



Does the United States still have the same level of control over the energy resources of the Middle East as it once had?

Noam Chomsky: The major energy-producing countries are still firmly under the control of the western-backed dictatorships. So, actually, the progress made by the Arab spring is limited, but it's not insignificant. The western-controlled dictatorial system is being eroded. In fact, it's been being eroded for some time. So, for example, if you go back 50 years, the energy resources – the main concern of US planners – have been mostly nationalised. There are constantly attempts to reverse that, but they have not succeeded.

Take the US invasion of Iraq, for example. To everyone except a dedicated ideologue, it was pretty obvious that we invaded Iraq not because of our love of democracy but because it's maybe the second- or third-largest source of oil in the world, and is right in the middle of the major energy-producing region. You're not supposed to say this. It's considered a conspiracy theory.

The United States was seriously defeated in Iraq by Iraqi nationalism – mostly by nonviolent resistance. The United States could kill the insurgents, but they couldn't deal with half a million people demonstrating in the streets. Step by step, Iraq was able to dismantle the controls put in place by the occupying forces. By November 2007, it was becoming pretty clear that it was going to be very hard to reach US goals.

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