

Two OPEC nations raise oil prices 7%

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (UPI) — Abu Dhabi and Qatar raised oil prices up to 7 percent yesterday, and Iraq reportedly was considering even greater hikes, heralding a general increase by OPEC nations as a result of the crisis in Iran.

The 7 percent increase would be in addition to the total 1979 price hikes of 14.5 percent set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Iraq's price increase plans were not clear, but it appeared they would be far in excess of 7 percent, possibly 75 percent or higher.

Qatar and Abu Dhabi produce only about 6 percent of OPEC's oil, but energy experts in Washington said they expected their moves would trigger a general price hike among other members of the 13-nation cartel.

One U.S. official compared the situation to the steel industry, where one firm's price hike often is copied by all others if the market shows it will take the increase.

"The increase is to compensate partly for the huge differential between the OPEC price and the free market, where oil prices are now between \$6 and \$7 a barrel (higher)," the United Arab Emirates news agency said.

Last week the Emirates' oil minister charged Western companies were "overcharging" during the Iran crisis and said extra revenues generated by tight market conditions should go to the

producer nations, not the international oil companies.

The current OPEC price is \$13.40 per barrel, but prices as high as \$24.50 per barrel have been reported in some recent spot transactions — 83 percent above the cartel's nominal price level.

The effect of Abu Dhabi and Qatar's new price increases on U.S. gasoline prices could not immediately be calculated. Experts noted the "light crude" that flows from Abu Dhabi's wells is used to produce unleaded fuel.

Iraq's price-increase intentions were reported by oil industry sources in Tokyo, where representatives of the Iraq National Oil Co. reportedly suggested a complicated, three-tier price system that would bring oil prices up to the maximum now being charged in the open market.

Iraq, which reportedly made its proposal during a meeting with Japanese officials on 1979 trade between the two nations, said it would adhere to the OPEC price schedule for the first 4.2 million tons of oil sold to Japan this year.

For everything between 4.2 million and 5.07 million tons of oil shipped, OPEC's highest price — the Oct. 1 rate of \$14.54 per barrel, scheduled to take effect Oct. 1 — would prevail under the Iraqi arrangement.

For all oil sold beyond 5.07 million tons, spot market prices — significantly higher than the OPEC rate at present — would be used, the Japanese sources said.

Abortion opponents, proponents assemble

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Groups on opposing sides of the abortion issue held what was described as a "productive and amicable" meeting yesterday in an effort to find a middle ground on the issues dividing them.

The participants, representing about 30 groups, agreed to hold future meetings and issued a statement calling for "expanded reproduction education by parents, schools, religious groups and other community organizations."

The private meeting avoided direct discussion of the abortion issue, concentrating instead on areas that promised hope of agreement. Included was the need for additional research in family planning and support for women who want to bear children.

The meeting was boycotted by some groups on both sides of the abortion issue, and the tentative agreements reached were thrown into doubt when anti-abortionists interrupted the news conference that followed.

Three young women representing anti-abortion groups stood behind the conference leaders to denounce the meeting. They displayed the aborted fetus of a baby girl.

However, the disruption was strongly

criticized by other anti-abortion groups.

"We are very much ashamed of any tactics that tend to disrupt this mutual respect we found together," said Elizabeth Moore of Feminists for Life.

Eleanor Smeal, of the sponsoring National Organization for Women, said the five-hour meeting was "productive and amicable."

Sean Downey, a leader of the effort for an anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution, said participants had "a great feeling that some accomplishments could be made at future meetings."

But Downey earlier conferred with the group that staged the protest and made it clear his anti-abortion position was unchanged.

Fay Wattleton, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said the meeting was called "to avoid the kind of polarization shown here."

Dr. Mildred Jefferson, president of the Right to Life Crusade, said the conference helped show both sides "we don't have horns and tails."

Smeal said another meeting was planned for April 19 "to continue the dialogue."

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