



## Natural Resources and Middle East Geopolitics

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### ABSTRACT:

For over one century now, since the time of the First World War, the regional and international politics of the Middle East have revolved around the region's most important natural resource: oil (and gas, increasingly). The issue of oil in international relations is about much more than ensuring access to the resource: it is also about the power of denying this access to others, as well as about the different uses of oil money. Oil was the basis upon which was built the US-Saudi relation, a central factor of US imperial strategy in the Middle East since the end of World War II. It is the main rationale behind the wars that the US has led in the region since the end of the Cold War, from the two onslaughts on Saddam Hussein's Iraq to the most recent war against ISIS.

### Readings:

Achcar, Gilbert (2013), "Regional Political Factors", Chapter 3 of *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising*.

Achcar, Gilbert (2004), "U.S. Imperial Strategy in the Middle East", Introduction to *Eastern Cauldron: Islam, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq in a Marxist Mirror*.

Hinnebusch, Raymond (2011), "The Middle East in the World Hierarchy: Imperialism and Resistance", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, v. 14, April, pp. 213–246.

Luciani, Giacomo (2009), "Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East", in Louise Fawcett, ed., *International Relations of the Middle East*.

Muttit, Greg (2012), *Fuel on the Fire: Oil and Politics in Occupied Iraq*.