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Dave McGowan Newsletter # 52

Mike Ruppert v The Center for an Informed America

[Editor's Note: Dave McGowan has taken head on, a concern that has nagged at me for a long time: the reliability of Mike Ruppert While Ruppert has done a bang up job of promoting himself as the quintessential, anti-New World Order, muckraking, good guy reporter, he made some accusatory statements about Ted Gunderson a few years ago, that I knew to be untrue, so I started to ask myself: "Who is Mike Ruppert, really?" I'll save the details of his false allegations against Gunderson for a separate article, but the issue which Dave McGowan raises here of [Ruppert's promotion of a looming oil scarcity crisis scenario \(which would serve the NWO agenda very nicely\)](#) is telling and makes me wonder with renewed concern: "Who is Mike Ruppert-REALLY?"...Ken Adachi]

By Dave McGowan <dave@davesweb.cnchost.com>

<http://educate-yourself.org/cn/davemcgowan52newsletter13mar04.shtml>

March 13, 2004

Original title: **Cop v CIA (Center for an Informed America)**

<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr52.html>

The Most Important Center for an Informed America Story in Two Years...

On February 29, 2004, I received the following e-mail message from **Michael Ruppert** of From the Wilderness:

I challenge you to an open, public debate on the subject of Peak Oil; any time, any place after March 13th 2004. I challenge you to bring scientific material, production data and academic references and citations for your conclusions like I have. I suggest a mutually acceptable panel of judges and I will put up \$1,000 towards a purse to go to the winner of that debate. I expect you to do the same. And you made a dishonest and borderline libelous statement when you suggested that I am somehow pleased that these wars of aggression have taken place to secure oil. My message all along has been, "Not in my name!" Put your money where your mouth is. But first I suggest you do some homework. Ad hominem attacks using the word "bullshit", unsupported by scientific data are a sign of intellectual weakness (at best). I will throw more than 500 footnoted citations at you from unimpeachable sources. Be prepared to eat them or rebut them with something more than you have offered.

Wow! How does high noon sound?

Before I get started here, Mike, I need to ask you just one quick question: are you sure it was only a "borderline libelous statement"? Because I was really going for something more unambiguously libelous. I'll see if I can do better on this outing. Let me know how I do.

Several readers have written to me, incidentally, with a variation of the following question: "How can you say that Peak Oil is being promoted to sell war when all of the websites promoting the notion of Peak Oil are stridently anti-war?"

But of course they are. That, you see, is precisely the point. What I was trying to say is that the notion of 'Peak Oil' is being specifically marketed to the anti-war crowd -- because, as we all know, the pro-war crowd doesn't need to be fed any additional justifications for going to war; any of the old lies will do just fine. And I never said that the necessity of war was being overtly sold. What I said, if I remember correctly, is that it is being sold with a wink and a nudge.

The point that I was trying to make is that it would be difficult to imagine a better way to implicitly sell the necessity of war, even while appearing to stake out a position against war, than through the promotion of the concept of 'Peak Oil.' After September 11, 2001, someone famously said that if Osama bin Laden didn't exist, the US would have had to invent him. I think the same could be said for 'Peak Oil.'

I also need to mention here that those who are selling 'Peak Oil' hysteria aren't offering much in the way of alternatives, or solutions. Ruppert, for example, has stated flatly that "there is no effective replacement for what hydrocarbon energy provides today." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/052703_9_questions.html)

The message is quite clear: "we're running out of oil soon; there is no alternative; we're all screwed." And this isn't, mind you, just an energy problem; as Ruppert has correctly noted, "Almost every current human endeavor from transportation, to manufacturing, to plastics, and especially food production is inextricably intertwined with oil and natural gas supplies." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/102302_campbell.html)

If we run out of oil, in other words, our entire way of life will come crashing down. One of Ruppert's "unimpeachable sources," Colin Campbell, describes an apocalyptic future, just around the corner, that will be characterized by "war, starvation, economic recession, possibly even the extinction of homo sapiens." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/102302_campbell.html)

My question is: if Ruppert is not selling the necessity of war, then exactly what is the message that he is sending to readers with such doomsday forecasts? At the end of a recent posting, Ruppert quotes dialogue from the 1975 Sidney Pollack film, *Three Days of the Condor*: (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/013004_in_your_face.html)

Higgins: ...It's simple economics. Today it's oil, right? In 10 or 15 years - food, Plutonium. And maybe even sooner. Now what do you think the people are gonna want us to do then?

Turner: *Ask them.*

Higgins: *Not now - then. Ask them when they're running out. Ask them when there's no heat in their homes and they're cold. Ask them when their engines stop. Ask them when people who've never known hunger start going hungry. Do you want to know something? They won't want us to ask them. They'll just want us to get it for them.*

The message there seems pretty clear: once the people understand what is at stake, they will support whatever is deemed necessary to secure the world's oil supplies. And what is it that Ruppert is accomplishing with his persistent 'Peak Oil' postings? He is helping his readers to understand what is allegedly at stake.

Elsewhere on his site, Ruppert warns that "Different regions of the world peak in oil production at different times ... the OPEC nations of the Middle East peak last. Within a few years, they -- or whoever controls them -- will be in effective control of the world economy, and, in essence, of human civilization as a whole."

(http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/102302_campbell.html)

Within a few years, the Middle East will be in control of all of human civilization?! Try as I might, I can't imagine any claim that would more effectively rally support for a U.S. takeover of the Middle East. The effect of such outlandish claims is to cast the present war as a war of necessity. Indeed, a BBC report posted on Ruppert's site explicitly endorses that notion: "It's not greed that's driving big oil companies - it's survival."

(http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/040403_oil_war_bbc.html)

On the very day that Ruppert's challenge arrived, I received another e-mail, from someone I previously identified - erroneously, it would appear - as a "prominent critic" of Michael Ruppert. In further correspondence, the writer, Jeff Strahl, explained that he is (a) not a critic of Ruppert in general, but rather a critic only of Ruppert's stance on certain aspects of the 9-11 story, and (b) not all that prominent. This is what Mr. Strahl had to say:

I'm a participant in a relatively new website, <http://911research.wtc7.net>, which has done lots of work regarding the WTC and Pentagon side of the 9/11 events, especially the physical evidence which reveals the official story as a complete hoax. Under "talks" you'll find a slide show I've done (and will do again) in public on the Pentagon aspects. This is all simply to let you know I'm far from an apologist for the status quo. Nor am I an apologist for Mike Ruppert, with whom in fact I got into a donnybrook of a fight on public email lists over his denial of the relevancy of physical evidence and the fact that an article full of disinformation about the WTC collapse, written 9/13/01, was still on his website, unedited or corrected, two years later. He finally gave in and printed a (sort of) retraction.

That said, I have to take issue with your stance re Peak Oil, something you say you wish were true, but deny, not on the basis of any information, but on the basis that you seem to think it's too good to be true, and that it's all info presented by Ruppert, which you thus suspect since you suspect Ruppert. Matter of fact, Peak Oil was predicted by an oil geologist, King Hubbert, way back in the mid '60s, before Ruppert was even in college. It's been pursued since then by lots of people in the science know-how, including Dale Allen Pfeiffer, Richard Heinberg, Colin Campbell and Kenneth Deffeyes. The information is quite clear; global oil production has either peaked in the last couple of years or will do so in the next couple, as Hubbert predicted decades ago (He predicted Peak Oil in the US as happening in the early '70s, was laughed at, but his prediction came true right on schedule). The science here is quite hard, facts are available from lots of sources. Perhaps Hubbert was part of a long-planned disinfo campaign that was planned way back in the '60s, and all the others are part of that plot. I find it hard to believe that, and I am quite a skeptic.

As for the relevancy of physical evidence, it would appear that that is another bone that I have to pick with Mr. Ruppert. But I will save that for another time. For now, the issue is 'Peak Oil' (which, as you can see, I am continuing to enclose in quotation marks, which is, as regular readers know, how I identify things that don't actually exist).

For the record, I never said that Michael Ruppert was the only one presenting information about 'Peak Oil.' I said that he was the most prominent of those promoting the idea. I also never implied that Ruppert came up with the idea on his own. I am aware that the theory has a history. The issue here, however, is the sudden

prominence that 'Peak Oil' has attained.

Lastly, let me say that, unlike you, Jeff, I am enough of a skeptic to believe that an ambitious, well-orchestrated disinformation campaign, possibly spanning generations, should never arbitrarily be ruled out. I am also enough of a skeptic to suspect that when a topic I have covered generates the volume of e-mail that my 'Peak Oil' musings have generated, then I must have managed to step into a pretty big pile of shit. What I did not realize, until I decided to take Mr. Ruppert's advice and "do some homework," was that it was a much bigger pile than I could have imagined.

I read through some, but certainly not all, of the alleged evidence that Ruppert has brought to the table concerning 'Peak Oil.' Since I have no interest in financially supporting his cause, I am not a paid subscriber and can therefore not access the 'members only' postings. But I doubt that I am missing much. The postings that I did read tended to be extremely redundant and, therefore, a little on the boring side.

Ruppert's arguments range from the vaguely compelling to the downright bizarre. One argument that pops up repeatedly is exemplified by this Ruppert-penned line: "One of the biggest signs of the reality of Peak Oil over the last two decades has been a continual pattern of merger-acquisition-downsizing throughout the industry."

Really? And is that pattern somehow unique to the petroleum industry? Or is it a pattern that has been followed by just about every major industry? Is the consolidation of the supermarket industry a sign of the reality of Peak Groceries? And with consolidation of the media industry, should we be concerned about Peak News? Or should we, perhaps, recognize that a pattern of monopoly control - characterized by mergers, acquisitions, and downsizing - represents nothing more than business as usual throughout the corporate world?

Another telling sign of 'Peak Oil,' according to Ruppert and Co., is sudden price hikes on gas and oil. Of course, that would be a somewhat more compelling argument if the oil cartels did not have a decades-long history of constantly feigning shortages to foist sudden price increases on consumers (usually just before peak travel periods). Contrary to the argument that appears on Ruppert's site, it is not need that is driving the oil industry, it is greed.

In what is undoubtedly the most bizarre posting that Ruppert offers in support of his theory, he ponders whether dialogue from an obscure 1965 television series indicates that the CIA knew as far back as the 1960s about the coming onset of 'Peak Oil.' (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/042003_secret_agent_man.html) Even if that little factoid came from a more, uhmm, credible source, what would the significance be? Hasn't the conventional wisdom been, for many decades, that oil is a 'fossil fuel,' and therefore a finite, non-renewable resource? Since when has it been an intelligence community secret that a finite resource will someday run out?

A few readers raised that very issue in questioning my recent 'Peak Oil' rants. "Even if we are not now in the era of Peak Oil," the argument generally goes, "then surely we will be soon. After all, it is inevitable." And conventional wisdom dictates that it is, indeed, inevitable. But if this website has one overriding purpose, it is to question conventional wisdom whenever possible.

There is no shortage of authoritatively stated figures on the From the Wilderness website: billions of barrels of oil discovered to date; billions of barrels of oil produced to date; billions of barrels of oil in known reserves; billions of barrels of oil consumed annually. Yadda, yadda, yadda. My favorite figure is the one labeled, in one posting, "Yet-to-Find." That figure, 150 billion barrels (a relative pittance), is supposed to represent the precise volume of conventional oil in all the unknown number of oil fields of unknown size that haven't been discovered yet. Ruppert himself has written, with a cocksure swagger, that "there are no more significant quantities of oil to be discovered anywhere ..." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/013004_in_your_face.html) A

rather bold statement, to say the least, considering that it would seem to be impossible for a mere mortal to know such a thing. Ruppert's figures certainly paint a scary picture: rapid oil consumption + diminishing oil reserves + no new discoveries = no more oil. And sooner, rather than later. But is the 'Peak Oil' argument really valid? It seems logical -- a non-renewable resource consumed with a vengeance obviously can't last for long. The only flaw in the argument, I suppose, would be if oil wasn't really a 'fossil fuel,' and if it wasn't really a non-renewable resource.

"Conventional wisdom says the world's supply of oil is finite, and that it was deposited in horizontal reservoirs

near the surface in a process that took millions of years." So said the Wall Street Journal in April 1999 (Christopher Cooper "Odd Reservoir Off Louisiana Prods Oil Experts to Seek a Deeper Meaning," Wall Street Journal, April 16, 1999). It therefore logically follows that conventional wisdom also says that oil will reach a production peak, and then ultimately run out. (<http://www.oralchelation.com/faq/wsj4.htm>)

As I said a few paragraphs ago, the purpose of this website is to question conventional wisdom -- by acquainting readers with stories that the media overlook, and with viewpoints that are not allowed in the mainstream. It was my understanding that From the Wilderness, and other 'alternative' websites, had a similar goal.

But is 'Peak Oil' really some suppressed, taboo topic? If it is, then why, as I sit here typing this, with today's (March 7, 2004) edition of the Los Angeles Times atop my desk, are the words "Running Out of Oil -- and Time" staring me in the face from the front page of the widely read Sunday Opinion section? The lengthy piece, penned by Paul Roberts, is replete with dire warnings of the coming crisis. Save for the fact that the words 'Peak Oil' are not routinely capitalized, it could easily pass for a From the Wilderness posting. (<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-op-roberts7mar07,1,107339.story>)

The Times also informed readers that Roberts has a new book due out in May, entitled The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World. Scary stuff. Beating Robert's book to the stores will be Colin Campbell's The Coming Oil Crisis, due in April. Both titles will have to compete for shelf space with titles such as Richard Heinberg's The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies, published April of last year; David Goodstein's Out of Gas: The End of the Age of Oil, which just hit the shelves last month; and Kenneth Deffeyes' Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage, published October 2001. The field is getting a bit crowded, but sales over at Amazon.com remain strong for most of the contenders.

The wholesale promotion of 'Peak Oil' seems to have taken off immediately after the September 11, 2001 'terrorist' attacks, and it is now really starting to pick up some steam. The BBC covered the big story last April (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/040403_oil_war_bbc.html). CNN covered it in October (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/100203_cnn_peak_oil.html). The Guardian covered it in December (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/120303_bottom_barrel.html). Now the Los Angeles Times has joined the chorus.

I guess the cat is pretty much out of the bag on this one. Everyone can cancel their subscriptions to From the Wilderness and pocket the \$35 a year, since you can read the very same bullshit for free in the pages of the Los Angeles Times.

Interestingly enough, there is another story about oil that, unlike the 'Peak Oil' story, actually has been suppressed. It is a story that very few, if any, of my readers, or of Michael Ruppert's readers, are likely aware of. But before we get to that story, let's first briefly review what we all 'know' about oil.

As anyone who stayed awake during elementary school science class knows, oil comes from dinosaurs. I remember as a kid (calm down, folks; there will be no Brady Bunch references this week) seeing some kind of 'public service' spot explaining how dinosaurs "gave their all" so that we could one day have oil. It seemed a reasonable enough idea at the time -- from the perspective of an eight-year-old. But if, as an adult, you really stop to give it some thought, doesn't the idea seem a little, uhmm ... what's the word I'm looking for here? ... oh yeah, I remember now ... preposterous?

How could dinosaurs have possibly created the planet's vast oil fields? Did millions, or even billions, of them die at the very same time and at the very same place? Were there dinosaur Jonestowns on a grand scale occurring at locations all across the planet? And how did they all get buried so quickly? Because if they weren't buried right away, wouldn't they have just decomposed and/or been consumed by scavengers? And how much oil can you really squeeze from a pile of parched dinosaur skeletons?

Maybe there was some type of cataclysmic event that caused the sudden extinction of the dinosaurs and also buried them -- like the impact of an asteroid or a comet. But even so, you wouldn't think that all the dinosaurs would have been huddled together waiting to become oil fields. And besides, scientists are now backing away from the mass extinction theory. (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-sci->

extinction6mar06,1,3634810.story)

The Wall Street Journal article previously cited noted that it "would take a pretty big pile of dead dinosaurs to account for the estimated 660 billion barrels of oil in the [Middle East]." I don't know what the precise dinosaur-carcass-to-barrel-of-oil conversion rate is, but it does seem like it would take a hell of a lot of dead dinosaurs. Even if we generously allow that a single dinosaur could yield 50 barrels of oil (an absurd notion, but let's play along for now), more than 130 billion dinosaurs would have had to be simultaneously entombed in just one small region of the world. But were there really hundreds of billions of dinosaurs roaming the earth? If so, then one wonders why there is all this talk now of overpopulation and scarce resources, when all we are currently dealing with is a few billion humans populating the same earth.

And why the Middle East? Was that region some kind of Mecca for dinosaurs? Was it the climate, or the lack of water and vegetation, that drew them there? Of course, the region could have been much different in prehistoric times. Maybe it was like the Great Valley in the Land Before Time movies. Or maybe the dinosaurs had to cross the Middle East to get to the Great Valley, but they never made it, because they got bogged down in the desert and ultimately became (through, I'm guessing here, some alchemical process) cans of 10W-40 motor oil.

Another version of the 'fossil fuel' story holds that microscopic animal carcasses and other biological matter gathered on the world's sea floors, with that organic matter then being covered over with sediment over the course of millions of years. You would think, however, that any biological matter would decompose long before being covered over by sediment. But I guess not. And I guess there were no bottom-feeders in those days to clear the ocean floors of organic debris. Fair enough. But I still don't understand how those massive piles of biological debris, some consisting of hundreds of billions of tons of matter, could have just suddenly appeared, so that they could then sit, undisturbed, for millions of years as they were covered over with sediment. I can understand how biological detritus could accumulate over time, mixed in with the sediment, but that wouldn't really create the conditions for the generation of vast reservoirs of crude oil. So I guess I must be missing something here.

The notion that oil is a 'fossil fuel' was first proposed by Russian scholar Mikhailo Lomonosov in 1757. Lomonosov's rudimentary hypothesis, based on the limited base of scientific knowledge that existed at the time, and on his own simple observations, was that "Rock oil originates as tiny bodies of animals buried in the sediments which, under the influence of increased temperature and pressure acting during an unimaginably long period of time, transform into rock oil."

Two and a half centuries later, Lomonosov's theory remains as it was in 1757 -- an unproved, and almost entirely speculative, hypothesis. Returning once again to the Wall Street Journal, we find that, "Although the world has been drilling for oil for generations, little is known about the nature of the resource or the underground activities that led to its creation." A paragraph in the Encyclopedia Britannica concerning the origins of oil ends thusly: "In spite of the great amount of scientific research ... there remain many unresolved questions regarding its origins."

Does that not seem a little odd? We are talking here, after all, about a resource that, by all accounts, plays a crucial role in a vast array of human endeavors (by one published account, petroleum is a raw ingredient in some 70,000 manufactured products, including medicines, synthetic fabrics, fertilizers, paints and varnishes, acrylics, plastics, and cosmetics). By many accounts, the very survival of the human race is entirely dependent on the availability of petroleum. And yet we know almost nothing about this most life-sustaining of the earth's resources. And even though, by some shrill accounts, the well is about to run dry, no one seems to be overly concerned with understanding the nature and origins of so-called 'fossil fuels.' We are, rather, content with continuing to embrace an unproved 18th century theory that, if subjected to any sort of logical analysis, seems ludicrous.

On September 26, 1995, the New York Times ran an article headlined "Geochemist Says Oil Fields May Be Refilled Naturally." Penned by Malcolm W. Browne, the piece appeared on page C1. Could it be that many of the world's oil fields are refilling themselves at nearly the same rate they are being drained by an energy hungry world? A geochemist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts ... Dr. Jean K. Whelan ... infers that oil is moving in quite rapid spurts from great depths to reservoirs closer to the surface. Skeptics of Dr. Whelan's hypothesis ... say her explanation remains to be proved ... Discovered in 1972, an oil reservoir some 6,000 feet beneath Eugene Island 330 [not actually an island, but a patch of sea floor in the

Gulf of Mexico] is one of the world's most productive oil sources ... Eugene Island 330 is remarkable for another reason: it's estimated reserves have declined much less than experts had predicted on the basis of its production rate. "It could be," Dr. Whelan said, "that at some sites, particularly where there is a lot of faulting in the rock, a reservoir from which oil is being pumped might be a steady-state system -- one that is replenished by deeper reserves as fast as oil is pumped out" ... The discovery that oil seepage is continuous and extensive from many ocean vents lying above fault zones has convinced many scientists that oil is making its way up through the faults from much deeper deposits

...

A recent report from the Department of Energy Task Force on Strategic Energy Research and Development concluded from the Woods Hole project that "there new data and interpretations strongly suggest that the oil and gas in the Eugene Island field could be treated as a steady-state rather than a fixed resource." The report added, "Preliminary analysis also suggest that similar phenomena may be taking place in other producing areas, including the deep-water Gulf of Mexico and the Alaskan North Slope" ... There is much evidence that deep reserves of hydrocarbon fuels remain to be tapped.

This compelling article raised a number of questions, including: how did all those piles of dinosaur carcasses end up thousands of feet beneath the earth's surface? How do finite reservoirs of dinosaur goo become "steady-state" resources? And how does the fossil fuel theory explain the continuous, spontaneous venting of gas and oil?

The Eugene Island story was revisited by the media three-and-a-half years later, by the Wall Street Journal (Christopher Cooper "Odd Reservoir Off Louisiana Prods Oil Experts to Seek a Deeper Meaning," Wall Street Journal, April 16, 1999). (<http://www.oralchelation.com/faq/wsj4.htm>) Something mysterious is going on at Eugene Island 330. Production at the oil field, deep in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana, was supposed to have declined years ago. And for a while, it behaved like any normal field: Following its 1973 discovery, Eugene Island 330's output peaked at about 15,000 barrels a day. By 1989, production had slowed to about 4,000 barrels a day. Then suddenly -- some say almost inexplicably -- Eugene Island's fortunes reversed. The field, operated by PennzEnergy Co., is now producing 13,000 barrels a day, and probable reserves have rocketed to more than 400 million barrels from 60 million. Stranger still, scientists studying the field say the crude coming out of the pipe is of a geological age quite different from the oil that gushed 10 years ago. All of which has led some scientists to a radical theory: Eugene Island is rapidly refilling itself, perhaps from some continuous source miles below the Earth's surface. That, they say, raises the tantalizing possibility that oil may not be the limited resource it is assumed to be.

... Jean Whelan, a geochemist and senior researcher from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts ... says, "I believe there is a huge system of oil just migrating" deep underground. ... About 80 miles off the Louisiana coast, the underwater landscape surrounding Eugene Island is otherworldly, cut with deep fissures and faults that spontaneously belch gas and oil. So now we are talking about a huge system of migrating dinosaur goo that is miles beneath the Earth's surface! Those dinosaurs were rather crafty, weren't they? Exactly three years later (to the day), the media once again paid a visit to the Gulf of Mexico. This time, it was Newsday that filed the report (Robert Cooke "Oil Field's Free Refill," Newsday, April 19, 2002). (<http://csf.colorado.edu/forums/pkt/2002II/msg00071.html>) Deep underwater, and deeper underground, scientists see surprising hints that gas and oil deposits can be replenished, filling up again, sometimes rapidly. Although it sounds too good to be true, increasing evidence from the Gulf of Mexico suggests that some old oil fields are being refilled by petroleum surging up from deep below, scientists report.

That may mean that current estimates of oil and gas abundance are far too low. ... chemical oceanographer Mahlon "Chuck" Kennicutt [said] "They are refilling as we speak. But whether this is a worldwide phenomenon, we don't know" ... Kennicutt, a faculty member at Texas A&M University, said it is now clear that gas and oil are coming into the known reservoirs very rapidly in terms of geologic time. The inflow of new gas, and some oil, has been detectable in as little as three to 10 years. In the past, it was not suspected that oil fields can refill because it was assumed that oil was formed in place, or nearby, rather than far below. According to marine geologist Harry Roberts, at Louisiana State University ... "You have a very leaky fault system that does allow it (petroleum) to migrate in. It's directly connected to an oil and gas generating system at great depth." ... "There already appears to be a large body of evidence consistent with ... oil and gas generation and migration on very short time scales in many areas globally" [Jean Whelan] wrote in the journal Sea Technology ... Analysis of the ancient oil that seems to be coming up from deep below in the Gulf of Mexico suggests that the flow of new oil "is coming from deeper, hotter [sediment] formations" and is not

simply a lateral inflow from the old deposits that surround existing oil fields, [Whelan] said. Now I'm really starting to get confused. Can someone please walk me through this? What exactly is an "oil and gas generating system"? And how does such a system generate oil "on very short time scales"? Is someone down there right now, even as I type these words, forklifting dinosaur carcasses into some gigantic cauldron to cook up a fresh batch of oil?

Desperate for answers to such perplexing questions, I turned for advice to Mr. Peak Oil himself, Michael Ruppert, and this is what I found: "oil ... is the result of climactic conditions that have existed at only one time in the earth's 4.5 billion year history." I'm guessing that that "one time" - that one golden window of opportunity to get just the right mix of dinosaur stew - isn't the present time, so it doesn't seem quite right, to me at least, that oil is being generated right now.

In June 2003, Geotimes paid a visit to the Gulf of Mexico ("Raining Hydrocarbons in the Gulf"), and the story grew yet more compelling. (http://www.geotimes.org/june03/NN_gulf.html) Below the Gulf of Mexico, hydrocarbons flow upward through an intricate network of conduits and reservoirs ... and this is all happening now, not millions and millions of years ago, says Larry Cathles, a chemical geologist at Cornell University. "We're dealing with this giant flow-through system where the hydrocarbons are generating now, moving through the overlying strata now, building the reservoirs now and spilling out into the ocean now," Cathles says. ... Cathles and his team estimate that in a study area of about 9,600 square miles off the coast of Louisiana [including Eugene Island 330], source rocks a dozen kilometers [roughly seven miles] down have generated as much as 184 billion tons of oil and gas -- about 1,000 billion barrels of oil and gas equivalent. "That's 30 percent more than we humans have consumed over the entire petroleum era," Cathles say. "And that's just this one little postage stamp area; if this is going on worldwide, then there's a lot of hydrocarbons venting out."

Dry oil wells spontaneously refilling? Oil generation and migration systems? Massive oil reserves miles beneath the earth's surface? Spontaneous venting of enormous volumes of gas and oil? (Roberts noted that - and this isn't really going to please the environmentalists, but I'm just reporting the facts, ma'am - "natural seepage" in areas like the Gulf of Mexico "far exceeds anything that gets spilled" by the oil industry. And those natural emissions have been pumped into our oceans since long before there was an oil industry.)

The all too obvious question here is: how is any of that explained by a theory that holds that oil and gas are 'fossil fuels' created in finite quantities through a unique geological process that occurred millions of years ago?

Why do we insist on retaining an antiquated theory that is so obviously contradicted by readily observable phenomena? Is the advancement of the sciences not based on formulating a hypothesis, and then testing that hypothesis? And if the hypothesis fails to account for the available data, is it not customary to either modify that hypothesis or formulate a new hypothesis -- rather than, say, clinging to the same discredited hypothesis for 250 years?

In August 2002, the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences published a study authored by J.F. Kenney, V.A. Kutchenov, N.A. Bendeliani and V.A. Alekseev. The authors argued, quite compellingly, that oil is not created from organic compounds at the temperatures and pressures found close to the surface of the earth, but rather is created from inorganic compounds at the extreme temperatures and pressures present only near the core of the earth. (<http://www.gasresources.net/index.htm>)

As Geotimes noted ("Inorganic Origin of Oil: Much Ado About Nothing?," Geotimes, November 2002), the journal "published the paper at the request of Academy member Howard Reiss, a chemical physicist at the University of California at Los Angeles. As per the PNAS guidelines for members communicating papers, Reiss obtained reviews of the paper from at least two referees from different institutions (not affiliated with the authors) and shepherded the report through revisions." (http://www.geotimes.org/nov02/NN_oil.html)

I mention that because I happened to read something that Michael Ruppert wrote recently that seems pertinent: "In real life, it is called 'the proof is in the pudding.' In scientific circles, it is called peer review, and it usually involves having your research published in a peer-reviewed journal. It is an often-frustrating process, but peer-reviewed articles ensure the validity of science."

(http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/052703_9_questions.html)

It would seem then that we can safely conclude that what Kenney, et. al. have presented is valid science, since

it definitely was published in a peer-reviewed journal. And what that valid science says, quite clearly, is that petroleum is not by any stretch of the imagination a finite resource, or a 'fossil fuel,' but is in fact a resource that is continuously generated by natural processes deep within the planet.

Geotimes also noted that the research paper "examined thermodynamic arguments that say methane is the only organic hydrocarbon to exist within Earth's crust." Indeed, utilizing the laws of modern thermodynamics, the authors constructed a mathematical model that proves that oil can not form under the conditions dictated by the 'fossil fuel' theory.

I mention that because of something else I read on Ruppert's site. Listed as #5 of "Nine Critical Questions to Ask About Alternative Energy" is: "Most of the other questions in this list can be tied up into this one question: does the invention defy the Laws of Thermodynamics? If the answer is yes, then something is wrong." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/052703_9_questions.html)

Well then, Mr. Ruppert, I have some very bad news for you, because something definitely is wrong -- with your 'Peak Oil' theory. Because here we have a published study, subjected to peer review (thus assuring the "validity" of the study), that demonstrates, with mathematical certainty, that it is actually the 'fossil fuel' theory that defies the laws of thermodynamics. It appears then that if we follow Ruppert's Laws, we have to rule out fossil fuels as a viable alternative to petroleum.

Reaction to the publication of the Kenney study was swift. First to weigh in was Nature (Tom Clarke "Fossil Fuels Without the Fossils: Petroleum: Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?," Nature News Service, August 14, 2002). Petroleum - the archetypal fossil fuel - couldn't have formed from the remains of dead animals and plants, claim US and Russian researchers. They argue that petroleum originated from minerals at extreme temperatures and pressures. Other geochemists say that the work resurrects a scientific debate that is almost a fossil itself, and criticize the team's conclusions. The team, led by J.F. Kenney of the Gas Resources Corporation in Houston, Texas, mimicked conditions more than 100 kilometres below the earth's surface by heating marble, iron oxide and water to around 1500° C and 50,000 times atmospheric pressure. They produced traces of methane, the main constituent of natural gas, and octane, the hydrocarbon molecule that makes petrol. A mathematical model of the process suggests that, apart from methane, none of the ingredients of petroleum could form at depths less than 100 kilometres.

The geochemist community, and the petroleum industry, were both suitably outraged by the publication of the study. The usual parade of experts was trotted out, of course, but a funny thing happened: as much as they obviously wanted to, those experts were unable to deny the validity of the research. So they resorted to a very unusual tactic: they reluctantly acknowledged that oil can indeed be created from minerals, but they insisted that that inconvenient fact really has nothing to do with the oil that we use. Showing that oil can also form without a biological origin does not disprove [the 'fossil fuel'] hypothesis. "It doesn't discredit anything," said a geochemist who asked not to be named. ... "No one disputes that hydrocarbons can form this way," says Mark McCaffrey, a geochemist with Oil Tracers LLC, a petroleum-prospecting consultancy in Dallas, Texas. A tiny percentage of natural oil deposits are known to be non-biological, but this doesn't mean that petrol isn't a fossil fuel, he says. "I don't know anyone in the petroleum community who really takes this prospect seriously," says Walter Michaelis, a geochemist at the University of Hamburg in Germany. So I guess the geochemist community is a petulant lot. They did "concede," however, that oil "that forms inorganically at the high temperatures and massive pressures close to the Earth's mantle layer could be forced upwards towards the surface by water, which is denser than oil. It can then be trapped by sedimentary rocks that are impermeable to oil."

What they were acknowledging, lest anyone misunderstand, is that the oil that we pump out of reservoirs near the surface of the earth, and the oil that is spontaneously and continuously generated deep within the earth, could very well be the same oil. But even so, they insist, that is certainly no reason to abandon, or even question, our perfectly ridiculous 'fossil fuel' theory.

Coverage by New Scientist of the 'controversial' journal publication largely mirrored the coverage by Nature (Jeff Hecht "You Can Squeeze Oil Out of a Stone," New Scientist, August 17, 2002). Oil doesn't come from dead plants and animals, but from plain old rock, a controversial new study claims. The heat and pressure a hundred kilometres underground produces hydrocarbons from inorganic carbon and water, says J.F. Kenney, who runs the Gas Resources Corporation, an oil exploration firm in Houston. He and three Russian colleagues believe all our oil is made this way, and untapped supplies are there for the taking. Petroleum geologists

already accept that some oil forms like this. "Nobody ever argued that there are no inorganic sources," says Mike Lewan of the US Geological Survey. But they take strong issue with Kenney's claim that petroleum can't form from organic matter in shallow rocks. Geotimes chimed in as well, quoting Scott Imbus, an organic geochemist for Chevron Texaco Corp., who explained that the Kenney research is "an excellent and rigorous treatment of the theoretical and experimental aspects for abiogenic hydrocarbon formation deep in the Earth. Unfortunately, it has little or nothing to do with the origins of commercial fossil fuel deposits."

What we have here, quite clearly, is a situation wherein the West's leading geochemists (read: shills for the petroleum industry) cannot impugn the validity of Kenney's unassailable mathematical model, and so they have, remarkably enough, adopted the unusual strategy of claiming that there is actually more than one way to produce oil. It can be created under extremely high temperatures and pressures, or it can be created under relatively low temperatures and pressures. It can be created organically, or it can be created inorganically. It can be created deep within the Earth, or it can be created near the surface of the Earth. You can make it with some rocks. Or you can make it in a box. You can make it here or there. You can make it anywhere.

While obviously an absurdly desperate attempt to salvage the 'fossil fuel' theory, the arguments being offered by the geochemist community actually serve to further undermine the notion that oil is an irreplaceable 'fossil fuel.' For if we are now to believe that petroleum can be created under a wide range of conditions (a temperature range, for example, of 75° C to 1500° C), does that not cast serious doubt on the claim that conditions favored the creation of oil just "one time in the earth's 4.5 billion year history"?

A more accurate review of Kenney's work appeared in The Economist ("The Argument Needs Oiling," The Economist, August 15, 2002). Millions of years ago, tiny animals and plants died. They settled at the bottom of the oceans. Over time, they were crushed beneath layers of sediment that built up above them and eventually turned into rock. The organic matter, now trapped hundreds of metres below the surface, started to change. Under the action of gentle heat and pressure, and in the absence of air, the biological debris turned into oil and gas. Or so the story goes. In 1951, however, a group of Soviet scientists led by Nikolai Kudryavtsev claimed that this theory of oil production was fiction. They suggested that hydrocarbons, the principal molecular constituents of oil, are generated deep within the earth from inorganic materials. Few people outside Russia listened. But one who did was J. F. Kenney, an American who today works for the Russian Academy of Sciences and is also chief executive of Gas Resources Corporation in Houston, Texas. He says it is nonsense to believe that oil derives from "squashed fish and putrefied cabbages."

This is a brave claim to make when the overwhelming majority of petroleum geologists subscribe to the biological theory of origin. But Dr Kenney has evidence to support his argument. In this week's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, he claims to establish that it is energetically impossible for alkanes, one of the main types of hydrocarbon molecule in crude oil, to evolve from biological precursors at the depths where reservoirs have typically been found and plundered. He has developed a mathematical model incorporating quantum mechanics, statistics and thermodynamics which predicts the behaviour of a hydrocarbon system. The complex mixture of straight-chain and branched alkane molecules found in crude oil could, according to his calculations, have come into existence only at extremely high temperatures and pressures—far higher than those found in the earth's crust, where the orthodox theory claims they are formed. To back up this idea, he has shown that a cocktail of alkanes (methane, hexane, octane and so on) similar to that in natural oil is produced when a mixture of calcium carbonate, water and iron oxide is heated to 1,500° C and crushed with the weight of 50,000 atmospheres. This experiment reproduces the conditions in the earth's upper mantle, 100 km below the surface, and so suggests that oil could be produced there from completely inorganic sources. Kenney's theories, when discussed at all, are universally described as "new," "radical," and "controversial." In truth, however, Kenney's ideas are not new, nor original, nor radical. Though no one other than Kenney himself seems to want to talk about it, the arguments that he presented in the PNAS study are really just the tip of a very large iceberg of suppressed scientific research.

This story really begins in 1946, just after the close of World War II, which had illustrated quite effectively that oil was integral to waging modern, mechanized warfare. Stalin, recognizing the importance of oil, and recognizing also that the Soviet Union would have to be self sufficient, launched a massive scientific undertaking that has been compared, in its scale, to the Manhattan Project. The goal of the Soviet project was to study every aspect of petroleum, including how it is created, how reserves are generated, and how to best pursue petroleum exploration and extraction.

The challenge was taken up by a wide range of scientific disciplines, with hundreds of the top professionals in their fields contributing to the body of scientific research. By 1951, what has been called the Modern Russian-Ukrainian Theory of Deep, Abiotic Petroleum Origins was born. A healthy amount of scientific debate followed for the next couple of decades, during which time the theory, initially formulated by geologists, based on observational data, was validated through the rigorous quantitative work of chemists, physicists and thermodynamicists. For the last couple of decades, the theory has been accepted as established fact by virtually the entire scientific community of the (former) Soviet Union. It is backed up by literally thousands of published studies in prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals.

For over fifty years, Russian and Ukrainian scientists have added to this body of research and refined the Russian-Ukrainian theories. And for over fifty years, not a word of it has been published in the English language (except for a fairly recent, bastardized version published by astronomer Thomas Gold, who somehow forgot to credit the hundreds of scientists whose research he stole and then misrepresented).

This is not, by the way, just a theoretical model that the Russians and Ukrainians have established; the theories were put to practical use, resulting in the transformation of the Soviet Union - once regarded as having limited prospects, at best, for successful petroleum exploration - into a world-class petroleum producing, and exporting, nation.

J.F. Kenney spent some 15 years studying under some of the Russian and Ukrainian scientists who were key contributors to the modern petroleum theory. When Kenney speaks about petroleum origins, he is not speaking as some renegade scientist with a radical new theory; he is speaking to give voice to an entire community of scientists whose work has never been acknowledged in the West. Kenney writes passionately about that neglected body of research: The modern Russian-Ukrainian theory of deep, abiotic petroleum origins is not new or recent. This theory was first enunciated by Professor Nikolai Kudryavtsev in 1951, almost a half century ago, (Kudryavtsev 1951) and has undergone extensive development, refinement, and application since its introduction. There have been more than four thousand articles published in the Soviet scientific journals, and many books, dealing with the modern theory. This writer is presently co-authoring a book upon the subject of the development and applications of the modern theory of petroleum for which the bibliography requires more than thirty pages. The modern Russian-Ukrainian theory of deep, abiotic petroleum origins is not the work of any one single man -- nor of a few men. The modern theory was developed by hundreds of scientists in the (now former) U.S.S.R., including many of the finest geologists, geochemists, geophysicists, and thermodynamicists of that country. There have now been more than two generations of geologists, geophysicists, chemists, and other scientists in the U.S.S.R. who have worked upon and contributed to the development of the modern theory. (Kropotkin 1956; Anisimov, Vasilyev et al. 1959; Kudryavtsev 1959; Porfir'yev 1959; Kudryavtsev 1963; Raznitsyn 1963; Krayushkin 1965; Markevich 1966; Dolenko 1968; Dolenko 1971; Linetskii 1974; Letnikov, Karpov et al. 1977; Porfir'yev and Klochko 1981; Krayushkin 1984)

The modern Russian-Ukrainian theory of deep, abiotic petroleum origins is not untested or speculative. On the contrary, the modern theory was severely challenged by many traditionally-minded geologists at the time of its introduction; and during the first decade thereafter, the modern theory was thoroughly examined, extensively reviewed, powerfully debated, and rigorously tested. Every year following 1951, there were important scientific conferences organized in the U.S.S.R. to debate and evaluate the modern theory, its development, and its predictions. The All-Union conferences in petroleum and petroleum geology in the years 1952-1964/5 dealt particularly with this subject. (During the period when the modern theory was being subjected to extensive critical challenge and testing, a number of the men pointed out that there had never been any similar critical review or testing of the traditional hypothesis that petroleum might somehow have evolved spontaneously from biological detritus.) The modern Russian-Ukrainian theory of deep, abiotic petroleum origins is not a vague, qualitative hypothesis, but stands as a rigorous analytic theory within the mainstream of the modern physical sciences. In this respect, the modern theory differs fundamentally not only from the previous hypothesis of a biological origin of petroleum but also from all traditional geological hypotheses. Since the nineteenth century, knowledgeable physicists, chemists, thermodynamicists, and chemical engineers have regarded with grave reservations (if not outright disdain) the suggestion that highly reduced hydrocarbon molecules of high free enthalpy (the constituents of crude oil) might somehow evolve spontaneously from highly oxidized biogenic molecules of low free enthalpy.

Beginning in 1964, Soviet scientists carried out extensive theoretical statistical thermodynamic analysis which established explicitly that the hypothesis of evolution of hydrocarbon molecules (except methane) from biogenic ones in the temperature and pressure regime of the Earth's near-surface crust was glaringly in

violation of the second law of thermodynamics. They also determined that the evolution of reduced hydrocarbon molecules requires pressures of magnitudes encountered at depths equal to such of the mantle of the Earth. During the second phase of its development, the modern theory of petroleum was entirely recast from a qualitative argument based upon a synthesis of many qualitative facts into a quantitative argument based upon the analytical arguments of quantum statistical mechanics and thermodynamic stability theory. (Chekaliuk 1967; Boiko 1968; Chekaliuk 1971; Chekaliuk and Kenney 1991; Kenney 1995) With the transformation of the modern theory from a synthetic geology theory arguing by persuasion into an analytical physical theory arguing by compulsion, petroleum geology entered the mainstream of modern science. The modern Russian-Ukrainian theory of deep, abiotic petroleum origins is not controversial nor presently a matter of academic debate. The period of debate about this extensive body of knowledge has been over for approximately two decades (Simakov 1986). The modern theory is presently applied extensively throughout the former U.S.S.R. as the guiding perspective for petroleum exploration and development projects.

There are presently more than 80 oil and gas fields in the Caspian district alone which were explored and developed by applying the perspective of the modern theory and which produce from the crystalline basement rock. (Krayushkin, Chebanenko et al. 1994) Similarly, such exploration in the western Siberia cratonic-rift sedimentary basin has developed 90 petroleum fields of which 80 produce either partly or entirely from the crystalline basement. The exploration and discoveries of the 11 major and 1 giant fields on the northern flank of the Dneiper-Donets basin have already been noted. There are presently deep drilling exploration projects under way in Azerbaijan, Tatarstan, and Asian Siberia directed to testing potential oil and gas reservoirs in the crystalline basement. (<http://www.gasresources.net/index.htm>) It appears that, unbeknownst to Westerners, there have actually been, for quite some time now, two competing theories concerning the origins of petroleum. One theory claims that oil is an organic 'fossil fuel' deposited in finite quantities near the planet's surface. The other theory claims that oil is continuously generated by natural processes in the Earth's magma. One theory is backed by a massive body of research representing fifty years of intense scientific inquiry. The other theory is an unproven relic of the eighteenth century. One theory anticipates deep oil reserves, refillable oil fields, migratory oil systems, deep sources of generation, and the spontaneous venting of gas and oil. The other theory has a difficult time explaining any such documented phenomena.

So which theory have we in the West, in our infinite wisdom, chosen to embrace? Why, the fundamentally absurd 'Fossil Fuel' theory, of course -- the same theory that the 'Peak Oil' doomsday warnings are based on.

I am sorry to report here, by the way, that in doing my homework, I never did come across any of that "hard science" documenting 'Peak Oil' that Mr. Strahl referred to. All the 'Peak Oil' literature that I found, on Ruppert's site and elsewhere, took for granted that petroleum is a non-renewable 'fossil fuel.' That theory is never questioned, nor is any effort made to validate it. It is simply taken to be an established scientific fact, which it quite obviously is not.

So what do Ruppert and his resident experts have to say about all of this? Dale Allen Pfeiffer, identified as the "FTW Contributing Editor for Energy," has written: "There is some speculation that oil is abiotic in origin -- generally asserting that oil is formed from magma instead of an organic origin. These ideas are really groundless." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/04_04_02_oil_recession.html)

Here is a question that I have for both Mr. Ruppert and Mr. Pfeiffer: Do you consider it honest, responsible journalism to dismiss a fifty year body of multi-disciplinary scientific research, conducted by hundreds of the world's most gifted scientists, as "some speculation"?

Another of FTW's prognosticators, Colin Campbell, is described by Ruppert as "perhaps the world's foremost expert on oil." He was asked by Ruppert, in an interview, "what would you say to the people who insist that oil is created from magma ...?" Before we get to Campbell's answer, we should first take note of the tone of Ruppert's question. It is not really meant as a question at all, but rather as a statement, as in "there is really nothing you can say that will satisfy these nutcases who insist on bringing up these loony theories." (http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/102302_campbell.html)

Campbell's response to the question was an interesting one: "No one in the industry gives the slightest credence to these theories." Why, one wonders, did Mr. Campbell choose to answer the question on behalf of the petroleum industry? And does it come as a surprise to anyone that the petroleum industry doesn't want to acknowledge abiotic theories of petroleum origins? Should we have instead expected something along these

lines?:

"Hey, everybody ... uh... you know how we always talked about oil being a fossil fuel? And ... uhmm ... you know how the entire profit structure of our little industry here is built upon the presumption that oil is a non-renewable, and therefore very valuable, resource*? And remember all those times we talked about shortages so that we could gouge you at the pumps? Well ... guess what, America? You've been Punk'd!"

For the sake of accuracy, I think we need to modify Mr. Campbell's response, because it should probably read: no one in the petroleum industry will publicly admit giving any credence to abiotic theories. But is there really any doubt that those who own and control the oil industry are well aware of the true origins of oil? How could they not be?

Surely there must be a reason why there appears to be so little interest in understanding the nature and origins of such a valuable, and allegedly vanishing, resource. And that reason can only be that the answers are already known. The objective, of course, is to ensure that the rest of us don't find those answers. Why else would we be encouraged, for decades, to cling tenaciously to a scientific theory that can't begin to explain the available scientific evidence? And why else would a half-century of research never see the light of day in Western scientific and academic circles?

Maintaining the myth of scarcity, you see, is all important. Without it, the house of cards comes tumbling down. And yet, even while striving to preserve that myth, the petroleum industry will continue to provide the oil and gas needed to maintain a modern industrial infrastructure, long past the time when we should have run out of oil. And needless to say, the petroleum industry will also continue to reap the enormous profits that come with the myth of scarcity.

How will that difficult balancing act be performed? That is where, it appears, the 'limited hangout' concerning abiotic oil will come into play.

Perhaps the most telling quote to emerge from all of this came from Roger Sassen, identified as the deputy director of Resource Geosciences, a research group out of Texas A&M University: "The potential that inorganic hydrocarbons, especially methane and a few other gasses, might exist at enormous depth in the crust is an idea that could use a little more discussion. However, not from people who take theories to the point of absurdity. This is an idea that needs to be looked into at some point as we start running out of energy. But no one who is objective discusses the issue at this time."

The key point there (aside from Sassen's malicious characterization of Kenney) is his assertion that no one is discussing abiotic oil at this time. And why is that? Because, you see, we first have to go through the charade of pretending that the world has just about run out of 'conventional' oil reserves, thus justifying massive price hikes, which will further pad the already obscenely high profits of the oil industry. Only then will it be fully acknowledged that there is, you know, that 'other' oil.

"We seem to have plum run out of that fossil fuel that y'all liked so much, but if you want us to, we could probably find you some mighty fine inorganic stuff. You probably won't even notice the difference. The only reason that we didn't mention it before is that - and may God strike me dead if I'm lying - it is a lot more work for us to get to it. So after we charged you up the wazoo for the 'last' of the 'conventional' oil, we're now gonna have to charge you even more for this really 'special' oil. And with any luck at all, none of you will catch on that it's really the same oil."

And that, dear readers, is how I see this little game playing out. Will you be playing along?

A few final comments are in order here about 'Peak Oil' and the attacks of September 11, 2001, which Ruppert has repeatedly claimed are closely linked. In a recent posting, he bemoaned the fact that activists are willing to "Do anything but accept the obvious reality that for the US government to have facilitated and orchestrated the attacks of 9/11, something really, really bad must be going on." That something really, really bad, of course, is 'Peak Oil.'

(http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/013004_in_your_face.html)

To demonstrate the dubious nature of that statement, all one need do is make a couple of quick substitutions, so that it reads: "for the German government to have facilitated and orchestrated the attack on the Reichstag,

something really, really bad must have been going on." Or, if you are the type that bristles at comparisons of Bush to Hitler, try this one: "for the US government to have facilitated and orchestrated the attack on the USS Maine, something really, really bad must have been going on."

The reality is that the attacks of September 11, and the post-September 11 military ventures, cannot possibly be manifestations of 'Peak Oil' because the entire concept of 'Peak Oil' is meaningless if oil is not a finite resource. I am not saying, however, that oil and gas were not key factors behind the military occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. The distinction that I am making is that it is not about need (case in point: there is certainly nothing in Haiti that we need). It is, as always, about greed. Greed and control -- control of the output of oil fields that will continue to yield oil long after reserves should have run dry.

One final note, this one directed at Michael Ruppert: I of course accept your challenge to participate in a public debate. However, I fail to see any benefit in limiting the audience of that debate to a "mutually acceptable panel of judges." I suggest we make this a truly public debate, available to anyone who wants to follow along. The debate, in other words, has already begun. Consider this my opening argument.

By the way, this isn't about 'winning,' and it isn't about a 'purse.' It's about the free and open exchange of ideas and information. It's about the pursuit of the truth, wherever that path may lead. And it's about presenting all the available information to readers, so that each of them can determine, for themselves, where that truth lies. To demonstrate my commitment to those goals, I will gladly post, exactly as it is received, any response/rebuttal to this missive that you should feel inclined to send my way. I will leave it to my readers to decide who 'wins' this debate. Will you be extending the same courtesy to your readers?

* There is a close parallel here with the diamond industry. It is a relatively open secret that the diamond market is an artificial one, created by an illusion of scarcity actively cultivated by DeBeers, which has monopolized the diamond industry for generations. As Ernest Oppenheimer of DeBeers said, nearly a century ago, "Common sense tells us that the only way to increase the value of diamonds is to make them scarce -- that is, reduce production." And that is exactly what the company has done for decades now.

There are reportedly nearly one billion diamonds produced every year, and that is only a fraction of what could be produced. Diamonds are not, conventional wisdom to the contrary, a scarce resource, and they are therefore not intrinsically valuable. Without the market manipulation, experts estimate that the true value of diamonds would be roughly \$30 per carat.

Interestingly enough, Soviet researchers have noted that diamonds are the result of the same processes that create petroleum: "Statistical thermodynamic analysis has established clearly that hydrocarbon molecules which comprise petroleum require very high pressures for their spontaneous formation, comparable to the pressures required for the same of diamond. In that sense, hydrocarbon molecules are the high-pressure polymorphs of the reduced carbon system as is diamond of elemental carbon." (Emmanuil B. Chekaliuk, 1968)

So what we appear to have here are two resources, both of which are created in abundance by natural geothermal processes, and both of which are marketed as scarce and valuable commodities, creating two industries awash in obscene profits. [back]

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