

Des Moines Mutual Aid Monthly

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A Leak in the War Machine

Will the US's dwindling petroleum reserve outlast Iran?

BY COMRADE JORDAN

The United States and Israel are bombing the people of Iran in order to destroy their society, one which has effectively resisted imperial control of its economy and resources. The principal strategic leverage that Iran and allies have against US attacks is their ability to effectively halt crude oil exports in the Strait of Hormuz. Exports through the strait previously made up 20 million barrels per day (MB/D) or 20% of total global supply. The US is using up its strategic petroleum reserve to deflect Iran's response from its own economy.

Held in massive tanks under Louisiana, the US state's strategic petroleum reserve is a critical defense to protect its economy from oil supply shocks. Oil is energy and transportation, on which every major component of modern capitalist production is entirely reliant. The US has released crude from its reserve throughout its war on Iran to prevent shortages. The outcome of this war may

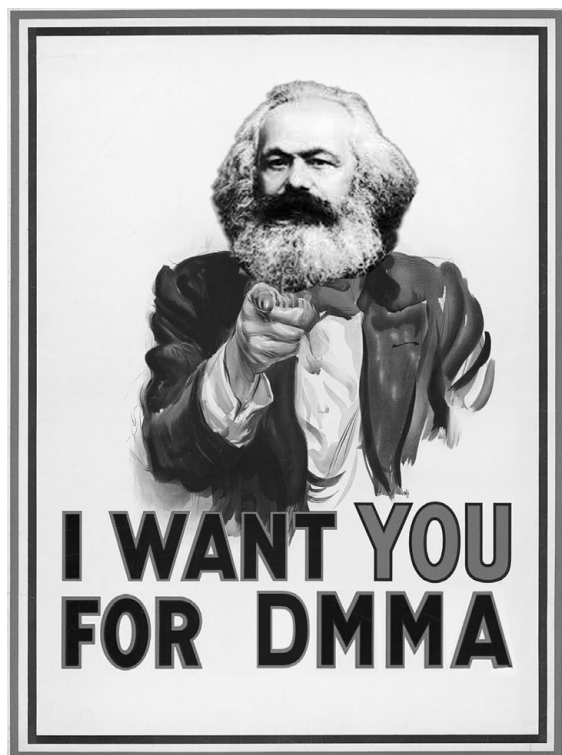
thus hinge upon which will hold out longer: Iran's hold of the Strait or the US's reserves maintaining the critical supply to its economy.

The 1.5 trillion dollar question is how long will the reserve last. The US is using up its reserve at about 30 million barrels (MB) per month and has about 315MB left, about 10-11 months' supply. There are many complicating factors, and most point to the reserve running out sooner. The recent Houthi embargo of the ab el-Mandeb Strait is estimated to halt an additional 5-7MB/D of shipping of global production. US and Venezuelan production have surged to near theoretical maximums of existing industry, but maintaining this degree of uptime is difficult and worsens as deferred maintenance accumulates. Although about 2MB/D is bypassing the straight of Hormuz in pipelines that previously had extra capacity, they are now maxed out. Finally, due to the speculative nature of major commodity pricing, the reassurance of the reserve is a major component in its power to stabilize prices. The reassurance will dry out before the tanks are empty.

China, the biggest oil importer in the world, has resumed much of its oil imports after idling much of its refining capacity in the early months of the war. Non-US western-aligned economies' combined reserves still hold about 680MB, but their collective production capacity is drastically lower than their consumption, leading to a much higher probability of shortages and rapid draw-downs. The greater volume does not represent a longer-lasting buffer due to the difference in production.

What can we do with this knowledge? The people of the US have no significant input on oil consumption or production. We do not have levers to help speed the emptying of the reserve. We should take the knowledge that a severe shortage is a real possibility within a year, and look for opportunities this will create. Should Iran hold out longer than the reserve, new choke points in the economy will appear, many needs of the people will no longer be met, and the supply chains of capitalist industry and the US state will be straining more than they have been in our lifetimes. We should prepare for this possibility. ■

We Want YOU to Join Des Moines Mutual Aid



...if you agree with our points of unity, are looking to be actively involved with your community, want to educate yourself and learn more about communist and anarchist political theory, and are a cool, friendly person.

Des Moines Mutual Aid's Points of Unity are as follows:

1. We believe in community autonomy. We believe that the communities we live and organize in have been largely excluded from state social services, but intensely surveilled and policed by the state repressive apparatus. Capitalism is fundamentally unable to meet people's needs. We want to build self-sustaining communities that are independent of the capitalist state, both materially and ideologically, and can resist its repression.
2. We are police and prison abolitionists. Abolition and the mutual aid that we practice are inextricably linked. We don't rely on capitalist institutions or the police to do our work. We believe in building strong and resilient communities which make police obsolete, including community systems of accountability and crisis intervention.
3. We work to raise the political consciousness of our communities. Part of political education is connecting people's lived experiences to a broader political perspective. Another component is working to ensure that people can

meet their basic needs. It is difficult to organize for future liberation when someone is entrenched in day-to-day struggle.

4. We have open disagreements with each other about ideas and practices. We believe there is no formula for resolving our ideological differences other than working towards our common aims, engaging with each other in a comradely manner, and respecting one another, whether or not we can hash out disagreements in the process.

5. We are a revolutionary organization. We are united in a basic agreement that the ultimate goal of revolution is the abolition of the state and of social classes, and that the state's institutions are not a means to achieving that end. We are against participation in electoral politics, because we are for the development of mutual aid as an alternative and widespread institution.



If you agree with these points of unity and are interested in joining, please reach out to us on instagram, or inquire via email at desmoinesmutualaid@protonmail.com. ■

Our Next Republican Governor



BY COMRADE PATRICK

While overshadowed by June’s Republican primary (a surprise upset victory for aspiring fascist and reverse carpetbagger Zach Lahn) the Democratic primary nevertheless yielded an important result: no matter who wins the general election in November, Iowa will have another Republican for governor.

Rob Sand shoots ducks with guns. Rob Sand drives a big truck, and wants you to know that. Rob Sand publicizes a list of his Republican supporters. He has adopted cultural signifiers of being a Republican, and wants you to believe that this is basically what he is. You should believe him. Hidden behind his unassuming, boyish facade, the push to make Sand our next governor has been orchestrated by a powerful right-wing family, the Lauridsens.

The Lauridsens own the creatively-named Lauridsen Group, an agribusiness conglomerate which started as a dairy company and ballooned into an umbrella corporation with an annual revenue of \$330 million. The man who oversaw this growth, Nixon Lauridsen, has personally donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Republican political candidates for as long as public donation records have been kept. Unlike most capitalists, who hedge their bets and donate to both parties, Lauridsen has exclusively given members of the Republican party, with one notable exception: Rob Sand.

Nixon’s daughter and scion of his corporate empire, Christine, married Sand in 2012. Six years later, Nixon vaulted his new son-in-law to major political office with over half a million dollars in contributions, an amount that represented the majority of total campaign contributions for both candidates in the race. Lauridsen bought the office of State Auditor for his son-in-law. Since then, Nixon and other members of the wealth-siphoning Lauridsen cabal have bankrolled Sand’s entire political career, most recently donating over \$12 million dollars in total for his gubernatorial run.

Sand is the only (ostensible) non-Republican the Lauridsens have backed since at least the 1990s. How

can we account for this? Was this right-wing pack of jackals simply charmed by Sand’s pubescent visage? Or is it more likely that these cold-blooded capitalist creeps are motivated by something other than familial affection?

The Lauridsens know exactly what they’re getting for their investment in Sand. He will no doubt return his in-laws’ generosity with favors and influence in his political program. Not content to support closet fascists, the Lauridsens’ section of the capitalist class has disgorged a significant part of its fortune into ensuring that the ‘Democratic’ alternative will be Republicans in all but name. Sand is ‘opposition’ to the state Republican machine which is controlled by the financiers of that same machine. His stated political positions reflect this: besides a few milquetoast gestures to liberal cultural issues (marijuana decriminalization, half-hearted support for women’s reproductive healthcare, gay—but not really tran—rights, etc.), Sand promises to govern as a moderate Republican, and one who notably refuses to denounce ICE.

It is a common (and correct) refrain on the left to complain that American government is dominated by two capitalist parties, that the Democrats and Republicans represent theatre which preserves unity of capitalist class rule rather than offer genuine political contestation. Rarely is it so literally true. This year, Iowans will not even be afforded the courtesy of two parties to vote for. Sand has Republican politics, tries to convince you that he is a Republican, and owes his entire political career to his rich Republican in-laws. The only option Iowans really have at the ballot box in November is vote for one of two Republicans promising to cut their public services in order to fund cops, ICE, and corporate giveaways for the next four years. ■

Letters from a Penpal in Anamosa State Penitentiary Regarding the Heat Emergency They are Facing

07/17/2026

A man named Buell died in my cellhouse last night with ruptured lungs. I don’t recall his first name, we weren’t close, but I knew him enough to talk to him. He was a very heavy person and had a lot of trouble walking due to barre syndrome. I spoke with him two days ago and he complained to me that he was too hot and couldn’t seem to cool down. His neighbors told me that he had been complaining to them that he was having trouble getting enough air, and they said he had begun sleeping with his head towards his bars in order to get enough air. I don’t know if he sought medical attention or not. I’m willing to bet that he had, but he had a fraught relationship with medical staff here. I’m not saying that anyone refused him help or denied him medical care, but this place has a history of engaging in what I would call ‘personality driven’ care: if they liked you, they treated you differently, etc.

The code went off around 11pm last night, and I heard people running. There is a guard here telling people that he died of heart failure (everyone, ultimately, dies of heart failure!), but witnesses say that he had blood erupting from his nose and mouth, and that when the officer who found him began chest compressions, blood exploded from his nose and mouth. The nurse on the scene said she thought he’d suffered a ruptured lung. Can struggling to breathe cause lung rupture? If he did have a heart condition, why were they keeping him in an overheated cell in an overheated cellhouse?

Even with this death last night there has been no action taken by the administration today to mitigate the deadly heat we’re living in. I know they can’t just snap their fingers and install air conditioning, but there are mitigation strategies they could deploy that would lessen the damage to our health and possibly prevent another death, but they’re taking no action. It’s business as usual. We have digital thermometers mounted in several places on the walls of the cellhouse, and it’s 88 degrees in the cellhouse right now at 11:47am; it hasn’t dropped below 80 degrees—day or night—for days, and the cells (which have no vents or ventilation of any kind in them), are at least 5 degrees hotter than the cellhouse.

How many more of us have to die?

I don’t know what can be done, but I’m begging you and anyone who’ll listen to start raising hell about this. We’re dying, finally we’re dying.

I’m sorry to send you something so dramatic and grim, but we’re out of options. Tell everyone.

Be well,
In Solidarity,
J.G.



7/21/2026

I emailed the following to the warden on 7/17: *“We’ve had 4 days of sustained nighttime temps of 80 degrees or higher, and have had one death in LUC where heat was a factor. What heat mitigation strategies can you deploy right now to prevent further death and injury? An immediate response is needed, but no staff has made any attempt to alleviate the problem. Please respond. Thank you.”*

On the same day, another prisoner from my cellhouse went to the infirmary with heat exhaustion, was kept there overnight, and given IV saline.

The warden responded on 7/18: *“We will continue to employ the fans to ensure as much air circulation as possible is maintained.”* By fans he means the four fans mounted to the walls of the cellhouse that point sideways at the walls themselves—not at the cells—which does nothing to cool the people living in the cells that are regularly 5-10 degrees hotter than the cellhouse.

As for now, the temperature has dropped and we’re supposed to stay relatively cool till Saturday. The administration probably considers the change in weather as an end to the argument, but I don’t. They could install portable air conditioning units. They could install condensers that remove the humidity and can cool massive amounts of air without refrigerant. They could add more fans to the unit (though at a certain point, when it’s really hot, they’re as useful as pointing a hair dryer at your face). These are just a few ideas I can think of as means to mitigate the heat problem, but I’m not an HVAC pro, so I’m sure there are solutions we haven’t thought of here.

We’re the first ones to starve,
We’re the first ones to die,
We’re the first ones in line for that pie in the sky,
And we’re always the last when the treasure’s shared out,
For the worker is working when the fat cat’s about.

In Solidarity,
J.G.