

Summary: *Canada's Oil and Imperialism* by Howard Shaffer

In *Canada's Oil and Imperialism*, Howard Shaffer describes oil in its political context as “an instrument of control” (Shaffer, 7). Shaffer explores a brief history of the relationship between oil and imperialism, and makes the case that whichever state controls the most foreign oil has the most power. In this regard, Shaffer argues that Canada's significant oil reserves will determine an increasingly important role for Canada in the global quest for energy, and directly impact international dealings with Canada. Shaffer contends that if Alberta's oil sands can be developed, Canada will rival even Saudi Arabia as a major oil power. His primary argument is that this will directly affect Canada-U.S. relations, as Canada's oil may make it a vulnerable target for “those who want to fuel America's war machine” (Shaffer, 17). In support of this thesis, Shaffer points to the strict terms imposed on Canada by the International Energy Agency and North American Free Trade Agreement. Under these contracts, Canada is obligatorily tied to the U.S. in determining both its foreign policy and the use of Canadian oil.

The argument our group is making is that, in today's world, oil is the driving force behind imperialism. In *Canada's Oil and Imperialism*, Howard Shaffer bases his argument on this very contention, and explores the potential implications oil-driven imperialism may have for Canada – an oil-rich state. This article is extremely relevant to our topic, especially in its analysis of the United States as the “world superpower” bent on maintaining this status through the acquisition of oil. Though our project does not focus specifically on Canada's role in the global quest for oil, the points made in this article support our assertions that the U.S. is the most active and aggressive in the struggle for oil (and related political power), and resource-rich countries are unlikely to benefit from the imperial interests of the U.S.

Shaffer, Edward Harry. "Canadas Oil and Imperialism." *International Journal of Political Economy* 35.2 (2006): 54-71. *ABI/INFORM Global*. Web. 21 Mar. 2012.