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Hey Bubba, Where You Going With That Oil?

By Kelpie Wilson
truthout | Environment Editor

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Last weekend, a Reuters report revealed that the US military has stepped up its logistics to move a large additional fuel supplies into the Persian Gulf.

Correspondent Stefan Ambrogi reported: "A Gulf oil industry source said the charters suggested there was activity, possibly including a demonstration to Iran that the U.S. Navy will protect the Strait of Hormuz oil tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme."

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According to the report, the US Military Sealift Command appears to be moving at least double the ordinary fuels for aviation and shipping into the Gulf. Ambrogi says that, "In the past ... fuel movements have provided U.S. intentions." The report was based on information that came from an anonymous oil industry insider.

As concerned citizens worry about our president [possibly] launching another war in the Middle East, can it be that the only way for us to find out our government's intentions is to intercept a semaphore signal?

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We don't even really know why we are involved in the current war in Iraq. First we were told it was to prevent then to bring democracy to the Middle East. Many suspect the real goal was to exert control over oil. This is explicit in Bush's speech of September 13 when he justified the occupation of Iraq to protect the "global energy" "extremists."

Concerned citizens now need to help their fellow Americans answer a question that reaches beyond the legal evaluation of the Bush-Cheney press to attack Iran.

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Will military action against Iran work to secure oil for US interests?

In order to answer this question, it must be put into the context of peak oil. Peak oil is simply the moment when the rate of oil production stops growing. Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute reports world oil production from 84.80 million barrels per day in 2006 to 84.62 million barrels per day during the first 10 months of 2007. The German Energy Watch Group is projecting that oil production will soon start to decline by seven percent. 58 million barrels a day by 2020, barely more than half of what economists say the world will need twelve years from now.

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The implications of peak oil for global security are profound. Lester Brown said: "When oil output is no longer increasing, every country can get more oil unless another gets less."

China is already feeling the pinch of oil shortages and has set up a monitoring system in parts of the country to give an advance warning to try to get fuel where it is needed.

China's predicament brings up the question: Why are we sitting on Iraq's oil? In other words, what are we building giant permanent military bases in Iraq for the benefit of American SUV drivers? Or for the benefit of China? But China is an intrinsic part of the US economy now, with its investment in our treasury. If we grab more oil from China, do we just hurt ourselves?

Michael Klare, author of the book "Blood and Oil," examines the logic of what's known as the "Washington long-term commitment on the part of both Democrats and Republicans to use military force to secure Middle East oil. Given this perspective, it is very hard for mainstream Democrats to challenge Bush when he says that a military presence is needed in Iraq.... By the same token, it will be hard for the Democrats to avert a US withdrawal from Iraq. It can be portrayed as a necessary move to prevent Tehran from threatening the long-term safety of Persian Gulf oil supplies.

The problem with this is that there is no evidence that Iran wants to disrupt oil supplies or invade any country.

including Iraq. And even if it did, as Jim Hightower said recently, "... all peace-seeking governments must | Iran's potential for belligerence. This requires steady engagement, smart diplomacy, military subtlety, and of the complexities embodied within Iran's rich, proud, 6,000-year-old culture."

The Bush-Cheney shell game that is developing uses Iraq to justify attacking Iran and uses Iran to justify occupation of Iraq. But ultimately to what end?

As Michael Klare pointed out, no oil company will invest billions of dollars in oil production infrastructure secure investment climate. And after nearly five years of US occupation, Iraq is no closer to having such

The global oil supply is starting to run out, and in response the Bush-Cheney bubba boys are running to precious fuel into the Gulf to fuel a saber-rattling operation or worse. War, whether hot or cold, will never be of securing oil supplies for US interests, but it might serve to obscure what is really going on.

Imagine what will happen when gas prices shoot up to \$5 or \$6 a gallon in the US. Now imagine how happy he would be if he can find an excuse to attack Iran, and Iran retaliates by disrupting the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. Oil shortages will be blamed on Iran, and peak oil as an issue will fall off the table.

A much better strategy for the US and the rest of the world would be to act on Lester Brown's suggestion of an emergency meeting of the G-8 to coordinate decisive action to reduce oil use. Such a meeting could also initiate a process such as the UN process on climate change to decide how to rationally apportion what remains of the world's oil reserves.

In a sensible world where the grownups were in charge, governments would come up with a plan to use help all nations build up their renewable energy infrastructure. We cannot afford to waste another drop of oil on consumer garbage or on war.

Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards - I hope you get this message.

Kelpie Wilson is Truthout's environment editor. Trained as a mechanical engineer, she embarked on a conservation protection activist, then returned to engineering as a technical writer for the solar power industry. She is the author of "Primal Tears," an eco-thriller about a hybrid human-bonobo girl. Greg Bear, author of "Darwin's Radio," says: "Prior to this, she was a storyteller, thoughtful and passionate. Kelpie Wilson wonderfully expands our definitions of human and fair. Her review of Thatcher's review of Kelpie Wilson's novel "Primal Tears."

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