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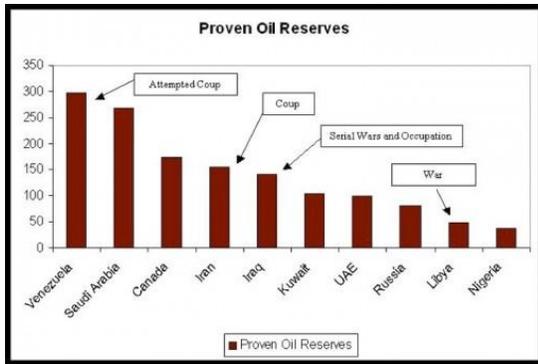
## The U.S., Israel and Oil Geopolitics

*Is the Goal of Israel the Total Dispossession of the Palestinians?*

by ROB URIE

7/17/2014

The standard line coming from political scientists, reporters and politicians is of Western governments acting in national ‘interests’ to protect ‘their’ citizens from military threats posed by other nations / peoples. This is certainly the frame U.S. President Barack Obama used in his recent editorial in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz to explain his, and U.S., support for the attack by Israel on the captive, immiserated civilian population of Gaza. Left out of Mr. Obama’s condolences to parents of the slain children alleged to be in part the motivation for the latest Israeli atrocities in Gaza is his own record of callously murdering between dozens and hundreds of women, children and innocent men throughout the Middle East and Africa in illegal drone ‘strikes’ in recent years. Also left unsaid is the miraculous overlap of the nations and peoples subjected to U.S. wars of ‘liberation / self-defense’ and proven oil reserves.



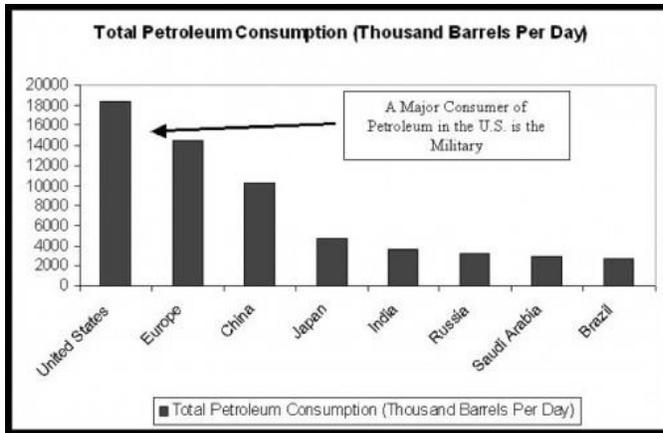
*Graph (1) above: U.S. benevolence in bestowing our ‘special’ care upon oil rich nations is a function of ‘our’ national interest? Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez was a ‘madman’ bent on bringing political and economic democracy to the people of Venezuela. Iran had a parliamentary democracy until the CIA and MI5 decided that the British predecessor to BP (British Petroleum) needed Iranian oil more than the Iranians did. Iraq’s ‘madman’ Saddam Hussein was installed by the CIA and was toppled by former oil company executives in the (George W) Bush administration to ‘democratize’ one million Iraqi people from their mortal coils. And President Barack Obama dispatched Libya’s ‘madman’ Muammar Gaddafi in order to ‘liberate’ the Libyan people from a ‘ruthless tyrant’ and Libya’s oil from Libyan control. Units are billions of barrels of oil. Source: EIA.*

The current Israeli attack on the citizens of Gaza, and more broadly the Palestinian people, is an emergency that needs to be ended immediately. At this point in history the people of Israel are fully culpable for the actions of the Israeli government just as the citizens of the U.S. are culpable for the U.S. role in supporting Israel’s ongoing occupation and repression of the Palestinian people and for the current attack. Mr. Obama’s framing of the U.S. role in the attack as honest broker for peace ignores existing fact of joint U.S. – Israeli military infrastructure, the U.S. role in arming Israel and the fact that the U.S. has all of the lever’s needed to force an end to the attack but is not using them. Mr. Obama’s posturing as thoughtful outsider ignores decades of the U.S. acting in bad faith in concert with the Israeli government against the Palestinian people as Israel has pursued a strategy of ‘inevitability’ through expanded settlements and the systematic dispossession of the Palestinian people.



*Graph (2) above: typically missing in the U.S. from discussion of Israel and the Middle East is any mention of political geography. With clearer understanding of where oil reserves lie (Graph (1) above) it is difficult to overcome the suspicion that oil geopolitics has something to do with the U.S.'s 'special' relationship with Israel. The U.S. was arming Iran much as it has armed Israel up until the Iranian Revolution in 1979. And in fact the Western storyline of 'the Islamic threat' evolved in some measure from the Iranian Revolution. Many of the antique neo-cons in the U.S. never 'forgave' the people of Iran from asserting their independence from the U.S. This left the high overlap of U.S. and Israeli neo-cons as an unexplained accident of history, only they are explained by history.*

The human catastrophe of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and repression resembles quite closely the callous way that the U.S. has acted around the globe. This isn't to take away from the particular culpability of the state of Israel and the Israeli people for these crimes, but it is to once again broaden this culpability to the U.S. and the American people. The central theoretical flaw in the 'Israeli Lobby' storyline of nations acting in 'the national interest' is that there is any such thing. Leaving for another day the World Wars of the twentieth century, none of America's modern wars have been defensive, in a clear national interest. Likewise, the Israeli claim of self-defense in attacking the Palestinian people requires distinguishing explicitly military actions such as aerial bombardment from everyday attacks through the deprivations and repression of the occupation. Resistance against the Israeli occupation more closely resembles the civil rights movement in the U.S. or the struggle against apartheid in South Africa than the military hostilities being claimed by the Israeli government. In other words, was Israel's goal other than annexation of everything of value through dispossession of the Palestinian people then the Israeli national interest would be in reconciliation and a just division of land and resources. Given that total dispossession is the clear goal, residual ignorance of recent and past events cannot continue to mitigate moral and political culpability for Israeli and U.S. actions against the Palestinian people.



*Graph (3) above: without public expression of irony the U.S. strategic interest in oil is the U.S. strategic interest in oil. The U.S. is by far the largest total and per capita consumer of petroleum products. But the U.S. military is one of the largest domestic consumers of oil as well. When tied to U.S. wars of aggression against the oil rich states of Iraq and Libya wars for oil become a perpetual murder machine— wars for oil to fight wars for oil. Israel’s role as America’s strategic ally in the Middle East makes it a partner in crime and the Palestinian people pawns in oil geopolitics. Because Americans are by far the largest consumers of oil we all participate in repressing the Palestinian people every time we fill up our cars with gasoline. Source: EIA.*

The reason why the unified national interest storyline behind the ‘Israeli Lobby’ thesis is so insidious is that it poses radically divergent interests as singularities. U.S. arms manufacturers and U.S. based multi-national oil companies have their economic interests tied to permanent chaos, war and destruction. And America’s dispossessed have interests more closely aligned with those of the Palestinian people in overthrowing the social mechanisms of repression like mass incarceration, coerced, exploitative economic participation, racist and classist strategies of dispossession and a legal system designed to serve some at the expense of ‘others.’ The hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops lied to by the (George W) Bush administration into invading and occupying Iraq were used as pawns in a cynical game of oil geopolitics. Mr. Bush could have left out the serial lies of weapons of mass destruction, ‘democratization’ and overthrowing a tyrant to provide an honest rationale, like oil geopolitics, and let the chips fall where they may. His choice to lie instead, as with Mr. Obama’s practice of murdering innocents, including American children, without providing evidence or recourse, demonstrates which side of the ‘unified interests’ line we stand on. And U.S. – Israeli ties are nowhere closer than in developing technologies of domestic surveillance and strategies of internal social control.

By changing the subject through Israel's (renewed) attack on Gaza the Obama administration is temporarily spared the 'embarrassment' of explaining the devolving U.S. circumstance in Iraq in an election year. For better or worse Iraq was a developed secular state before the (latest) U.S. war and occupation. While the chaos and destruction unleashed by the war undoubtedly help fuel arms sales in the region the faux partisan bickering in the U.S. over who is 'to blame' for the broadening regional chaos can't mask that America's war on Iraq was a bi-partisan affair. With neo-con hack Hillary Clinton waiting in the wings for her turn to destroy some portion of the world in 2016, understanding the U.S. role in causing death and destruction across the Middle East is as important now as it was before the catastrophic war on Iraq was launched.

Israel's attack on Gaza is a war crime among an ongoing series of war crimes. Even though not currently plausible, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should be regularly reminded that he faces prison or worse if he is ever convicted of his crimes. Whatever the broad American – Israeli propaganda machine is able to accomplish, most Americans have interests more closely aligned with the Palestinian people than with the American and Israeli political establishments. Finally, with the apparent goal of Israel being the total dispossession of the Palestinian people permanent peace will never be possible. But that is the fault of Israel and the U.S., not the Palestinians. The side of justice is with the Palestinian people.