

anywhere in the world"; at the same time, they "must transition from a reactive to a proactive force posture to deter enemy forces from organizing for and conducting potentially catastrophic attacks." It follows that, "to carry out these activities, the U.S. military will have to be even more energy intense.... Considering the trend in operational fuel consumption and future capability needs, this 'new' force employment construct will likely demand more energy/fuel in the deployed setting."

The resulting increase in petroleum consumption is likely to prove dramatic. During Operation Desert Storm in 1991, the average American soldier consumed only four gallons of oil per day; as a result of George W. Bush's initiatives, a U.S. soldier in Iraq is now using four times as much. If this rate of increase continues unabated, the next major war could entail an expenditure of 64 gallons per soldier per day.

It was the unassailable logic of this situation that led LMI to conclude that there is a severe "operational disconnect" between the Bush administration's principles for future war-fighting and the global energy situation. The administration has, the company notes, "tethered operational capability to high-technology solutions that require continued growth in energy sources" - and done so at the worst possible moment historically. After all, the likelihood is that the global energy supply is about to begin diminishing rather than expanding. Clearly, writes LMI in its April 2007 report, "it may not be possible to execute operational concepts and capabilities to achieve our security strategy if the energy implications are not considered." And when those energy implications are considered, the strategy appears "unsustainable."

## The Pentagon as a Global Oil-Protection Service

How will the military respond to this unexpected challenge? One approach, favored by some within the DoD, is to go "green" - that is, to emphasize the accelerated development and acquisition of fuel-efficient weapons systems so that the Pentagon can retain its commitment to the Bush Doctrine, but consume less oil while doing so. This approach, if feasible, would have the obvious attraction of allowing the Pentagon to assume an environmentally-friendly facade while maintaining and developing its existing, interventionist force structure.

But there is also a more sinister approach that may be far more highly favored by senior officials: To ensure itself a "reliable" source of oil in perpetuity, the Pentagon will increase its efforts to maintain control over foreign sources of supply, notably oil fields and refineries in the Persian Gulf region, especially in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. This would help explain the recent talk of U.S. plans to retain "enduring" bases in Iraq, along with its already impressive and elaborate basing infrastructure in these other countries.

The U.S. military first began procuring petroleum products from Persian Gulf suppliers to sustain combat operations in the Middle East and Asia during World War II, and has been doing so ever since. It was, in part, to protect this vital source of petroleum for military purposes that, in 1945, President Roosevelt first proposed the deployment of an American military presence in the Persian Gulf region. Later, the protection of Persian Gulf oil became more important for the economic well-being of the United States, as articulated in President Jimmy Carter's "Carter Doctrine" speech of January 23, 1980 as well as in President George H. W. Bush's August 1990 decision to stop Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which led to the first Gulf War - and, many would argue, the decision of the younger Bush to invade Iraq

over a decade later.

Along the way, the American military has been transformed into a "global oil-protection service" for the benefit of U.S. corporations and consumers, fighting overseas battles and establishing its bases to ensure that we get our daily fuel fix. It would be both sad and ironic, if the military now began fighting wars mainly so that it could be guaranteed the fuel to run its own planes, ships, and tanks - consuming hundreds of billions of dollars a year that could instead be spent on the development of petroleum alternatives.

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*Michael T. Klare, professor of Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College, is the author of Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum (Owl Books).*

### 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice



205 W. Monroe St., #500  
Chicago IL 60606-5062  
312-641-5151  
[8thday@claret.org](mailto:8thday@claret.org)  
[www.8thdaycenter.org](http://www.8thdaycenter.org)

Local Contact:

## The Pentagon V. Peak Oil

### How wars of the future may be fought just to run the machines that fight them.

By Michael T. Klare, 06/14/07,  
<http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/174810>

Sixteen gallons of oil. That's how much the average American soldier in Iraq and Afghanistan consumes on a daily basis - either directly, through the use of Humvees, tanks, trucks, and helicopters, or indirectly, by calling in air strikes. Multiply this figure by 162,000 soldiers in Iraq, 24,000 in Afghanistan, and 30,000 in the surrounding region (including sailors aboard U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf) and you arrive at approximately 3.5 million gallons of oil: the daily petroleum tab for U.S. combat operations in the Middle East war zone.

Multiply that daily tab by 365 and you get 1.3 billion gallons: the estimated annual oil expenditure for U.S. combat operations in Southwest Asia. That's greater than the total annual oil usage of Bangladesh, population 150 million - and yet it's a gross underestimate of the Pentagon's wartime consumption.

Such numbers cannot do full justice to the extraordinary gas-guzzling expense of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. After all, for every soldier stationed "in theater," there are two more in transit, in training, or otherwise in line for eventual deployment to the war zone - soldiers who also consume enormous amounts of oil, even if less than their compatriots overseas. Moreover, to sustain an "expeditionary" army located halfway around the world, the Department of Defense must move millions of tons of arms, ammunition, food, fuel, and equipment every year by plane or ship, consuming additional tanker-loads of petroleum. Add this to the tally and the Pentagon's war-related oil budget jumps appreciably, though exactly how much we have no real way of knowing.

And foreign wars, sad to say, account for but

a small fraction of the Pentagon's total petroleum consumption. Possessing the world's largest fleet of modern aircraft, helicopters, ships, tanks, armored vehicles, and support systems - virtually all powered by oil - the Department of Defense (DoD) is, in fact, the world's leading consumer of petroleum. It can be difficult to obtain precise details on the DoD's daily oil hit, but an April 2007 report by a defense contractor, LMI Government Consulting, suggests that the Pentagon might consume as much as 340,000 barrels (14 million gallons) every day. This is greater than the total national consumption of Sweden or Switzerland.

## **Not "Guns v. Butter," but "Guns v. Oil"**

For anyone who drives a motor vehicle these days, this has ominous implications. With the price of gasoline now 75 cents to a dollar more than it was just six months ago, it's obvious that the Pentagon is facing a potentially serious budgetary crunch. Just like any ordinary American family, the DoD has to make some hard choices: It can use its normal amount of petroleum and pay more at the Pentagon's equivalent of the pump, while cutting back on other basic expenses; or it can cut back on its gas use in order to protect favored weapons systems under development. Of course, the DoD has a third option: It can go before Congress and plead for yet another supplemental budget hike, but this is sure to provoke renewed calls for a timetable for an American troop withdrawal from Iraq, and so is an unlikely prospect at this time.

Nor is this destined to prove a temporary issue. As recently as two years ago, the U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) was confidently predicting that the price of crude oil would hover in the \$30 per barrel range for another quarter century or so, leading to gasoline prices of about \$2 per gallon. But then came Hurricane Katrina, the crisis in Iran, the insurgency in southern Nigeria, and a host of other problems that tightened the oil market, prompting the DoE

to raise its long-range price projection into the \$50 per barrel range. This is the amount that figures in many current governmental budgetary forecasts - including, presumably, those of the Department of Defense. But just how realistic is this? The price of a barrel of crude oil today is hovering in the \$66 range. Many energy analysts now say that a price range of \$70-\$80 per barrel (or possibly even significantly more) is far more likely to be our fate for the foreseeable future.

A price rise of this magnitude, when translated into the cost of gasoline, aviation fuel, diesel fuel, home-heating oil, and petrochemicals will play havoc with the budgets of families, farms, businesses, and local governments. Sooner or later, it will force people to make profound changes in their daily lives - as benign as purchasing a hybrid vehicle in place of an SUV or as painful as cutting back on home heating or health care simply to make an unavoidable drive to work. It will have an equally severe affect on the Pentagon budget. As the world's number one consumer of petroleum products, the DoD will obviously be disproportionately affected by a doubling in the price of crude oil. If it can't turn to Congress for redress, it will have to reduce its profligate consumption of oil and/or cut back on other expenses, including weapons purchases.

The rising price of oil is producing what Pentagon contractor LMI calls a "fiscal disconnect" between the military's long-range objectives and the realities of the energy marketplace. "The need to recapitalize obsolete and damaged equipment [from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan] and to develop high-technology systems to implement future operational concepts is growing," it explained in an April 2007 report. However, an inability "to control increased energy costs from fuel and supporting infrastructure diverts resources that would otherwise be available to procure new capabilities."

And this is likely to be the least of the Pentagon's worries. The Department of Defense is, after all, the world's richest military

organization, and so can be expected to tap into hidden accounts of one sort or another in order to pay its oil bills and finance its many pet weapons projects. However, this assumes that sufficient petroleum will be available on world markets to meet the Pentagon's ever-growing needs - by no means a foregone conclusion. Like every other large consumer, the DoD must now confront the looming - but hard to assess - reality of "Peak Oil"; the very real possibility that global oil production is at or near its maximum sustainable ("peak") output and will soon commence an irreversible decline.

That global oil output will eventually reach a peak and then decline is no longer a matter of debate; all major energy organizations have now embraced this view. What remains open for argument is precisely when this moment will arrive. Some experts place it comfortably in the future - meaning two or three decades down the pike - while others put it in this very decade. If there is a consensus emerging, it is that peak-oil output will occur somewhere around 2015. Whatever the timing of this momentous event, it is apparent that the world faces a profound shift in the global availability of energy, as we move from a situation of relative abundance to one of relative scarcity. It should be noted, moreover, that this shift will apply, above all, to the form of energy most in demand by the Pentagon: the petroleum liquids used to power planes, ships, and armored vehicles.

## **Bush Doctrine Faces Peak Oil**

Peak oil is not one of the global threats the Department of Defense has ever had to face before; and, like other U.S. government agencies, it tended to avoid the issue, viewing it until recently as a peripheral matter. As intimations of peak oil's imminent arrival increased, however, it has been forced to sit up and take notice. Spurred perhaps by rising fuel prices, or by the growing attention being devoted to "energy security" by academic strategists,

the DoD has suddenly taken an interest in the problem. To guide its exploration of the issue, the Office of Force Transformation within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy commissioned LMI to conduct a study on the implications of future energy scarcity for Pentagon strategic planning.

The resulting study, "Transforming the Way the DoD Looks at Energy," was a bombshell. Determining that the Pentagon's favored strategy of global military engagement is incompatible with a world of declining oil output, LMI concluded that "current planning presents a situation in which the aggregate operational capability of the force may be unsustainable in the long term."

LMI arrived at this conclusion from a careful analysis of current U.S. military doctrine. At the heart of the national military strategy imposed by the Bush administration - the Bush Doctrine - are two core principles: transformation, or the conversion of America's stodgy, tank-heavy Cold War military apparatus into an agile, continent-hopping high-tech, futuristic war machine; and pre-emption, or the initiation of hostilities against "rogue states" like Iraq and Iran, thought to be pursuing weapons of mass destruction. What both principles entail is a substantial increase in the Pentagon's consumption of petroleum products - either because such plans rely, to an increased extent, on air and sea-power or because they imply an accelerated tempo of military operations.

As summarized by LMI, implementation of the Bush Doctrine requires that "our forces must expand geographically and be more mobile and expeditionary so that they can be engaged in more theaters and prepared for expedient deployment