Whatever the stated reasons for conflict, resources are often an underlying motivation. Governments and media offer limited versions of what is going on. John Foster’s talk addresses current narratives on Syria, Iraq and Ukraine. Conflicts in all three countries involve geopolitical and petroleum rivalries within the region, and the larger rivalries between the US, Russia and China.

John Foster is an international petroleum economist, who has worked on staff of the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and two oil companies (BP and Petro-Canada). He has presented his research on the petroleum connection in talks across Canada, most recently sponsored by the Canadian International Council. A recent article in Open Canada is “The Petroleum Factor: Are oil and gas being left out of current conflict narratives?”.

His earlier research on Afghanistan and pipeline politics was presented to the G78 at a 2008 luncheon, was published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and became banner headlines in the Globe and Mail (19 June 2008). Other articles have appeared in the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, and Journal of Energy Security (Washington DC).