



FUEL'S GOLD

"It looked like a popular, bloodless revolution on the streets. Behind the scenes, it smells more like another victory for the United States over Russia in the post-Cold War international chess game." - Mark MacKinnon, journalist.

While government ministers meet in Milan this week for more farting about climate change, the pursuit of dwindling oil stocks continues to map events across the globe. According to the snappily named Association for the Study of Peak Oil - made up of such radicals as former industry executives, geologists and statisticians - oil is running out and reserves have started to decline. No news there then. And none of this bothers the oil junkies. While the US has less than 2 per cent of world crude-oil reserves, it gobbles up a quarter of the world's supplies. Without imports, it would run out of its own reserves in just three years. Britain's total oil reserves are enough to satisfy our cravings for a mere seven and a half years.

US Professor of Peace and Security studies, Michael Klare, predicts the emergence of a new geography, "Attracting the greatest interest will be places that harbour particularly abundant supplies of vital materials." The Persian Gulf region, which includes Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait possesses two-thirds of known future oil reserves. The Caspian Sea Basin which includes the Central Asian states of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is next, with a fifth of the world's total reserves, so they're the next target for the oil junkie West.

Of course SchNEWS now realises that the Iraq war was nothing to do with oil - if Iraq's main export was parsnips we are sure Britain and America would still have invaded out of a profound sense of moral duty. A morality much in evidence in America's response to the recent 'velvet revolution' in Georgia.

Last year Georgia, a country of five million was given \$64 million of US aid, making it the second biggest recipient of US aid per capita after Israel. The reason? Georgia is in the frontline of the 'war on terror'. Russia says that its mountainous Pankisi gorge is a hideout for Chechen rebels, while the US reckons that amongst these fighters there might be as many as a dozen Al-Qaeda members, which works out around over five million dollars a head!

Now it just so happens that for the last 10 years the US and Britain have been investing in central Asian oilfields, but have been struggling to find a way of getting the oil to the West without taking it through Iran or Russia. Bingo! Just weeks ago the World

Bank and European Development Bank each approved a £300 million contribution for BP's massive Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project, which will stretch from the Caspian through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean. According to the director of the Liberty Institute in Georgia, western oil money provided some of the finance behind the toppling of the Shevardnadze regime. With 60 percent of its population living well below the poverty level, the Georgian people had clearly had enough of Shevardnadze. But he had also upset his western 'friends' by arguing that the Baku-Ceyhan pipelines could damage the country's ecology and, more importantly, by pursuing major energy deals with Russia.

Within weeks, President 'elect' Bush sent senior adviser Stephen Mann to Tbilisi with a warning: "Georgia should not do anything that undercuts the powerful promise of an East-West energy corridor." When the energy deals with Russia went ahead anyway, former U.S. secretary of state James Baker flew in and warned the Georgian leader of the need for a free, fair parliamentary election. The vote was rigged, the people rose, and in a bloodless coup Shevardnadze became history. The new president Mikhail Saakashvili is a US-trained lawyer who, according to Business Week, has been courting Washington for some time with promises to block Shevardnadze's plan to give Russian oil interests a foothold in the country.

SUDAN DEATH

Even if we forget the damage that oil is causing to our climate, governments and oil companies always claim that new pipelines will benefit the poor.

Just like in the Sudan. A recent report 'Sudan, Oil and Human Rights' shows that oil company executives "turned a blind eye" to well-reported government attacks including aerial bombings of hospitals, churches, relief operations and schools, so that the opening up the oilfields might go ahead. While Sudanese government oil revenues rose from zero in 1998 to almost 42 percent of GDP in 2001, the biggest benefactor was the military who received 60 percent of the money.

The World Bank Group justified its \$93 million commitment to the Chad-Cameroon pipeline by claiming it would help reduce poverty. But before a drop of oil had even flowed through the pipes the Chad Government had blown an estimated \$4.5 million of oil-related money on arms to fight its civil war.

As Michael Renner, a journalist looking into conflict caused by resource exploi-

CRAP STICK-UP OF THE WEEK

Stickers are really good. As propaganda they work well because people see them for a long time.

But one particular sticker managed to stop a plane. An unidentified man stuck one proclaiming "War is Terrorism on a Bigger Budget" on the door of a 727 while boarding a flight from Atlanta to San Francisco. After everybody had got on, a ground crew worker spotted it and then all 162 people were made to get off again and get searched once more. The plane finally left 4 hours later.

P.S. Don't get stuck up if you want any SchNEWS stickers. Just send an SAE to the office.

tation, points out: "In case after case, an array of burdens - ranging from the expropriation of land, disruption of traditional ways, environmental devastation, and social maladies - are shouldered by the local population."

Meanwhile the US has given the protection of pipeline routes (rather than the protection of people) as a prime reason for its 'war on terror'. In its May 2002 report, the US Office of the Co-ordinator for Counterterrorism has classified more than half of the international terrorist attacks committed during 2001 as being directed at a single pipeline in Colombia. In keeping with this, the US military is redefining its role to include oil pipeline security. US troops are now in Colombia training the army to provide pipeline protection.

In September 2000 a bunch of neo-conservative nut cases issued a report, the Project for the New American Century (see SchNEWS 387) stated: "At no time in history has the international security order been as conducive to American interests and ideals... The challenge of this coming century is to preserve and enhance this American peace. " It advocated the need for the US to engage in "constabulary duties" with a much larger military presence across the globe. With many of those Dr. Strangelove wannabes now in the Bush administration, their dreams are now the worlds nightmares. The 'war on terror' provides a handy smokescreen for America to set up military bases across the world and help itself to the worlds dwindling oil supplies.

* For more on the oil industry check out the October edition of the New Internationalist www.newint.org

* For more on the bloodless coup see www.globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20031124.wgeorgiaan1124/BNPrint/International/

* Campaign against the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline www.bakuceyhan.org.uk

HEALTHY WORK

Fancy working in India? The Sambhavna Clinic in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh are looking for volunteers to work in their centre, helping local victims of the 1984 Union Carbide chemical leak help themselves. This month is the 19th anniversary of the "Hiroshima of the chemical industry" (see SchNEWS 238) and it continues to poison people, with each monsoon washing more and more toxic chemicals into the soil. In an effort to save a whopping \$37 per day, managers at the plant cut back on safety regulations and overfilled storage tanks with the noxious MIC chemical - 500 times more dangerous than cyanide. The inevitable initial leak killed up to 10,000 people, with 130,000 still affected. Cancer, "monster" births and menstrual disorders are now rife in the area, for which Union Carbide (now owned by Dow Chemicals) have never been held to account for.

In 1994, ten years after the leak, money raised in the UK was used to fund a multi-purpose clinic on a 2 acre plot, ½ kilometre from the now deserted chemical plant. Volunteers work with local residents of Bhopal in providing herbal remedies, yoga and educational programmes to those still affected by the chemical leaks. The Sambhavna Clinic is in the process of expanding their operations, building a new clinic which intends to be a "model for holistic, integrated health care", helping the community to help themselves. Anyone is welcome as a volunteer, with people staying for a minimum of two weeks, often integrating the work with a broader tour of India. People with medical skills are in big demand at the centre. Work is also needed on video documentation, solar electric system and biological wastewater management. For those of us who like to remain in soggy old Britain, the Pesticide Action Network (www.pan-uk.org, 020 7274 8895) needs help with raising funds and awareness. www.bhopal.net

Positive SchNEWS

Not every little country down south bends over backwards (or forwards) to accommodate the Yankee oil dollar. Last year Costa Rica's newly elected President Abel Pacheco promised new legislation banning all future extraction of oil and coal and looks set to deliver on this with politicians currently negotiating the text of an Environmental Bill of Rights.

Pacheco's decree was a direct result of 3 years well-organised, non-stop protest and direct action by indigenous NGO, Anti-petroleum Action who fight oil concessions to US and Canadian companies. Particularly big in the loser stakes are Harken Energy, Texas-based friends of Bush, who were hoping to stick their rigs in the Talamanca region of southeastern Costa Rica: a pristine area resting between several protected wilderness areas and home to endangered sea turtles.

The best case scenario is that this non-cooperation will spread through the area and the signs are hopeful. In May this year Nicaraguan activists in the Oilwatch network called for their government to institute a moratorium on oil concessions. In June, Ecuadorian environmental activists presented the new government of Lucio Gutierrez with a proposed prohibition on expansion of the oil frontier.

In an environmentalist's wet-dream of a presidential statement, Pacheco announced that the ban was to protect his country's future: "The true fuel and the true gold of the future will be water and oxygen, our aquifers and our forests." Whatever he's on can George have some please? * Harken Energy has lodged a claim against the Costa Rican government for \$57 million over the cancellation of an oil exploration contract. The compensation demanded is equivalent to more than three times the Costa Rican GDP, and 11 times larger than the annual government budget.

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SchNEWS in brief

Discussion and skills-sharing event to re-launch **Lancaster Indymedia** - Sun 14th, 2-6pm, The Basement, 78a Penny St., Lancaster. im-lancaster@lists.indymedia.org ** What a surprise, the Indonesian government has been using British made Hawk jets, Scorpion tanks and Saracen armoured vehicles to repress dissent in the Aceh province, despite Indonesian assurances that British equipment will not be used for offensive or counter-insurgency purposes. These so-called assurances are what the British government uses to justify sales of weapons to oppressive regimes. <http://tapol.gn.apc.org/pr030623.htm> ** An electricity supply station in Bergamo, Italy near a Bayer industrial site was attacked with a pipe bomb. A communiqué published by local newspapers stated that the action was done to stop the works inside the factory and as a direct attack against the genetic engineering projects of Bayer Crop Science. www.bayerhazard.com ** The **D'Hoppe protest camp** in Belgium, despite being evicted back in July has prevented the landfill being expanded. The pressure from the camp forced the government to investigate the landfill, which was found to be too large and was contaminating the environment with chlorides, heavy metals and phenols. The owner has 9 months to clean up the contamination or face legal proceedings. More proof that direct action works. ** **Milan Rai** will be talking about his new book 'Regime Unchanged: why the war on Iraq changed nothing' Thurs 11th 6pm, Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton ** **Keith McHenry, founder of the Food Not Bombs movement** will be speaking Weds 10th at the Forest Cafe, 2 Bristol Place, Edinburgh 8pm ** Also on Weds 10th **Slough for Peace** are hosting "Giving Globalisation the Thumbs down", the Labour Memorial Hall Church St, MEP Dr. Lucas will be one of the speakers 8pm www.slough4peace.net ** **Guantanamo Bay Demo:** Sat 13th End injustice at Guantanamo Bay. 1-4pm, opposite Downing Street, London. Campaign against Criminalising Communities 020 7250 1315 www.cacc.org.uk

ORE-SCARS

While the Mining Industry was having its annual back slapping award ceremony at the Mines and Money Congress, anti-mines campaigners handed out their own awards for making a big fat mess of our planet rather than for making big fat wads of cash. Top prize of the "Death Roll Award" went jointly to Jim-Bob Moffet and Robert Wilson who are respective heads of the US company Freeport and the UK-based company Rio Tinto. Under their leadership the companies have taken the world's richest mineral deposit at Grasberg from under the feet of the indigenous people of West Papua, Indonesia. John Rumbiak, a native Papuan human rights activist said: "In the three decades that Freeport has operated in Papua, the company has single-handedly succeeded in establishing its own fiefdom. With the assistance of the Indonesian armed forces, paid by Freeport to safeguard its operations, the company decides who can enter the area surrounding its mine and who cannot." Rio Tinto also won the "Goni Lozada Award For Unsustainable Development" (which is fitting considering its close relations with the Bolivian ex-president after whom the award is named). The judges were shocked that Rio Tinto, given its track record, was nominated for the Mines and Money equivalent award for "Sustainable Development". Rio Tinto also shared the "Emperor's New Clothes Award" with Newmont and Placer Dome for its advocacy of Submarine Tailings Disposal (dumping waste in the ocean!) in the Asia-Pacific region despite the problems such dumping has caused elsewhere.

For more information Phone: (+44) 20 7700 6189 or see www.minesandcommunities.org

CLAMPSFIELD

Democracy is alive and well in 21st Century Britain courtesy of Thames Valley Police. Yep, you can demonstrate as long as you don't mind being searched, shoved into the corner of a car park where no one can see you, only allowed to protest for two hours and have your numbers restricted. This is what happened at the tenth annual protest against Campsfield asylum detention centre last Saturday.

Despite nine years of demonstrating outside the gates of Campsfield with organisers cooperating with the cops, this year the police decided to impose severe restrictions on the demo, under Section 14 of the Public Order Act. Many of the people demonstrating were themselves asylum seekers who after fleeing persecution were very frightened by what the police were doing. Apparently the restrictions were the result of police "intelligence", so had the police uncovered a sinister plot? No, Group4 Security had told lies to the police saying that detainees were upset by the fact that people outside were vocally supporting them with drums, chants and loud hailer. The police even had the audacity to cite the Human Rights Act 'that detainees have the right not to be disturbed in detention!' This is despite people from the Campaign being told repeatedly by detainees that they welcome outside support. The Close Campsfield Campaign are going to make complaints about the policing operation, they are seeking reports and pictures of the demonstration. Contact Bill on 01865 558145 or go to www.closecampsfield.org.uk

SchOPPING LIST

SchNEWS doesn't usually encourage rampant consumerism unless it's our products we're ruthlessly peddling...

* You may have been there, you may have done it, but have you bought the t-shirt? We've got SchNEWS black t-shirts, with "If you're not pissed off You're not paying attention" on the front and the website and monkey wrench bunny on the back are available short sleeved in skinny rib or large sizes for £8, or long sleeve (M/L/XL) for £10.

* SchNEWS books for sale: This year's annual Peace de Resistance and CD-Rom £10; SchNEWS of the World £6.50; Yearbook 2001 - a bargain at only £3; SchQUALL - nearly sold out £7; Survival Handbook only £2; SchNEWS annual only £2; and we thought they were gone, but we've found a few more, the second SchNEWS book, SchNEWSround for £5.

* All prices include postage in the UK. Make cheques payable to Justice? To get your order in for Christmas send them to: SchNEWS (Merchandise), 55 Canning Street, Brighton BN2 0EF. * FREE Stickers to spread the word, send us an SAE and we'll send you a load, or download them off our website.

...and finally...

It's something all parents have to do - choose a name for their new born. But how about calling him or her L'Oreal, Del Monte or even ESPN (it's a U.S. sports channel). Yep there's a new craze in affluent America of naming babies after large corporations with names like Timberland, Canon, Chevrolet and even Courvoisier, after the cognac. Cleveland Evans, a professor who has been studying baby names for 25 years reckons it reflects parents "aspirations" and growing desire on the part of parents to mark their children out as different! Let's hope SchNEWS readers don't start jumping on the bandwagon and calling their new born Crap Baby of the Week.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers that oil's well that ends well... Honest!