

A Western Expert Denies Iraqi Arson In Oil Fields -- From Al-Jazeera

by Gotham Gazette Staff

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Michael Alcorn, the president of a company specializing in disasters, who left Iraq last Wednesday, said that the fire in the oil well in Karkook is due to a human mistake made 4 weeks ago and not like Washington and allies pretend caused by Iraqi arsonists.

Michael Alcorn, who's in Dubai now, said that his company, was working under a contract with the Iraqi government to put out the fire. He also said that he went to Karkook for this purpose on March 16th and stayed there until his company took him out because of the war. He added that he didn't see any facts showing that the Iraqi army was planning to destroy the oil wells in Karkook. He also said that the fire in Karkook wells is not linked to the Iraqi army and was due to a mistake in well digging, a human mistake that started the fire in the well on the 24th of last month.

Concerning the accusations about Iraq placing mines in the Karkook wells, Alcorn said that in the well where he was working there was no proof of existing explosives. "We saw a big number of army personnel digging trenches but we didn't see them filling these trenches with oil."

A British army spokesman in Qatar has confirmed the American and Kuwaiti accusations that Iraq set on fire multiple wells in the south of Iraq to prevent the American and British forces from controlling these wells. Iraq denied this. Karkook produces 900,000 barrels daily.

Translated from Arabic by Elias Saber