulf of Guinea off the coast of Western Africa, the Caspian Sea, the Arctic Circle, and the Antarctic Ocean and adjoining parts of the South Atlantic Ocean.

The first two were the private preserves of Washington and Western Europe until the Iranian revolution of 1979 in the first example and in the second the election of Hugo Chavez as president of Venezuela in 1998 and subsequent developments in that country and in nearby Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

South American oil and gas are no longer available to Washington on its own terms. Though Venezuelan and Ecuadoran officials have voiced the suspicion that the U.S. has recently acquired the use of seven new military bases in neighboring Colombia in part to seize the region's energy resources.

The U.S. belatedly compensated for the loss of Iran after the overthrow of its proxy, Shah Reza Pahlavi, thirty years ago by invading neighboring Iraq in 2003.

The announcement of the Carter Doctrine in January of 1980, which bluntly affirmed that the U.S. would wage war for control of Persian Gulf energy resources and by extension those in other parts of the world, codified then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's threat five years earlier to go to war over oil after the Arab petroleum boycott of 1973-1974.

President Carter's State of the Union address in 1980 included the following comments:

"This situation demands careful thought, steady nerves, and resolute action, not only for this year but for many years to come. It demands collective efforts to meet this new threat to security in the Persian Gulf and in Southwest Asia. It demands the participation of all those who rely on oil from the Middle East....Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

The reference to an outside force at the time was the Soviet Union, much nearer the Persian Gulf than the United States. It was later used against a nation in the Gulf, Iraq in 1991, and now is aimed at Iran, another Persian Gulf country.

With the breakup of the Soviet Union in the same year that the U.S. and its NATO and Gulf allies first applied the Carter Doctrine, 1991, areas that for several decades had been off limits to the West now became open frontiers for a new oil rush. The Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions most immediately.

The Gulf of Guinea, where America is planning to soon import 25 percent of all its oil - high-grade crude shipped straight across the Atlantic Ocean on tankers - is the center of plans going back to the beginning of this century for what is now Africa Command (AFRICOM), the U.S.'s first new regional command since Central Command (CENTCOM), which itself was set up in 1983 as an upgrade of the Carter administration's Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force in the Middle East, and the NATO Response Force.

In addition to securing West African oil, U.S. and NATO military expansion in the region also aims at denying it to nations like China and Russia. The practice of acquiring oil wells abroad and of denying them to competitors played no small role in triggering the two world wars of the last century.

The Arctic oil and natural gas bonanza is arguably among the main world developments of the new millennium and an analogous situation obtains in the Antarctic and South Atlantic Oceans.

Three news reports of the past week, one American and two Russian, provide an idea of the magnitude of what is at stake.

On September 17 United Press International ran a feature called "Amid Africa's oil boom, U.S. binds ties" which included these observations:

"Potentially major oil strikes announced by an American-led consortium and a British company in West Africa have bolstered the region's reputation as the world's hottest energy zone.

"It has also become the focus of the U.S. military's global mission to protect America's

energy supplies....”

The “U.S. military’s global mission to protect America’s energy supplies” is a phrase that warrants being pondered deliberately and within historical perspective. Even the bellicose brusqueness of Kissinger’s war-for-oil advocacy and the Carter Doctrine pale in comparison to the strategic scope of what is now underway.

The same article added these details, pertaining to both ends of the African continent:

“The Texas-based Anadarko Petroleum Corp. said Wednesday its deepwater Venus 1B well off the coast of Sierra Leone had hit paydirt and formed one of two ‘bookends’ 700 miles apart across two prospective basins that extend into waters controlled by Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana.

“These could each contain 150 million to 1 billion barrels of oil, according to Anadarko’s CEO Al Walker.

“One of Anadarko’s consortium partners, Tullow Oil of Britain, which has a vast array of licenses in Africa, recently announced a new potentially important discovery in its Ngassa field in Uganda.”

The United Press International report sums up the situation in a single effective sentence: “In the scramble for new oil reserves as the planet’s older fields become depleted, the U.S. military has become a predominant force in U.S.-African relations.”

A billion barrels of oil is not an insignificant figure, yet far more is being fought over in an area where there is a serious rival with one of the world’s two major nuclear arsenals and strategic nuclear triads.

The Voice of Russia on September 15 revealed that “British Petroleum, Europe’s second largest oil company, estimates that the Arctic Ocean may hold around 200 billion barrels of oil resources, about a half of the world’s prospective hydrocarbons. This is the main reason behind a sharp surge of interest in the Arctic ‘oil pie.’”

According to a recent estimate by the Oil and Gas Journal, the world’s largest petroleum exporter, Saudi Arabia, possesses approximately 267 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. The Arctic Ocean, whose reserves have yet to be explored in any thorough manner, may be home to even more.

In May the U.S. Geological Survey released the results of a study on the Arctic which estimated that 30 percent of the world’s undiscovered natural gas reserves and 13 percent of its oil may be in the Arctic Circle.

If the British Petroleum figure cited above is closer to the truth, the U.S. Geological Survey estimate is woefully conservative.

With the melting of the Arctic polar ice cap and the navigability of the Northwest Passage for the first time in recorded history opening up the area for energy exploitation, the U.S. released National Security Presidential Directive 66 on January 12, 2009, which contained these claims:

“The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic

region and is prepared to operate either independently or in conjunction with other states to safeguard these interests. These interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight.”

Sixteen days later NATO abruptly convened a two-day Seminar on Security Prospects in the High North in Iceland and then Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer’s comments included:

“[T]he High North is going to require even more of the Alliance’s attention in the coming years.

“As the ice-cap decreases, the possibility increases of extracting the High North’s mineral wealth and energy deposits.

“At our Summit in Bucharest last year, we agreed a number of guiding principles for NATO’s role in energy security....”

Alluding to the fact that of the five formal claimants to Arctic territory – Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway – only the first is not a member of the bloc, Scheffer said, “NATO provides a forum where four of the Arctic coastal states can inform, discuss, and share, any concerns that they may have. And this leads me directly onto the next issue, which is military activity in the region.

“Clearly, the High North is a region that is of strategic interest to the Alliance.”

On September 16 the Voice of Russia featured an article on Antarctica which reported that “British geologists have discovered a wide array of oil and gas fields in the Falkland Islands....Edinburgh-based British Geological Survey Agency...experts insisted that as much as 60 billion barrels may be recoverable on the shelf. If these estimates prove right that may well rival the world’s oil-rich nations, not least Libya and Nigeria.

“The late 1970s saw breaking news about a spate of lucrative oil and gas fields in the Falkland Islands – deposits that experts insisted were 13 times as much as those in the North Sea at the time.

“Many believe that the 1982 war between Britain and Argentina with almost 1,000 servicemen killed in the hostilities was all about oil and gas fields in the South Atlantic.”

On May 11 of this year Britain submitted a claim to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf for one million square kilometers in the South Atlantic reaching into the Antarctic Ocean.

As early as October 23, 2007 The Scotsman reported that “the value of the oil under the sea in the region is understood to be immense. Seismic tests suggest there could be about 60 billion barrels of oil under the ocean floor.”

Britain is two hemispheres, the west and south, away from the Falklands/Malvinas Islands, which lie off the southeastern coast of Argentina.

The Russia source quoted earlier warned:

“Given London’s unwillingness to try to arrive at a political accommodation with Buenos Aires, a UN special commission will surely have tougher times ahead as far as its final decision on the continental shelf goes. And it is only to be hoped that Britain will be wise enough not to turn the Falkland Islands into another regional hot spot.”

In April of last year the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, through some combination of select compliance and procedural negligence if not complicity, granted Australia – Britain’s, the U.S.’s and increasingly NATO’s main outpost in the South Pacific – 2.5 million more square kilometers in the Antarctic Ocean so that the nation’s territory, in the words of Resources Minister Martin Ferguson as quoted by Agence France-Presse on April 21, 2008, “expanded by an area five times the size of France,” which could “potentially provide a ‘bonanza’ in underwater oil and gas reserves.”

The expansion of Australia’s seabed borders included the Kerguelen Plateau around the Heard and McDonald Islands, which extend southwards into Antarctica. As such Australia became the first nation to be granted exclusive property rights in the ocean.

In the Caspian Sea Basin and its neighborhood, which takes in the Afghanistan-Pakistan war theater and the turbulent and explosive Caucasus, Azerbaijan last week marked the fifteenth anniversary of what was called the Contract of the Century in 1994, engineered by the United States and Britain to open up the Caspian region to Western energy companies.

In the interim several oil and natural gas transit projects – the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum and Nabucco natural gas pipelines – have been launched.

The intent of all of them is to prevent Iran from exporting hydrocarbons to Europe and to expel Russia entirely from its previous contracts to provide Europe with natural gas and Caspian oil. Russia currently supplies the European Union with 30 percent of its gas, but the West – the U.S. and its EU allies – is well on its way to replacing Russian oil and gas with supplies from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan via Azerbaijan and from Iraq and North Africa through Turkey where all of the three pipelines mentioned above end.

Plans for what has accurately been called a Peace Pipeline from Iran through Pakistan and to India and China were heavy-handedly quashed by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her successor.

Caspian energy supplies are only to flow west to Europe and east to Asia by routes under Western control if the U.S. and its partners have their way.

The Trend News Agency of Azerbaijan on September 16 reproduced parts of a letter from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose husband had begun the process with the Contract of the Century, to President Ilham Aliyev from which the following is excerpted:

“The development of the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli offshore oilfields, and the subsequent formation of the Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC), was a landmark event in international oil and gas development, as well as a great success for international energy diplomacy.

“Promotion of international energy security remains critical for the Eurasia region. In this regard, the July 13 signing of the Nabucco inter-governmental agreement was a major milestone in our joint efforts to open the Southern Corridor, which will bring Caspian gas to Europe.

“We hope that Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other interested countries will be able to build on this momentum and agree on those remaining issues needed to make the southern corridor [Nabucco] a reality.

“Azerbaijan is on the threshold of a new and even more promising phase of energy development, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and other leaders in the region to develop new oil and gas resources and new routes to bring those resources to market.”

New routes mean any other than Russian ones.

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline is to branch out through Ukraine - where the reverse flow of Russian oil has been cut off - and from there to Poland and the Baltic Sea city of Gdansk.

The Russian South Stream project to transport natural gas from Russia to Greece and the Balkans and then to Central Europe is being undermined by the Nabucco pipeline. The Nord Stream pipeline planned to deliver Russian gas to Germany through the Baltic Sea is also under assault, with pro-Western figures in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland accusing it of being a security and even a military threat.

Never before in history have all parts of the world been so intensely fought over simultaneously as they are currently.

Nothing less than uncontested, irreversible global domination is what is being sought by the West - the United States and its NATO, Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern allies and clients.

Possession of energy supplies and control of their destinations and transit routes are an essential part of that strategy and will be enforced through a military machine that has penetrated most of the world and is still expanding.

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