

America's crude tactics for Iraq war

Level 3 | **Advanced**

1 Pre-reading | Key Words

Match the words with the definitions

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1• to topple | a• to provide the money for something |
| 2• to guzzle | b• to deal with |
| 3• to bankroll | c• to make someone in authority lose their power; to overthrow |
| 4• to lobby | d• to reach the highest point or level |
| 5• to diminish | e• to control or limit something that is harmful |
| 6• to tackle | f• to become less; to decrease |
| 7• to peak | g• to drink a lot quickly and with enthusiasm |
| 8• to curb | h• to continue to exist |
| 9• to persist | i• to try to influence politicians on a particular subject |

2 What do you know?

Decide whether the following statements are true or false:

- 1• Iraq has more than 10% of the world's oil reserves.
- 2• The discovery of oil reached in peak in the mid-1980s.
- 3• The US produces enough oil to meet its own needs.
- 4• More efficient oil production would lead to higher global oil prices.
- 5• Saudi Arabia has 25% of the world's oil reserves.
- 6• The US government has refused permission for oil companies to extract oil in Alaska.

Now read the text and check your answers.

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Larry Elliot

Let's get one thing straight. George Bush's determination to topple Saddam Hussein has nothing to do with oil. Iraq may account for 11% of the world's oil reserves, but the military build-up in the Gulf is about making the world a safer and more humane place, not about allowing motorists to guzzle gas to their heart's content. So, let me spell it out. This. Has. Nothing. To. Do. With. Oil. Got that? Of course you haven't. It takes a trusting, nay naive, soul to imagine that the White House would be making all this fuss were it not that Iraq has something the US needs. There are plenty of small, repressive states where the regimes are being allowed to quietly kill and torture their people. There are plenty of small, repressive states with weapons of mass destruction - North Korea, for example - which appear to pose a more immediate threat to international security. But only with Iraq do you get a small, repressive country with weapons of mass destruction that also happens to be floating on oil. Moreover the realities of oil dependency are catching up with the world's biggest economy. The US has long ceased to be self-sufficient in oil and, as the recent shutdown of Venezuela's refineries has

proved, is therefore vulnerable to its imported supplies being cut off. The discovery of oil peaked in the mid-1960s but the world continues to use faster than it is being found. Bush and his team know all this. They have worked for the oil industry, been bankrolled by the oil industry, and have listened hard to what the oil industry would like. Faced with the prospect that on current trends the gap between demand and supply will widen, Bush has three choices. First, he could listen to the lobbying of executives such as Longwell, who are convinced that there is still plenty of oil out there provided the exploration teams are given the freedom to find it. That is why Bush has courted the wrath of the environmental lobby in the US to sanction exploration and extraction in the wilds of Alaska. The second option is to ensure that, to buy time, the US secures a bigger share of diminishing stocks. The seizure intact of Iraqi oil is a prime war aim of the US, and it is likely that, once Saddam has been toppled, the big oil companies will be called in to modernise the country's oil infrastructure. In one sense, such an outcome would be no bad thing. A modernisation that increased the supply

of oil through more efficient production would lead to lower global prices and stronger growth. It might also be environmentally less damaging. The possibility that a US occupation of the Middle East will destabilise the region, putting pressure on the autocratic rulers of Western client states, is a second, perhaps greater, threat. It would be a bitter irony if the US found itself in possession of 11% of the world's known reserves only to find that the 25% in Saudi Arabia had been seized by a regime with no love for America. The third choice for the US and the rest of the developed world is to tackle the imbalance between demand and supply from the other end - by limiting demand rather than by increasing supply. Most governments, including that in Washington, acknowledge the need to take steps to curb emissions of greenhouse gases. The first problem with this is political will. If governments took steps to increase energy efficiency by 20% and to commit to producing 25% of energy from renewable sources by 2020, it would be costly, both in terms of money and effort. But wars, too, are costly. The depletion of non-renewable energy resources is a problem that will persist long after the butcher of Baghdad is dead and buried.

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3 Comprehension Check

Match the beginnings with the endings:

Choose the best answer to each question.

- 1• According to the writer, the US is targeting Iraq because ...
 - a• It is a small repressive state.
 - b• It has weapons of mass destruction.
 - c• It is a repressive state that has weapons of mass destruction and lots of oil.

- 2• Why is the US vulnerable to its imported supplies being cut off?
 - a• Because it is no longer produces enough oil to meets its needs.
 - b• Because Venezuela's refineries have been shut down.
 - c• Because the world continues to use oil faster than it is being found.

- 3• Why is the environmental lobby angry with Bush?
 - a• Because he has agreed to allow oil companies to look for oil in Alaska.
 - b• Because the gap between supply and demand is widening.
 - c• Because the oil companies are convinced there is more oil to be found.

- 4• Why does the US want to seize the Iraqi oil intact?
 - a• In order to modernise the country's oil infrastructure.
 - b• In order to increase the supply of oil.
 - c• In order to get a bigger share of decreasing stocks of oil.

- 5• What, according to the writer, is the third choice for the US and the rest of the developed world?
 - a• To curb emissions of greenhouse gases.
 - b• To limit demand by increasing energy efficiency.
 - c• To remove the "butcher of Baghdad" from power.

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4 Word Building: Collocations

Match the verbs with the nouns they collocate with.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1• to topple | a• a threat |
| 2• to make | b• a region |
| 3• to pose | c• an imbalance |
| 4• to lobby | d• a regime |
| 5• to court | e• energy efficiency |
| 6• to buy | f• a fuss |
| 7• to destabilise | g• emissions |
| 8• to tackle | h• politicians |
| 9• to curb | i• disaster |
| 10• to increase | j• time |

5 Word Building: Adjectives

Fill the gaps by using an appropriate adjective from the text.

- 1• _____ regimes rule by the use of force or violence.
- 2• Someone who is _____ is easy to hurt physically or mentally.
- 3• If something is _____ it is not harmed, damaged or lacking any parts.
- 4• _____ means absolutely certain.
- 5• A _____ person lacks experience of life and believes things too easily.
- 6• People who rule with complete power can be described as _____ .
- 7• _____ is another word for expensive.

6 Discussion

What are the arguments for and against an attack on Iraq?
What are the alternative energy sources to oil?
Can the world live without oil?