

Oil trade shifts to African west coast

by Konstantin George

When the United States withdrew from Lebanon, a "Saigon II" abandonment of the strategic Mideast architected by Henry Kissinger and his British "New Yalta" superiors like incoming NATO Secretary General Lord Peter Carrington, important shifts began to occur in the world oil trade. The pullout symbolized Kissinger and Carrington's endeavors to deliver the Mideast to the "Soviet sphere of influence."

The Persian Gulf region is synonymous with oil. Any strategic vacating of the area must be mirrored by major occurrences in the oil industry. In looking for Kissinger's footprints in the international oil trade, one finds some stunning moves since the Marines left Beirut.

A discussion with an official of the West German foreign ministry (Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher is very close to Kissinger and Carrington) about the "hypothetical" case of Persian Gulf oil being shut down through Iranian or Soviet action, yielded the following response: "If the Persian Gulf is closed off, it will not affect us. We've shifted our oil dependency away from the Mideast to the North Sea and Africa."

Soon after the Beirut humiliation, Henry Kissinger was named as a consultant to Standard Oil of California (SoCal), and its subsidiary, Chevron. Until then, SoCal had the main weight of its overseas operations in Saudi Arabia, where it forms one of the partners in Aramco. Then in February, SoCal, in the biggest merger ever in oil history, acquired the mammoth Gulf Oil corporation, and in so doing shifted the weight of its overseas oil drilling to Africa. SoCal has acquired through Gulf the major Cabinda oilfields in the Angolan enclave north of the Zaire River (oilfields well protected by several thousand Cuban troops, an arrangement with the Soviet Union that Henry is sure to keep), and Gulf's extensive holdings in Nigeria.

SoCal's new partner, Gulf Oil, is the traditional property of the Mellon family in Pittsburgh. The Mellons are a nasty bunch—in the 1930s through their bauxite-aluminum monopoly (Alcoa, etc.) they worked out international cartel arrangements highly favorable to Nazi Germany on the production and importation of strategic light metals (aluminum,

magnesium), especially vital for the aircraft production requirements of the Göring Plan war buildup. These cartel arrangements of the Mellon family's Alcoa with the German Vereinigte Aluminium Werke complemented the more notorious Rockefeller (Standard Oil)-I.G. Farben deals.

Spheres of influence then and now

So today, key interests among the Anglo-American oil giants and today's *Mitteleuropa* networks, successors to the various 1930s stripes of fascism—brownshirt, blueshirt, clerical—find many common interests, including that of accommodation with the Soviet Union. The pullout from the Mideast, in terms of dependency on the region's oil, has been accomplished at breakneck pace over the past 18 months by the English, German-speaking, and Scandinavian parts of Europe, where the British monarchy and its oligarchical in-laws have the greatest power.

The year of the big shift in German oil purchases was 1983. Purchases from Saudi Arabia collapsed from 17 million tons in 1982 to only 7 million tons in 1983, or in deutschemark terms, from 11 billion to only 4 billion. Oil imports from Oman likewise went through the floor, from 1 billion DM in 1982 to only 140 million DM in 1983. The German trade boom with Khomeini's Iran did not affect the geography of oil dependence, as the boom consisted of 7.7 billion DM in German exports to Iran, and about 1 billion DM worth of oil purchases.

Of Germany's top eight oil suppliers, only one, Saudi Arabia, is from the Mideast. Germany's number-one supplier—also true for the Netherlands—is Great Britain (which is self-sufficient), while Sweden now is also primarily served by Britain's North Sea oil, in this case through Norway. Germany's number-two and -three suppliers are on the African continent—Libya and Nigeria, respectively.

This is not the first time in this century that the oil-producing regions of the Mideast have been offered to the Soviet sphere of influence, in return for some kind of raw materials regroupment in Africa. "Secret Protocol Number One" of the Hitler-Stalin Pact is revealing in this respect. Point one of the Protocol: "Germany declares . . . the main thrust of its territorial aspirations lie in central Africa"; and point four: "The Soviet Union declares that the main axis of its territorial aspirations lies to the south of the territory of the Soviet Union, in the direction of the Indian Ocean." Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's note to the German Ambassador Graf von Schulenburg, dated Nov. 26, 1940, reiterated the point: ". . . the aspirations of the Soviet Union in the area south of Batum and Baku [Turkey, Iran, Iraq] lie in the general direction of the Persian Gulf."

In the present scramble to accommodate the U.S.S.R., these old notions of spheres of influence and "strategic raw-materials preserves" have again turned up, in the wake of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Khomeini takeover in Iran, and the Lebanon "Saigon II" disaster.