

Editorial

A travesty of history

The new crisis-in-the-making in the Middle East appears to have Iran as its target, but it should be obvious to any thinking person that there is more here than meets the eye. From the destabilization of the Shah of Iran in January 1979, to the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, to Desert Storm, inter-Arab conflict has been fostered in the region in tandem with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But this is not a modern phenomenon. These are merely replays of the imperial politics perfected by the British in the 19th century. The truth is that the Arab and Persian Gulf nations, along with Greece, Turkey, Armenia, and Israel have all been programmed over more than a century to predictable response patterns, such that when and as it suits certain interests, new wars are easily detonated as one is played off against the other.

The roots of World War I can be located in precisely this kind of politics which was practiced by the British in the 19th century, first out of the India Office, and then transferred to the Arab Bureau, which was a spinoff of the India Office. This British imperial policy was the guide used by Carter National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in his "Arc of Crisis" management of the region, which included replacing the Shah with the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Brzezinski's policy in turn was based upon the "Bernard Lewis Plan," a scenario for tribalization of the region from the Mideast to India, fracturing nations along ethnic, sectarian, and linguistic lines. Lewis is a British Islamicist, who is operating in the ugly tradition of St. John Philby, an open advocate of the Nazis during World War II who was the father of the equally evil KGB Gen. Harold "Kim" Philby. Not by chance, "Kim" was named after a character in a story by Rudyard Kipling which described how the British played the "Great Game" in India.

In 1974, Lewis moved to Princeton University. From there he has published an update on his thesis, which appeared in the Fall 1992 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the quarterly of the New York Council on Foreign Relations, the sister agency to Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA).

Lewis's plan is modeled on imperial methods which have their roots as far back as the Roman Empire: to grant local autonomy to a myriad of squabbling and politically impotent ethnic enclaves over which Rome could wield its military strength without difficulty.

A geopolitical aim of Bernard Lewis's strategy has been the breakup of the edges of the Soviet empire. With this now accomplished, Lewis, in his article entitled "Rethinking the Mideast," predicts that the Middle East will undergo a process of "Lebanonization"—a reference to the years-long civil war unleashed in Lebanon in 1975 by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. That war pitted Lebanon's Catholic, Palestinian, Shiite Muslim, Sunni Muslim, Druze, and Greek Orthodox populations against each other. With a steady supply of arms funneled to all sides, the war resulted in the de facto partition of Lebanon by Israel and Syria. Today, the nation-state of Lebanon, once considered the jewel of the Mideast, no longer exists.

Of course, the Bernard Lewis Plan is related to oil politics, and the desire of the British and Americans to constrain any positive impulses toward development in oil-dependent continental European countries (in particular Germany) and Japan. It is the antithesis of the kind of major world infrastructure development programs urged by Lyndon LaRouche. Unfortunately, nowhere in the world today are there leaders in power of the stature of LaRouche, or of Adenauer, de Gaulle, and Kennedy in the 1960s.

The current hype against Iran, the surfacing of secret indictments against terrorists supposedly housed in Iran, and so forth, are ominous signs that the lame-duck Bush administration is trying to force the hand of the Clinton administration. It is time that the American people repudiate Desert Storm—and make their will known to the incoming Congress—that there be no more such unjustified wars fought by American men and women. Make it known that the American people will not again allow the United States to become the enforcement arm for British imperialism. Maybe then President Clinton will model himself on John F. Kennedy, rather than on Jimmy Carter.