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**EDITORIAL—**

## **Oily Truth Emerging?**

What is there in Vietnam that is so valuable? Why do the leaders of our country ask us to spend so much blood and treasure fighting a seemingly endless war in a worthless jungle?

This question has long puzzled me. But an item I saw in the current issue of *Between the Lines* may help explain it all. Editor Charles Wells reports that

"During the ten years the U.S. has been militarily involved in Vietnam, news of vast undersea oil deposits off the coast of South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand has been reported in oil circles. Only lately has this news broken into the open through the European press. The much-respected publication *Die Weltwoche* of Zurich was quoted by *Atlas* (Oct.), as stating that American oil explorers have found a lake of petroleum 4,000 miles long and 300 wide that sweeps along the continental shelf described above and circles around the sea north of Indonesia, a deposit dwarfing all other known reserves in the world.

"Forty oil companies, most of them controlled by U.S. capital, have been secretly swarming over the area under the protection of the U.S. Navy. The Gulf of Siam (Thailand) is already tightly contracted to Esso, American, Conoco, the Gulf and Union oil companies, with British Petroleum in on a share. This year South Vietnam is expected to grant 16 concessions to these and other companies."

Interesting. This may explain, not only Vietnam, but quite a few of the puzzling events of the 1960's.

Is the oily truth at last beginning to surface?

—KC