

## Oil So Plentiful in Southwest Asia You Can Just Steal It

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 26 August 2010 00:00

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Pundits and Internet trolls have engaged in protracted [debates](#) regarding whether the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002 was more about oil than it was about WMD. The American Conservative website [notes](#) that—

Controlling Iraq's oil has historically been a vital factor in America's involvement in Iraq and was always a crucial element of the Bush administration's plans for the post-Saddam era. Of course, that's not how the war was sold to the American people. A few months before the invasion, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared that the looming war had 'nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil.' The war was necessary, its planners claimed, because Saddam Hussein supported terrorism and, left unchecked, he would unleash weapons of mass destruction on the West.

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Nevertheless, oil was the foremost strategic focus for the U.S. military in Iraq. The first objectives of the invading forces included the capture of key Iraqi oil terminals and oilfields. On March 20, 2003, Navy SEALs engaged in the first combat of the war when they launched a surprise invasion of the Mina al-Bakr and Khor al-Amaya oil loading terminals in the Persian Gulf. A few hours later, Marine Lt. Therral Childers became the first U.S. soldier to die in combat in the invasion when he was killed fighting for control of the Rumaylah oil field in southern Iraq.

Oil was also the first objective when U.S. forces reached Baghdad on April 8. Although the National Library of Iraq, the National Archives, and the National Museum of Antiquities were all looted and in some cases burned, the oil ministry building was barely damaged. That's because a detachment of American soldiers and a half-dozen assault vehicles were assigned to guard the ministry and its records.

After all, the war's architects had promised that oil money was going to rebuild

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Iraq after the U.S. military took control. In March 2003, Paul Wolfowitz told a Congressional panel, 'The oil revenues of that country could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next two or three years. Now, there are a lot of claims on that money, but ... we are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon.' As Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor explained in their 2006 book, *Cobra II*, 'The Pentagon had promised that the reconstruction of Iraq would be 'self-financing,' and the preservation of Iraq's oil wealth was the best-prepared and -resourced component of Washington's postwar plan.'

Our various articles covering the official DOD reports to Congress regarding progress made in Iraq (example: [here](#)) have noted the importance of oil—and of the oil infrastructure—to stability in the region. The armed forces of the United States are *huge* users of oil. In March, 2010, we [posted](#) an article about the importance of oil to the armed forces, and the theft of approximately 10 million gallons of fuel from the U.S. Army at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Well, here's another story about theft of fuel from the U.S. armed forces. This time, the location is Afghanistan. On August 19, 2010, the Department of Justice [announced](#) that Michael Dugger, age 27, a former U.S. Army Sergeant, had pleaded guilty to one count of receiving a bribe as a public official. Another former U.S. Army Staff Sergeant, Steven Ringo, was also charged, but did not

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plead guilty; his case is still pending.

According to the DOJ press release—

Ringo and Dugger were stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank, a U.S. Army installation in the Logar Province of Eastern Afghanistan. ... the Army stores large quantities of fuel at FOB Shank and redistributes that fuel to installations in the surrounding area through government contractors. Dugger's responsibilities included supervision of FOB Shank's fuel redistribution process.

Dugger admitted that between January and February 2010 he aided and abetted a co-conspirator's solicitation and acceptance of more than \$400,000 in bribes from a government contractor, all in exchange for his co-conspirator's creation and submission of fraudulent paperwork permitting that contractor to steal fuel

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from FOB Shank. Dugger also admitted that he helped his co-conspirator conceal the money in various locations in and around FOB Shank. The total value of the fuel stolen during the course of the scheme was at least \$1.39 million.

The amount of fuel stolen was not disclosed, but we guess it was a substantial amount, given the \$1.4 million value ascribed to the theft.

One of the guys who stole the 10 million gallons of fuel from Camp Victory (for subsequent resale on the black market) was sentenced to three years in prison. How does Mr. Dugger fare in comparison? The DOJ announced that, "At sentencing, Dugger faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000; twice the gross gain or loss from the scheme; or three times the value of the payments solicited or received." Ouch!

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