

## Colonialism—‘the best thing since the Flood’

**Lord Lugard**, first British governor-general of Nigeria:

“Pax Britannica, which shall stop this lawless raiding and this constant inter-tribal war, will be the greatest blessing that Africa has known since the Flood.”

**Lord Curzon**, Viceroy of India:

“We are here in obedience to what I call a decree of Providence for the lasting benefit of millions of the human race.”

**William Pfaff**, *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 10, 1990:

“If Africans themselves cannot maintain a civil order on the continent with a minimal assurance of human dignity, as the multinational force is attempting to establish in Liberia, then some kind of international custodianship—a neo-colonialism of some kind—is likely to be seen as the alternative to mounting anarchy and a contagious violence.”

**John Keegan**, “The Case for a New Colonialism,” *Daily Telegraph*, July 25, 1994:

“While airlifts and small-scale military intervention may alleviate a little of the harm done, it cannot bring the old Rwanda back. Empire was better for the Rwandans than independence. Should we be looking towards some reversal of decolonization?”

“In Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and parts of Latin America, the philosophies of the American and French revolutions—*independence, liberty, equality, even fraternity*—ran riot. The United States had a great deal to do with that. American presidents and electorates alike disapproved of empire. Their national beliefs derived from the events of 1776—what had been good for them must be good for other peoples as well.”

The United States “actively opposed British and French efforts to sustain their indirect empire in Egypt in 1956, making common cause with the Soviet Union to end the Suez operation. It generally took the side of black against white in British, French, Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese Africa. . . .

“If the peace-making agencies of the civilized world—and that includes the United States—wish to make their sense of outrage at disorder in the old empires effective, they must overcome their distaste for imperial forms and set about re-creating equivalent services. Civilization is not about literature and the plastic arts. It is about duty, courage and respect for the eternal verities. The pursuit of happiness is all very well. The rule of law is what makes it possible. . . .

“India is now riven by worse communal disorder than it was under the Raj, and caste is more, not less, dominant. . . . Peace-making requires ruthlessness. It requires peace-makers to exert superior force over peace-breakers. Sleeman, the British officer who broke the cult of ritual murder practiced by the Thug cult of India, simply killed its devotees out of hand wherever he found them. What would CNN have made of that?”

On Somalia: “The former Italian rulers showed less enthusiasm for separating the endemically contentious factions than the idealistic Americans.”

On Rwanda: “Decolonization subjected the aristocratic Tutsis to the rule of the majority Hutus. What is going on now is a settlement of old scores, but with a ruthlessness never before imagined or indeed possible. . . .

“Peace-making requires the enlistment of the traditional warrior peoples to police the rest. Since they regard themselves as aristocrats—as the Tutsis do, and the high-caste Sikhs of the Punjab—they do not recommend themselves to the egalitarians of the television world. Much current disorder has to do with the local underdogs taking their revenge on the uppercrust whom the imperialists favored.”

provide the OAU with a mediating force capable of intervening in support operations and “reestablishing” peace, was communicated to the WEU, which has worked for that ever since. The Council of Europe examined this question several times since the Rwanda events, and the consensus was well under way to downplay the need to “Europeanize” crisis management operations in Africa, so as to avoid fears about the “secret operations” by the former colonial powers.

This “Europeanization” of military intervention in Africa constitutes virtually laying French national policy on that continent to rest. By opening the doors of French-speaking Africa

to the supranational institutions that Gen. Charles de Gaulle so vigorously fought—the IMF, WEU, NATO—France puts an end to any hope that these countries might have, to see France engaged on their side, with a politics of progress. To be sure, a French politics of progress toward Africa was usually not more than a hope, even in de Gaulle’s time—a hope which has fast given way to frenetic clientelism. Still, under the worst of conditions, France had a history of friendship with Africa. Today, France is preparing to give way to an imperial supranational bureaucracy, without heart or soul, with nothing to tie it to the history of Africa.