

Lessons of History: London Is Pushing A Hundred Years War

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The cover of the Jan. 10-16, 2009 issue of the City of London's flagship *The Economist* magazine really tells it all, with its photograph of Israeli jets bombing Gaza City, and a headline that announces "The hundred years' war."

The editorial policy statement accompanying the cover, glibly begins: "With luck, the destructive two-week battle between Israel and Hamas may soon draw to an end. But how long before the century-long war between Arabs and Jews in Palestine follows suit? It is hard to believe that this will happen any time soon.... Gaza, remember, is only one item in a mighty catalogue of misery, whose entries are inscribed in tears. The Jews and Arabs of Palestine have been fighting off and on for 100 years.... The slaughter this week in Gaza ... will pour fresh poison into the brimming well of hate."

The Economist promo for another 100 years of bloodshed in the Holy Land continues: "A conflict that has lasted 100 years is not susceptible to easy solutions or glib judgments. Those who choose to reduce it to the 'terrorism' of one side or the 'colonialism' of the other are just stroking their own prejudices. At heart, this is a struggle of two peoples for the same patch of land. It is not the sort of dispute in which enemies push back and forth over a line until they grow tired. It is much less tractable than that, because it is also about the periodic claim of each side that the other is not a people at all—at least not a people deserving sovereign statehood in the Middle East. That is one reason why this conflict grinds on remorselessly from decade to decade."

Sykes-Picot Legacy

The Economist was not merely offering commentary. As their editors know, it has been British policy, for more than 100 years, to actively promote precisely the kind of perpetual warfare that we see today in the Israeli onslaught against Gaza. The fact that this clearly documented history has been largely suppressed and forgotten, does not in any way undermine the truth. Indeed, the failure of leading American policymakers to appreciate that the long reach of the British empire is still driving events in Southwest Asia, is one of the primary reasons that the conflict remains so apparently intractable, to this day.

To address this dilemma, and to provide the newly inaugurated Obama Administration with the needed historical understanding, the staff of *EIR* presents the following account of the political war that raged for decades, between the republican, anti-colonialist United States of America, and the European colonial powers, over the future of Southwest Asia.

In the midst of World War I, Britain and France conspired to impose Anglo-French colonial rule over the territory of the former Ottoman Empire, under the secret Sykes-Picot agreements of 1916. The United States attempted to offer an alternative policy. Two American missions to the region—the Military Mission to Armenia, and the King-Crane Commission—directly countered the European colonial schemes. The emergence of Turkey as a unique sovereign state under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the only concrete accomplishment of the American effort, but the fault-lines between the American republican outlook and the European imperial outlook were well known throughout the region.



UN/Shawn Baldwin

*Would you buy a used car from this man? Tony Blair, now the Mideast “peace” emissary for the Quartet, at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on Nov. 9, 2008. The real British geopolitical gameplan is illustrated in *The Economist’s* cover.*



Still, Today ...

Some reading this introduction will react: The history aside, Britain is no longer an imperial power with global reach. If anything, the United States has replaced Britain as the world's would-be imperial giant. Again, this is simply wrong.

Just follow the path of the leading war ally of the Bush-Cheney team, Britain's former Prime Minister Tony Blair. It was Blair who made clear, in an April 1999 speech in Chicago on the 50th anniversary of NATO, that the world is now in a post-Westphalian, i.e., post-nation state, imperial epoch. And it is Blair, in his supposed capacity as the peace emissary of the Quartet (the United States, Russia, the United Nations, and the European Union), who is promoting the idea that the next Hundred Years War in the Mideast shall be between “moderates” (Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia) and “extremists” (Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and, perhaps, Syria).

Read the following historic accounts as if your life depended on it.