

THE REGION

Balkanization plan gains momentum

by Mark Burdman

Current destabilizations in the Middle East and Indian subcontinent reflect the next phase of a British intelligence plan drafted after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Known as the Bernard Lewis Plan, it involves the proliferation throughout these regions of tribal, sectarian, and ethnic wars. It was this plan that in large part guided the destabilization of Lebanon ordered by Henry Kissinger in 1975-76. The plan was then a crucial factor in the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1978-79.

The next phase of the Bernard Lewis Plan involves the further breakup of Iran into feuding principalities and the instigation of tribal war in Arab-Islamic states, particularly Syria. The aim is to create the preconditions for oil shutdowns in the Persian and Arabian Gulf regions, and to expedite the intervention of Anglo-American (and possibly Israeli) troops.

A dossier on Lewis

Lewis, the chief architect of this destabilization program, is a British subject, trained in the "Lawrence of Arabia" school of British Orientalism. Resident at Princeton University throughout the period following the October 1973 Mideast war, he has used this base of operations to filter his tribal warfare blueprints into U.S. policymaking circles.

Lewis has trained nearly an entire generation of British and American Middle East specialists in the art of balkanizing the region into feuding tribes, sects, and clans. He has briefed congressional committees, intelligence meetings at Jesuit-run Georgetown University, and other forums in the methods of re-feudalizing the Middle East. At these sessions, Lewis has repeatedly stressed that "using the terms 'left' and 'right' in the Middle East is akin to using cricket terms to describe baseball. Left versus right is meaningless in an area defined by tribes and tribal warfare." His ideas are so inimical to the existing nation-states of the region that Lewis has also told confidants: "Please don't publish what I've said or I'll never be able to visit several countries in the Middle East again."

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ects for the comprehensive redrawing of the map of the Middle East. At least one such redrawing project was held secretly at Princeton during 1978; during this meeting, according to an Arab source, a plan was elaborated for reintroducing various Ottoman Empire administrative divisions into the current Middle East configuration.

More recently, Lewis was a special consultant to a project at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies on the theme of "Political Islam." (The overall coordinator for this project was Robert Neumann, a Middle East adviser to the Reagan campaign, which helps to explain why so many Reagan advisers are convinced the Middle East is hopelessly unstable as a source of oil supplies.)

Following this project, Lewis's Georgetown friend, Gulf expert Alvin Cottrell, told a Washington inquirer that "the big problem the region faces is fragmentation. Iran is fragmenting. . . . The younger Pakistani tribes are beginning to fight for separatism. And, not surprisingly, there is a hard time ahead facing Riyadh."

More Lebanon

Several articles have suddenly appeared in the international press which indicate cumulatively that the Middle East-Indian subcontinent region is entering an intense new implementation phase of the Lewis scheme.

On Aug. 14, the *New York Times* ran an op-ed feature entitled "Mideast Pariahs," by Yosef Gotlieb, director of the World Jewish Congress's "Project for the Study of Middle Eastern Nationalities." Echoing Lewis, Gotlieb asserted that "the numerous ethnic, linguistic and religious differences in the Middle East have been consistently ignored in discussions and policy concerning the region." Itemizing cases of minorities-in-turmoil, Gotlieb declared: "Superficial changes and postponement of solutions have provided a dangerous lull in these ethnic conflicts. Their eruption into the kind of conflagration that embroiled Lebanon during the civil war remains probable and perhaps inevitable so long as the status quo remains."

On the same day, West Germany's *Frankfurter Rundschau* reported on a new plan by Israel's Mossad intelligence agency to "support the independence movements of the Kurds and the Arabs in Khomeini's Iran and throw so much unrest into the border areas between Iraq and Iran that the Iraqis are tied down there."

France's daily, *Le Matin*, simultaneously published a well-documented five part series on the rise of the traffic in drugs throughout the region spanning Afghanistan-Pakistan to Turkey, the so-called "Golden Crescent" region. *Matin* author Roger Colombani quotes a leading Turkish antidrug specialist: "Our intelligence is precise. In these countries, opium circulates almost freely. Opponents of the regimes utilize its market value to procure arms. From Pakistan to the Turkish frontiers, from tribe to tribe, chains have been formed. By secret routes they transport the drug to the traffickers and receive rifles and machine guns."

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One of Colombani's sources implicates the Baluchi tribe of southwest Pakistan (where separatist sentiment is reportedly growing) and parts of the Qashqai tribe in southwest Iran as two key groups involved in the arms-for-drugs operations. He specifies how Gotlieb's Kurdish unrest is being funded: "Kurds, even if they are not accustomed to trafficking, can very well sell opium or put import duties on its passage in order to procure arms."

Syrian focus

The scenario for Syria under the Lewis plan is for Muslim Brotherhood "Sunni Muslim" antagonism toward the ruling Alawite minority to reach such a peak that a new "independent Alawite state" must be created. The emergence of such a state would catalyze an "independent Maronite state" run by Jesuit-trained

Bashir Gemayel in Lebanon and possibly an "autonomous Druze buffer region" created by Israel along the Syrian border. This latter variant has been advocated by, among others, Lewis protégé Harold Luks, a congressional aide to Connecticut's Sen. Abraham Ribicoff.

The outlines of the scenario were revived in the Aug. 23 *Baltimore Sun* by correspondent Douglas Watson, reporting from Amman, Jordan: "... while President Assad is likely to hold on a while longer, there has been so much carnage [in Syria] that eventually he will be forced out. One suggested outcome is that the Alawites will form their own autonomous fiefdom in their native mountains of northern Syria, causing a breakup of the country such as has occurred in neighboring Lebanon."

A leader of the pro-Beshir Gemayel wing of the Lebanese Falangist Party in Washington recently told *EIR* that he and his associates have been working on a "feasibility study for an independent Alawite state in the northern state." The creation of such a state, the source indicated, would depend largely on Hafez Assad's corrupt brother, Rifaat. Rifaat has a strong "Alawite nationalist" profile, and may be tempted to make such a move as conditions in Syria worsen.

This is made more likely by the apparent commitment of Lebanon's ancient oligarchic families, such as the Sursoks, to use their wealth and intelligence capabilities to further the Lewis plan. An informed Arab source told *EIR* Aug. 26 that the Sursoks have "completely acquiesced in Israel's takeover of southern Lebanon and have arranged for Israel to be given real estate titles to much of southern Lebanese land in return for Israeli funding of Maronite church operations. This means Israel will soon de facto annex that area and in the process set off reactions throughout the region favoring renewed communalist conflicts." The Sursoks are also active in Egypt, which has witnessed a recent heatup of communalist activity within the Egyptian Coptic Church. One branch of the Sursok family and allied Egyptian clans actively fund these Coptic elements, who in turn are heavily penetrated by the Mossad. With Mossad backup, the group has been vocal enough in its "Coptic autonomy" demands to provoke a reaction from Egyptian fundamentalist Muslims.

One sign of rising communalist tension was reported Aug. 25 by French sources in Cairo: an assassination attempt against the leader of the Coptic Church, Pope Chenouda III, who had been chided by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat for stirring communalist sentiment in Egypt through his insistence on "Coptic rights." The near-murder of Chenouda is expected to trigger further unrest among the Copts and an escalated Muslim fundamentalist reaction.