

The Wall Street Journal spells it out: Turkey could lose “oil spoils” of war

Henry Michaels
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For all the denials in Washington and the corporate media, the looming invasion of Iraq is all about oil and strategic control over the Middle East and the wider Central Asian region. The *Wall Street Journal*, the voice of American big business, declared as much in its March 4 editorial denouncing the vote by the Turkish parliament to reject the use of the country as a staging post for the US operation.

The editorial bemoaned the failure of Turkey’s political and military leaders to “shape public opinion” to recognize the alleged benefits of supporting the US takeover of Iraq. It summarized the benefits as follows:

“The badly needed cash (and US goodwill) aside, Turkey would benefit as much as any nation from a neighboring Iraq that was free of both a dictator and UN sanctions. Turkey would also give itself a larger voice in postwar Iraq, especially in dealing with the Kurds. The Turkish military was demanding joint supervision of the disarmament of the Kurds after the war, for example, and for a buffer zone manned by Turkish troops in northern Iraq, presumably in order to limit the free passage of Kurds into southern Turkey. Now the US will have every right to ignore Turkish desires and work with Kurds militarily and politically after the war. And the Turks can forget about any postwar Iraqi oil spoils.”

In the most crass and brazen manner, the *Journal* has spelled out the criminal calculations that dominate the Bush administration and Wall Street: the looting of Iraq and the region of its “oil spoils,” the use of some of the spoils to pay off its accomplices, and the military suppression of the aspirations of the region’s people for liberation from national and economic oppression.

In return for joining the US attack, the Turkish military would be rewarded with control over Kurdish-populated northern Iraq, where a degree of autonomy

currently exists, and a cut of the oil proceeds.

As for the “badly needed cash,” it was to consist of \$6 billion in aid, followed by \$24 billion in credits, all on the condition that the Turkish government imposed the demands of the International Monetary Fund, strongly influenced by the US, for a privatization program and cuts in its national budget. These measures would of course require further devastating cuts to jobs and social programs in a country where most people live in cruel poverty, with an average monthly income for a worker of less than 150 euros.



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