

# Iraqophobia: a pretext to seize the Saudi oil fields

by Herbert Quinde

Former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James E. Akins has charged that the seizure of Saudi Arabia's oil fields and their placement under U.S. military control, in a desperate attempt to soften the impact of the world economic crisis, is the real motivation propelling present U.S. policy in the Middle East.

The truth of this charge is amply documented by a review of statements by some key policymakers since the "oil hoax" of 1973. As we shall show, sucking dry Saudi oil fields to bail out the U.S. economy is not a new idea.

Ambassador Akins reveals that in 1975 while he was representing the United States in Saudi Arabia, a group of "neo-conservative" ideologues was set loose by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to beat the drum for a military invasion of Saudi Arabia as a "solution to the eternal Arab problem and to our own economic problems." Ambassador Akins opposed the policy, which he said could only benefit the Soviet Union.

In 1975, the "enemy" was the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). According to intelligence community and diplomatic sources, Kissinger manipulated the increase in oil prices at that time by secretly urging the Shah of Iran to steadily boost prices, even though it was official U.S. policy to restrain them. Today, it is Saddam Hussein against whom President Bush is willing to sacrifice 30,000 American soldiers to "preserve our way of life."

In 1975, proposals for seizing Saudi oil fields to bail out the declining U.S. economy did not come with much moralistic mumbo-jumbo about preserving "our way of life" or "rallying to the defense of international law." The proposal for a British-style imperialist grab of raw materials was much more naked and straightforward than is the Bush administration's public relations posture today.

The opening public salvo in the debate appeared in the March 1975 issue of *Commentary* magazine, in an article titled "Oil: the issue of American intervention," by Robert W. Tucker, then a professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University.

"Those who insist that armed intervention be ruled out so long as we are confronted only with a distinct possibility of disaster are perfectly at liberty to do so," wrote Professor Tucker. "But candor does at least require them to concede that this is what they mean when they say that intervention is unnecessary. For there is a general consensus, which includes

most of the 'optimists,' that if the present situation goes unaltered, a disaster resembling the 1930s is indeed a distinct possibility. . . . This being so, it is irrelevant, though true, to be reminded that the current economic malaise—above all, the global inflation—had its origins in conditions largely unrelated to the price of oil today and *would persist even if this price were drastically lowered*. A generally sick man who also happens to be hemorrhaging will not be saved from bleeding to death by being reminded of the other and more deeply-rooted causes of his ill health [emphasis added]."

Tucker's piece was complemented by a lengthy article in the March 1975 issue of *Harper's*, entitled "Seizing Arab Oil," written under the pseudonym of Miles Ignotus (Latin for the "Unknown Soldier"). He outlined the necessary military components of an invasion, starting with the deployment of the 82nd Airborne. According to one diplomatic source, the author was Edward Luttwak, a pro-Israeli Anglo-American mouthpiece housed at the Washington, D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Virtually every industrialized oil importer is in deep recession, with its threat of social instability and, in turn, political disarray," was the assessment of the author. Therefore, "the only feasible countervailing power to OPEC's control of oil is power itself—military power. . . . This, then, is the scenario: an Arab embargo or supply cut, an atmosphere of crisis, most probably in the aftermath of a short but bloody war" between Israeli and Arab forces.

"The first question is where?" continued Miles Ignotus. "The goal is not just to seize some oil (say in accessible Nigeria or Venezuela), but to break OPEC. Thus force must be used selectively to occupy large and concentrated oil reserves. . . . Faced with armed consumers occupying vast oil fields whose full output can eventually bring the price down to 50 cents per barrel, most of the producers would see virtue in agreeing to a price four or five times as high, but still six times lower than present prices. This being the ultimate goal, there is only one feasible target: Saudi Arabia."

Although the U.S. government publicly denied that it had any intention of invading Saudi Arabia back in 1975, both Kissinger and President Gerald Ford did not rule out the option, and made clear that the issue was not the bogeyman of OPEC and the price of oil as such, but the need for a contingency plan to alleviate the effects of a future domestic economic catastrophe.

In a Jan. 13, 1975 interview with *Business Week*, Kissinger commented, "I'm not saying that there's no circumstance where we would use force. But it is one thing to use it in the case of a dispute over price. It's another where there's some actual strangulation of the industrialized world." President Ford echoed Kissinger in an interview with NBC's John Chancellor: "I want it made clear . . . that this country, in case of economic strangulation—and the key word is strangulation—we had to be prepared . . . to take the necessary action for our self-preservation."

Saddam Hussein or no Saddam Hussein, what will soon become clear to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and other Arab leaders is that their countries have been militarily occupied. And as one U.S. intelligence analyst commented, "Even with Saddam eliminated, the U.S. cannot pull out overnight. As removed and out-of-the-way as the oil fields are located from Saudi population centers, having U.S. troops with barbed wire surrounding Saudi well-heads will not add to internal Saudi stability, much less regional stability. It can only get worse."

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## Documentation

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*The following are excerpts of the commentary by Ambassador James E. Akins that appeared in the Los Angeles Times on Sept. 12 and the Virginia Pilot on Sept. 17.*

In January 1975, the neo-conservative publication *Commentary* carried an article proposing invasion of Saudi Arabia as a solution to the eternal Arab problem and to our own economic problems. A flurry of similar articles followed that proposed occupying oil fields on the peninsula from Kuwait to Dubai, pumping them dry, and in 50 years or so returning the properties to their original owners. . . .

I suggested that anyone who would take this proposition seriously was a madman, a criminal or a Soviet agent. Henry Kissinger, then U.S. secretary, had another view, and my career in the Foreign Service did not extend much beyond that point. . . .

There are those in the Bush administration who will point out that conditions are more propitious now than in 1975 for at least a de facto military occupation of the Saudi oil fields. An invasion would not be necessary.

I am not the only knowledgeable observer who is convinced that the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein did not intend to attack Saudi Arabia early last month. . . . Yet . . . Dick Cheney convinced King Fahd that such an attack was imminent. . . .

If Saddam is not overthrown, he will remain a potential threat to Saudi Arabia and a certain threat to the House of Saud if the Americans were to withdraw. So, it is conceivable that U.S. troops might be welcome to stay indefinitely. Whether that would enjoy the favor of the army and the

## Echeverría: End 'cycle of poverty and pillage'

*Luis Echeverría Alvarez, the former President of Mexico (1970-76), criticized Anglo-American actions in the Persian Gulf at the annual meeting of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in Caracas, Venezuela on Sept. 6. Excerpts follow:*

This crisis has all the characteristics of a profound crisis between the North and the South. . . . It is beginning to be evident that, in the grave Persian Gulf conflict, there are still-unresolved issues which persist, and which could worsen due to the unilateralism of North-North negotiations.

We understand the circumstances which have generated the tendency toward the globalization of the economy; but, can anyone think that globalization will be acceptable and fruitful [when it] leaves out the Third World countries? The answer is clear; it will not be possible. If there was any doubt of this, the Persian Gulf events are eloquent. In summary, we are going to face one conflict after another in the developing areas. They show us today, and they will demonstrate tomorrow, that it is neither conceivable nor possible to eliminate 76% of the world's population from participation in constructive peace dialogues.

[Latin America must integrate itself.] This cycle of poverty and pillage, of submission to forms of globalization conceived in North-North terms, must be replaced with precise forms of regional integration.

people of Saudi Arabia is another matter.

Those in and out of the U.S. government—including Kissinger—who were serious about taking over the oil fields in 1975 surely will argue that we should not let these extraordinary resources go now that they are in our control.

The scenario can be advanced further. The United States, which has already persuaded the Saudis to increase production by 2 million barrels a day, could order or persuade them to increase production much further. . . . The Saudi-Emirates production could be raised to 20 million barrels a day within three or four years through a crash development program. We could then write off permanently—or at least for a generation—Iraq, Kuwait, and for good measure, Iran.

The oil price would be kept low, ensuring the support of the world's consumers. . . . Or the price could be set somewhat higher, say, \$20 per barrel. . . . Cost of produc-

tion would be no more than \$2 per barrel. The United States could take a management fee of \$10 per barrel. . . . At 20 million barrels a day, our \$10 management fee could reduce the federal deficit by \$70 billion a year after payment of the occupation costs. . . .

A more imaginative plan would be the internationalization of all Arab oil, thereby rectifying one of God's inexplicable errors in placing such a valuable resource in such an unworthy place.

If this is our plan—and it appears to be—it is as foolish as it was 15 years ago. It is absurd to believe that the Saudi Arabian population and the army would remain docile; and it is beyond belief to suggest that, otherwise, they be exterminated or expelled, as was proposed in 1975. Anti-Semitism (Arab branch) may be acceptable in the United States today, but I doubt that the American people would have the stomach to conduct a racial, genocidal war—even in the interests of such enormous gain.

It would be useful if President Bush told us whether he has excluded the possibility of ending the Kuwait occupation through diplomatic means, and if so, why. If he is preparing to starve or invade Iraq, this should be debated and the American public should know that it will face a rocky road.

If the President is planning a long occupation of Saudi Arabia, he will never admit it; it will just happen. It seems to be happening already.

## Narco-terror resurges as the Colombian government retreats

by Andrea Olivieri

On the eve of Colombian President César Gaviria's departure for the United States to speak before the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 27-29, his administration is in shameful retreat in the face of a renewed narco-terrorist offensive by the cocaine cartels. Notwithstanding the President's fervent desire to strike a "gentlemen's agreement" with the cartels, the traffickers have responded with a wave of new kidnappings.

Spitting on the government's offer, known as Decree 2074, of reduced jail sentences and no extradition in return for surrender, the so-called "Extraditables" have ended a relatively quiet period of retrenchment (dubbed a "truce" by the ever-hopeful Gaviria administration) by kidnaping three prominent Colombians. On Aug. 30, Diana Turbay, the journalist daughter of former President Julio César Turbay, was reported missing. On Sept. 19, the 28-year-old managing editor of the daily *El Tiempo*, Francisco Santos, was kidnaped, his driver and guard murdered. Hours earlier, the sister of former President Virgilio Barco's personal secretary German Montoya was abducted.

In a statement released to *El Tiempo* and published Sept. 21, the "Extraditables" acknowledged holding the three kidnap victims, and demanded for their ransom "political treatment" (read: full amnesty) similar to that granted the narco-terrorist M-19 by the government. They further categorically rejected the government's deal, assuring that "no one, absolutely none of us, are thinking of surrendering," and confirmed that their so-called truce was not in response to anything the President had done or offered, but purely their own strategy. State security agencies report that the Medellín Cartel has created "three working fronts" in the cities of Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali to conduct further kidnappings and assaults against government officials and notables in the immediate future.

Also on Sept. 21, the anti-drug daily *El Espectador* published an editorial which described Gaviria's offer to the cartels as "a surrender, the abandonment of a state of law [for a] quietly agreed-upon reign of crime." *Espectador's*

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