

## Guest Commentary

# Geopolitics and our grimy future

By Ken Tyson

Few would doubt that the world is moving into a very crucial stage in terms of global politics. With the lifeline of western civilization running through the Persian Gulf, Western Europe, the U.S.S.R. and the United States as well as many third world nations face serious questions of national interests.

Furthermore, the stability of the international community is at stake. Recent events show us that the interactions of the balance of power have shifted to the strategically important grounds of the Middle East, i.e. Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Here the flexing of military muscles by the superpowers as well as the defiant opposition by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (in conjunction with the Muslim community) has made the Middle East a battleground of influence. We are no doubt heading into an age of ominous political tension.

One extremely important aspect of the politics of the Middle East lies in the theological conflict between Western civilization and the Muslim world. The stability of any government in the Middle East depends on its ability to develop a modern economy while simultaneously adhering to the social customs of the Koran.

According to *Fortune* magazine, the government of Saudi Arabia seems to have mastered this problem through development of a strong economy while enforcing the domestic customs of Islam with state law. However, even in Saudi Arabia the healing of the two conflicting forces is not complete. Contrary to many propaganda claims, the capture of the Grand Mosque was a completely internal affair undertaken by Islamic zealots who fear and hate the modernization trends of the Royal Family.

The Iranian revolution and the subsequent rule by the Ayatollah Khomeini is but another blatant manifestation of this motif. However, in Iran the importance of oil is less dominant than in other countries of the area simply because Iran supplies a significant yet smaller amount of crude. Here power politics is dominated not only by the thirst for oil, but also by Iran's recent flagrant defiance of international law through the capture of the fifty U.S. hostages.

The most severe implications of this move are twofold. First, the entire security of global diplomatic immunity has proven to be vulnerable. Second, it has further propagated instability in a part of the world where stability is essential.

Both of these implications have led to tricky military



problems for the United States. The U.S. has already drastically increased its presence in the area by sending the Mideast Task Force, the Midway Battle Group, and the Kitty Hawk Battle Group into the Persian Gulf. Yet this show of force does not necessarily carry with it a true threat. The few feasible bombing targets have been and are effectively protected by the lives of the hostages held in Tehran.

Moreover, the Pentagon's plans to create a quick strike force for use in the Middle East suffers from the same social and political ailments as the other military options. It is highly uncertain that such a force would be effective in securing the political sovereignty of the area.

In light of these strategic complexities, we must still consider the presence of a Soviet threat to the freedom of crude flow from the region. As brought out in an editorial in the March issue of *Oil and Gas Journal*, the Soviet bloc can no longer claim immunity from the woes of Middle Eastern oil. In fact, there are those who see the Soviet move into Afghanistan, defended as a purely political move under the Brezhnev doctrine, as a blatant grab for Middle Eastern oil guarantees.

In light of the severe military implications involved with Middle Eastern oil as well as the general instability of the area, many nations have developed

drastic domestic energy programs. Canada, for example, has already developed strong programs for the exploitation of its vast reserves of natural gas in the province of Alberta. However, political conflict between the liberals and the conservatives still inhibits the speedy recovery of these reserves.

Through changes in Middle Eastern economics, new fields in the North Sea are becoming economic. Norway has developed daring exploration and development techniques which will enable it to recover hydrocarbons from the North Sea at competitive prices.

Behind the Iron Curtain, the Soviets have developed an extensive drilling and production program to safeguard the bloc from the unstable Middle East. Interesting from an ideological perspective is the Soviet claim that they are free from capitalistic profiteering propensities. The Soviet Union makes a substantially higher average profit from oil production than do the U.S. oil companies. Yet the Soviet Union keeps a tight lid on this data.

The United States has undertaken several major trends in order to ease the tension over the world oil situation. Many important energy experts, however, see these moves by the government as much too weak in view of the urgency of the situation. William P. Tavoulareas, president of Mobile Corporation, strongly supports the

vigorous development of domestic crude reserves, nuclear power, and coal reserves, as well as unconventional sources such as solar, energy, geothermal energy, and synthetic fuels. Accordingly, this would greatly decrease the hawkish pressure in O.P.E.C.

Interestingly enough, the omnipresence of O.P.E.C. has had an important effect on America's economy and domestic lifestyle. President Carter, in what has been viewed as a campaign-year economic scapegoat search, has developed a "blame it all on O.P.E.C." attitude as an excuse for the upcoming recession and rampaging inflation. His mysteriously weak election year energy program shows very few signs of having a significant limiting affect on inflation.

On the other hand, the recent oil market glut will probably detain further O.P.E.C. price increases through the recession. Therefore, although the economy is not prospering, the serious economic threat forecasted by many will probably not materialize.

An essay in the March 3rd issue of *Time* magazine points out one possible benefit of the tight economic times; the rise of U.S. frugality. Frugality, coupled with shifts on our modes of transportation and ingenious modifications of our automated devices, could play a very important role in our survival in a resource short world.

## Club foots fancy-free

The Guilford College Track Club returned home last Wednesday night without fanfare for their efforts on the track and in the field at the first invitational meet of the season at Averett College.

The team was not dispirited, however, because the rag-tag team of five men and three women had finally been given a chance to prove themselves and collected a total of four first place finishes, one second, and one third, not a bad start for a club formed only this January.

In the women's division, Suzette Holbrook celebrated her twentieth birthday by running the first, and finest, race of her college career, capturing second in the 400m event. In the cool evening breeze, Kris Beeler turned in an excellent time of 6:42 for the 1600m run, beating out her challenger by a full thirty seconds. Trying a tough double, Beeler narrowly missed a third place finish in the 100m dash, racing only fifteen minutes after her victory in the mile-plus event.

Jean Geiger, coming off her solid performance a week ago in the 10 kilometer Natural Light Classic, brought back two first place finishes: one in the 5000m run and one in the discus, tossing the men's 2-kilo discus over sixty feet. The women took second place to Winston-Salem State overall, however, because

of a lack of depth. As Coach Freyberg later stated, "Had we had the depth to enter runners in the 200m and 800m events, I think the women would have won the meet."

The men fared a little less well, bringing back a total of four points and a fourth place finish overall. The 4 x 100 relay team, consisting of Mark Gaver, Rob Penney, Phil Wertz, and Jim Ramicone, turned in a disappointing performance, largely due to a poor start from the blocks.

The lead-off runner, Mark Gaver, was unable to get into position before the starter fired the gun from a point on the track at which he almost certainly could not have seen the Guilford lane. Frustrated in the relay, Gaver later sprang to a third place finish in the high jump, despite having to break his concentration repeatedly to help run the event.

Mark Little brought back the only first place finish for the men. Tossing the javelin into the twilight, after a two and one-half hour delay, Little outdistanced his nearest competitor by four feet with a throw of one hundred forty-two feet.

The Track Club looks forward now to the Smith Relays on April 12 and to helping run off and run in the 10 kilometer relay for Serendipity Weekend before exams disrupt the training schedule.



## REWARD

offered for anyone knowing the whereabouts of the missing Hobie Sailboat Print that was taken out of Boren Lounge on the afternoon of April 1st. The print contains 3 panes of glass, separating 2 layers of sand. The glass is framed in white pine. The print is extremely fragile and heavy, [approx. 20 lbs.] It took a semester to design, print, and fabricate the Hobie Sailboat Print. The elderly couple who bought the print would greatly appreciate the return of the print. All Calls Can Be Anonymous. Contact: Guilford College Security; 292-5511, ext. 127 OR Steve Hardy; 852-0227, 852-5064.

## CANCER CAN BE BEAT.

American Cancer Society

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## Mind Twisters



Answers to 31 & 32  
31. A backwards glance;  
32. Spaceship