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# REPORT

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## **BRITISH STRATEGY AND CYPRUS; PAST AND PRESENT**

### Introduction

Ever since 1878, when Britain took control of Cyprus from the Ottoman Empire, British politicians and commentators have looked for ways in which the island might be employed to influence events in the Balkans and Middle East, first as a naval and military base, and later as an air base, a broadcasting station and an Intelligence gathering post. How far any of these ambitions could be realised depended crucially on whether decision makers understood political developments in the region but secondly on whether British agents in the area could put their decisions into effect.

Analyses of great power intervention in the Third World are divided between those who believe that policies are primarily decided on Machiavellian grounds of ruthless interest and those who believe that a mixture of interest, good intentions and incompetence generally lies at the root of policy. This essay falls firmly into the latter group; it suggests that British policies towards the region have failed when their Intelligence has been poor and politicians have misunderstood the tide of events and thus their ability to influence them.<sup>1</sup>

### Historical background

Britain took over Cyprus because of the grand strategic changes which were happening in the Balkans, Turkey and Egypt and which shaped the politics of what our conveners here today call that

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, Editor, *Conflict and Intervention in the Third World*, Croom Helm, London, 1980.

‘troublesome region that stretches from the Balkans into Central Asia, the Near East and North Africa’. The first change was that the peoples of the Balkans were becoming politically aware and determined to expel their Ottoman rulers, a process which had popular support in Europe partly because the Balkan peoples were seen as representatives of Christianity and partly because of the methods the Turks used to repress them.<sup>2</sup> Yet their unrest increased fears amongst Conservative British politicians of Russian expansion into that region and into Turkey proper because many erroneously believed that Turkey itself was in terminal decline. At the same time, the French construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 had focused attention on Ottoman possessions in the Middle East as never before. Although they knew that the canal would vastly improve communications and trade with India and elsewhere in Asia, the British had opposed its development because they knew what it would increase suspicions between Britain and France, and enhance their competition over Egypt.

The British statesmen who attended the Congress of Berlin in June and July 1878, Salisbury and Disraeli, attempted to find a comprehensive solution to these problems. The outcome was lauded at the time as a great British achievement and both statesmen have high reputations for their policies. The conference accepted that Turkey could no longer control any part of Europe but the British tried to prevent Russia dominating the successor states. At the same time they guaranteed Turkey in Asia and backed that assurance by attempting to establish a base in Cyprus from which they thought they could send forces to Turkey’s assistance. They also imagined that they could push their fleet through the Dardanelles to protect Constantinople should Russia attack.<sup>3</sup>

And yet the much-vaunted British achievement proved both in the short and medium term equally problematical. Cypriot geography made it unsuitable for the naval base they sought; in the 1880s it seemed a fever-ridden, poverty-stricken island of which little could be hoped and which the Gladstone government soon considered abandoning. We also now know that Russian policy was far less coherent than the British often believed; there was no coordinated, long-term plan for expansion, just a series of ad hoc moves impelled by ambitious pro-consuls in Central Asia and by popular Russian support for the aspirations of the Serbs and other Balkan Slavs.<sup>4</sup>

Within three years of the British intervention in Cyprus, Gladstone’s anti-imperialist government had initiated the British domination of Egypt and the Suez Canal which lasted until 1956 and which greatly diminished any strategic importance of Cyprus over the next decades. More ironically, Turkey was to show 37 years after the Congress of Berlin that it was not only not in a state of collapse but that it could defeat

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Central Europe Cannot Shut Its Eyes’, *The Times*, 3 September 1877.

<sup>3</sup> Dwight E. Lee, *Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention of 1878*, Harvard University Press, London, 1934, chapter three; A. J. P. Taylor and A. P. Thornton in F.H. Hinsley, *The New Cambridge Modern History XI: Material Progress and Worldwide problems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 548, 553, 573, 575.

<sup>4</sup> Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy 1860-1914*, Berg, Lemington Spa, pp. 77- 85.

the British who had so condescendingly agreed to protect it against Russia. In the meantime, Russia had now become one of Britain's two most important allies in a desperate struggle for survival.

In sum, British policy in 1878 was based on poor Intelligence of conditions in Cyprus, of the resilience of Turkey, of Britain's ability to come to Turkey's support, of the intentions of the Russian government and of the Russians' capacity to dominate the Balkans. Subsequent British policies in the Middle East often had the reverse effect to those intended. To take two of the most egregious examples; the ambiguous commitment in the Balfour Declaration to establish a Jewish 'homeland' in Palestine enabled both Zionists and Palestinians to claim that the British had broken their word. From 1922 onwards, British politicians made frequent efforts to demonstrate what a 'homeland' did not mean but they were never able to show exactly what it did mean.<sup>5</sup> The Declaration has left a running sore which continues to destabilise the region, while British efforts to regain control of the Suez Canal in 1956 led to their humiliation and exposed their economic weakness. The leaders of the states, which they were supposed to be protecting in the Baghdad Pact, actually felt sorry for their 'protector' although they also wished to dissociate themselves from a country which could attack an Arab state in conjunction with the Israelis.<sup>6</sup> In the first case, the British wholly misunderstood the relationship between Jews and Arabs, in the second they underestimated the strength of Egyptian nationalism and Washington's hostility to any policy which smacked of colonialism.<sup>7</sup>

There were successes for British policies in the Middle East, but these were often achieved, despite the inadequacies of government policies, by British officials and military officers who had expertise on Arab politics. Immediately after the First World War Britain took over more territory in the area than it could manage in the face of Arab resistance. It was left to officials like Percy Sykes, Arnold Wilson and John Glubb to find some way of administering and policing Iraq at a price Britain could afford.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, it was the British armed forces which had to fight to maintain control of Iraq when it broke into rebellion in 1919 and to maintain some degree of peace between Jews and Arabs in the newly acquired Palestinian mandate. Again, it was the armed forces which had to regain the Suez Canal in 1956 and to control the Basra area of Iraq after the Anglo-American invasion in 2003.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Palestine: Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government*, Official Communique No 2/39, paragraphs 4 to 7.

<sup>6</sup> Mohamed Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez through Egyptian Eyes*, Arbor House, New York, 1987, p. 221.

<sup>7</sup> See Anthony Eden, *Full Circle*, Cassell, London, 1960, book 3, chapter one; Keith Kyle, *Suez*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1992; Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account*, Jonathan Cape, 1978, chapter 14.

<sup>8</sup> Arnold Wilson, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920: A Clash of Loyalties*, Oxford University Press, London, 1931, p. 273. Philip Graves, *The Life of Sir Percy Cox*, Hutchinson, London, undated; John Glubb, *Arabian adventures: Ten Years of Joyful Service*, Cassell, London, 1978. Some paid for official mistakes with their lives see Zetton Buchanan, *In The Hands of the Arabs*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1921.

## Changes in the Balance of Power between Great and Small States

The process of universal political involvement, which destabilised the Balkans in the 1870s, has now encompassed the whole region on which we are focusing today. Whenever such politicisation takes place *before* stable, constitutional structures and civic institutions have been developed, the process is profoundly unsettling and usually violent. The Balkans are still unstable almost a century and a half after the Berlin Congress, providing the world with a new term for an old pattern of behaviour in 'ethnic cleansing' in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> Such violence is particularly intense when the country involved is divided by culture and religion.<sup>10</sup> It also increases in direct proportion to the degree to which the historic religions are prescriptive and autocratic. It is through religion that the process of politicisation begins and if a particular religion teaches people to use their own powers of reasoning and intuition, rather than to rely on authority, then modernisation is much smoother.

If political involvement has made the region unstable, it has also completely changed the military balance between great and small powers. When Britain took over Cyprus in 1878 there was no serious opposition either from Turkey or the people living on the island.<sup>11</sup> And the British remained on the island even when they found it of no immediate strategic use. They kept it because it was not costly to garrison and because Queen Victoria and others believed that giving it up might involve some loss of prestige. Ironically, it began to become useful to the British in the 1950s, because of the development of airpower and the weakening of their position in the Middle East, just when the rise of EOKA made their position untenable. In the event they had to concede the independence of the island, something they had declared impossible at the start of EOKA's campaign. The balance has swung yet further in favour of guerrilla movements in recent years, beginning in Sri Lanka, with the appearance of suicide bombers.

And suicidal attacks are not the only new factor. 9/11 should have woken the Western world to a change almost as great as politicisation itself. Guerrillas will now take the battle to their enemies' homeland. EOKA did not generally carry out attacks on Britain itself, nor did the Vietcong attack the United States. There were, of course, exceptions, Udham Singh hunted down Sir Michael O'Dwyer and killed him on 13 March 1940, two decades after O'Dwyer had been Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab during the Amritsar massacre.<sup>12</sup> But that was unusual. In the future, politicisation, cheap travel and the spread of minority ethnic groups in the West will ensure that similar assassinations and terrorist attacks will be much more frequent. The consequences are already apparent, Britain, for example, has doubled the size of its Intelligence community over recent years. Everywhere border surveillance and airport security

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<sup>9</sup> For the way in which this process had long affected the region see Milovan Djilas, *Land Without Justice*, Methuen, London, 1958.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Lt Colonel R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1935.

<sup>11</sup> Not that Britain could impose its culture on Cyprus, see Mary Koutselini-Ioannidou, 'Curriculum as a political text: the Case of Cyprus (1935-1990)', *History of Education*, volume 26, pp 395-407.

<sup>12</sup> Alfred Draper, *Echoes of War: The Amritsar Massacre and the Twilight of the Raj*, Buchan and Enright, London, 1985.

has been strengthened. This means that less money is available to spend on the traditional armed forces and that, despite George W. Bush's proclamation of a 'war on terror' and British determination to carry the war to the terrorists, *the European security establishments are moving from the attack to the defence.*<sup>13</sup>

### The Growth of Islamist Movements

However radical they were, the governments, which came to power in the Middle East after the end of colonialism, shared many Western political ideals, notably to raise standards of living. In most cases they failed because there was too much government interference and centralisation; while Europe was recovering from the Second World War and East Asia was astonishing the world by its industrialisation, the only great increases in prosperity in the Middle East were a consequence of oil exports from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, although there was subsidiary development due to European tourism on the Mediterranean coast. In 1982 the Algerian economy grew by 2.5 percent, the Iraqi economy declined by 5 percent, the Kuwaiti by 7.5 percent, the Libyan by two percent and the Lebanese by 2.5 percent.<sup>14</sup> There were dramatic changes year by year but by 2007 the Algerian GDP per head was only \$3944, the Egyptian \$1656, the Iranian \$3969, the Iraqi \$2265, the Jordanian \$2606 and the Lebanese \$5737. In some of the oil rich states the situation was very different with Kuwaitis having a GDP per head of \$45,328, the Qataris \$78,127 and the Saudis \$13661.<sup>15</sup> But there was a widespread feeling that development had failed. India has responded to a similar discovery in the 1990s by opening its markets, freeing its industry from government control and achieving economic growth of about 7% a year. Not so the Middle East where frustration and national humiliation have turned into displaced aggression against the West.

When different societies and states are brought into contact, one usually becomes dominant and tries to persuade the others to assimilate its culture. Alternatively, the dominant culture can try to maintain its position by perpetuating its separation and the weaker culture may collude in this process to protect itself through isolation, although it will try to overcome its weakness in other ways.<sup>16</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s it seemed that the countries bordering the southern and eastern Mediterranean were assimilating European *political and economic* culture, and could live with the effects of tourism. The Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the growth of Islamist movements elsewhere have thrown this assumption into question. Anti-Western propagandists now come in many forms; many claim that the West has tried not just to introduce democracy and capitalism but to destroy all Islamic culture and religion by

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<sup>13</sup> For the British response see *The Strategic Defence Review: A New Chapter*, Cm 5566 Volume 1, Ministry of Defence, London, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1983-1984*, London, 1983, pp. 50-65.

<sup>15</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2009*, Routledge, London, 2009, chapter five.

<sup>16</sup> George M. Frederickson in Deborah Prentice and Dale Miller, Editors, *Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1999, chapter two. As far as colonialism was concerned see Richard Faber, *The Vision and the Need: Late Victorian Imperialist Aims*, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, chapter one.

assimilating these into Western patterns and trying to impose the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enlightenment on the Islamic world. Thus the Egyptian Professor Zaynab Abd Al-Aziz told Saudi television in May 2005 that the Second Vatican Council in 1965 had set out to Christianise the world. This plan had been backed by the United States' government which staged the 9/11 attacks in order to launch a 'crusade' against the Muslim world beginning with Iraq. Nor is this an isolated view; the former Syrian Information Minister, Dr Mahdi Dakhllallah and others have accepted this conspiracy theory about 9/11<sup>17</sup> Whether or not they agreed about the genesis of 9/11 others deplored its effects; 30 heads of Pakistani madrassas and prominent Islamic scholars put out a statement in January 2008 claiming that after 9/11:

Efforts were launched with full preparedness to take the nation on an irreligious path in the name of 'moderation' and 'progressive' thinking. Changes were made in the curricula of the educational system, to make them look good to foreigners instead of [making them appropriate for] our national interests. Completely unjustified amendments were made in hudood law [regarding women] in the name of women's rights-[amendments] which were not only unrelated to women's rights but also included further injustices against them.. And the government, instead of resolving these problems, remained busy promoting dancing, the Basan [kite festival], [and women's participation in] marathons.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, al Qaeda has been successful in encouraging Muslim resentment against the West. Its attacks have been designed to prove that the West was much more vulnerable than it had seemed in the past. Osama bin Laden's former bodyguard, Nasser Ahmad Nasser Al-Bahri explained that al Qaeda attacked the US destroyer Cole in Yemen because it wanted:

To damage the USA's reputation in the naval arena, to raise the morale of the Muslims and to prove to the Islamic nation that its sons are capable of striking the nation's enemies wherever they may be, by sea, by air and by land.<sup>19</sup>

The Egyptian MP, Hamadein Sabahi told Egyptian television in July 2005, 'any weapon that kills an American is good. Any gun aiming at the Marines is good. Any slaughtering of an American in Iraq is good'.<sup>20</sup>

Muslim liberals have resisted Islamist claims, dismissed conspiracy theories about 9/11 and praised the tolerance shown by European societies towards Muslim immigrants. Dr Ahmad Abu Matar, a Palestinian living in Norway pointed out that even the extremist Islamic Liberation Party was able to

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<sup>17</sup> Special Dispatch- Egypt/Saudi Arabia, 10 June 2005, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington. Special Dispatch-Syria-US and the Middle East, 11 September 2007, Middle East Media Research Institute.

<sup>18</sup> Urdu-Pashtu Media Project 19 February 2008, Middle East Media Research Institute.

<sup>19</sup> Special Dispatch N. 766-Jihad and Terrorism, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington, 19 August 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Special Dispatch- Egypt/Jihad and Terrorism, 27 July 2004, Middle East Media Research Institute.

operate from London and to call for the spread of Islam to the rest of the world and the need for the Queen of England to convert. Such tolerance continued even though Muslim clerics encouraged the assassination of the Dutch cinema director Van Gogh and other terrorist incidents.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Abd Al-Mun'im Sa'id, the Director of the Centre for Political and Strategic Studies of the Al-Ahram publishing house criticised the persecution of minorities in the Arab world and the intolerance and despotism found in most of the region. The Islamic countries are thus pulled between those who support the development of some features of secular political and social behaviour, and those who attack democracy, favouring rather the adoption of Sharia law and other strictures of traditional Muslim society. The schism has been likened to the emergence of Protestantism and the struggles of the Reformation in Europe.

### Western Involvement in the Middle East

Writing in 1932 the distinguished British strategist, J.F.C.Fuller commented:

The materialistic conception of fighting force must undergo a drastic change if force is to maintain internal tranquillity and frustrate external pressure. It is not physical force itself which is wrong, but physical force applied to conditions which it cannot rectify... Physical force is but one of several means of protecting national existence, or if needs be, of carrying the national will over the frontiers of hostile peoples.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1930s, when Fuller was writing, it was only too clear that winning the battle of ideas was as important as winning on the battlefield. The Allies were victorious in 1918 but they lost the battle to convince the German people that the post-war settlement was reasonable, not least because influential writers led by John Maynard Keynes had denounced the settlement, accusing the US, British, French and Italian leaders of 'empty and arid intrigue' and of failing to understand the magnitude of the issues before them. Despite initial criticism of Keynes' book, which *The Times* described as the 'cry of an academic mind, accustomed to deal with the abstractions of that largely metaphysical enterprise known as "political economy"', other writers began to follow his lead. Eventually his views, however destructive they were because of the fillip they gave to German revisionism, became the conventional wisdom as they fulfilled some deep psychological need for self-criticism amongst the educated elite in Britain and the United States.<sup>23</sup> The failure to win this battle and the onset of the great depression meant that the German

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<sup>21</sup> Special Dispatch- Reform project 10 June 2005, Middle East Media Research Institute.

<sup>22</sup> J.F.C.Fuller, *The Dragon's Teeth: A Study of War and Peace*, Constable, London, 1932, p. p. 197.

<sup>23</sup> John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York, 1920, pp. 6,7; 'A Candid Critic of the Peace', *The Times*, 5 January 1920; Harold Nicholson, *Peacemaking 1919*, Constable, London, 1933.

democrats lost the political struggle with the National Socialists. The consequence was another disastrous World War leading to millions of deaths and the devastation of Europe, the Middle East and China.

Today the West has to understand the battle of ideas in the Islamic world and how, if at all, it can assist those who sympathise with its political and economic beliefs. If the conservatives were to win, the Islamic world would stay economically inert and politically unstable. Emigrants would continue to flood into Europe amongst whom a minority would use violence to try and impose Islamist views. Since this is the primary issue, military intervention by the United States and Britain in Iraq in March 2003 was an egregious mistake because it deposed the secular ruler of Iraq, Saddam Hussein and thus strengthened his rivals, the more deeply religious governments in neighbouring countries. After 9/11 the Western powers ignored their own precepts and laws, and exposed themselves to the charge of hypocrisy; they claimed to believe in democracy yet refused to accept the election of Hamas in Palestine; they denounced torture in the Third World, yet used it in Guantanamo and sent prisoners to be tortured elsewhere.

Their policy towards the Middle East exposed not only the weakness of Western Intelligence but the profound amateurishness of the policy making mechanism. The decision to attack Iraq was taken by a handful of people with no deep experience of the Middle East, no clear understanding of the nature of the Iraqi government and of the absurdity of their claim that Saddam Hussein had helped the Islamists of al Qaeda organise 9/11. Connections between al Qaeda and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of the Kurdish guerrilla groups fighting against Baghdad, were distorted by leading members of the administration and particularly the Vice-President, Cheney to suggest a link between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein- equivalent to suggesting a link between the British and Libyan governments in the 1980s because the Libyans were in touch with the IRA.<sup>24</sup> There was a curious parallel between 1956 and 2003; in the first case Anthony Eden's mendacious denials of coordination between the French, British and Israelis were followed by the disastrous Anglo-French attack on Egypt, notionally to protect the Suez canal during a war between Israel and Egypt. It took decades for Britain's reputation to recover.

The incompetence of the Bush administration and the Blair government landed the armed forces in a second war (after Afghanistan) of a type for which they were particularly ill-suited. In a conventional war the United States is more powerful than all the other countries in the world, it needs to do everything possible to avoid embroiling itself in campaigns which play to its weakness rather than its strength. The possibility that an insurgency might break out against invaders should have been clear to anyone who had studied Iraqi history. Precisely such a rebellion had occurred when British took over the country under a

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More balanced works were often ignored see for example, E.J. Dillon, *The Peace Conference*, Hutchinson, London, 1919 and Paul Mantoux, *The Cathaginian Peace or the Economic Consequences of Mr Keynes*, Oxford University Press, London, 1946.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, Pocket Books/ Simon Schuster, London, 2004, p. 141. 'Bush Claim on Saddam, al-Qaeda Link Debunked', *The Hindu*, Madras, 10 September 2006.



League of Nations mandate after the First World War and that insurrection was to be replicated in the resistance to the United States after 2003.<sup>25</sup>

The strength of that rebellion encouraged America's enemies and discouraged its allies. As Hamas leader Khaled Mash'al argued in February 2006:

We say to the West, which does not act reasonably, and does not learn its lessons. By Allah, you will be defeated. You will be defeated in Palestine, and your defeat there has already begun. .. America will be defeated in Iraq, wherever the [Islamic] nation is targeted, its enemies will be defeated, Allah willing... Tomorrow our nation will sit on the throne of the world. This is not a figment of the imagination, but a fact... The Arabs have said: we don't want [conventional] wars, thank you very much. Leave the war to the peoples. Today the Israeli weapons are of no use against the peoples. We have imposed a new equation in the war. In this equation, our tools are stronger. That is why we will defeat them, Allah willing.<sup>26</sup>

### Public Reaction

The impact of the US attack on Iraq on public opinion around the world was revealed by the Pew polls in June 2003. The pollsters asked people to rank 'world figures' in terms of their confidence in their tendency to do the right thing; bin Laden came first in Palestine, third in Indonesia and second in Jordan, Pakistan and Morocco. 93 per cent of Moroccans, 91 percent of Jordanians, 82 per cent of Turks and Indonesians and 74 percent of Pakistanis expressed disappointment that Iraqi resistance against the United States had not been more effective. Even amongst US allies, 58 per cent of South Koreans, 30 per cent of French and 29 per cent of Kuwaitis also expressed disappointment. For the West, the only encouraging aspect of the polls was that large majorities in many Muslim countries continued to believe in democracy, 83% in Kuwait, 75% in Lebanon and 63% in Jordan. Ominously it was in Turkey, which has had a quasi-democratic system for many years, that the highest proportion, 37% said democracy was a Western system unsuitable for the Muslim world.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in 2007 81% of Turks said they disliked US ideas about democracy and 83% disliked American ways of doing business.<sup>28</sup> This popular antagonism towards democracy in such a society shows how profound the gap remains between certain Western and Muslim ideals and political behaviour. Many years ago, the Indian writer, Nirad Chaudhuri pointed out how much

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<sup>25</sup> Arnold Wilson, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920: A Clash of Loyalties*, Oxford University Press, London, 1931: Zeton Buchanan, *In The Hands of the Arabs*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1921.

<sup>26</sup> Special Dispatch- Palestinian Authority/ Jihad and Terrorism, 7 February 2006, Middle East Media Research Institute.

<sup>27</sup> Pew Research Centre, *Views of a Changing World 2003: War with Iraq further divides Global Politics*, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=185>. accessed 21 May 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Pew Research Centre, *Global unease with major world powers*, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=256> , 27 June 2007.

deeper and more personal the clash was between the West on one side and the Hindu and Muslim worlds on the other than what he called the 'cold-blooded' Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West.<sup>29</sup> More recently, as argued above, India has moved closer to the West, while elements in the Muslim world have moved in the opposite direction. Roger Scruton has shown how this is partly the result of the fundamental contradiction between a society which tries to solve political problems by discussion and agreement on one side and a society which relies on interpretation of a sacred text.<sup>30</sup>

The closest parallel to the Islamist reaction against the West is Japanese policy in the 1930s. In that case also Japan had emulated the West after its opening in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, absorbing Western technology, copying the German army and the British navy and modelling its constitution on the German Reich. At the same time its educational system stressed the importance of nationalism and loyalty to the Emperor, while Shintoism became the dominant religion.<sup>31</sup> By the late 1920s the young nationalists who had come through this system were disappointed with the way in which the West had responded and with what they regarded as the appeasement of Western governments by their own leaders. They tore apart the embryonic democratic system by assassinating Japanese statesmen, undermined the League of Nations by invading Manchuria and showed their rejection of international law by killing or enslaving Asians who stood in their way or allied prisoners who fell into their hands. The kamikaze pilot at the end of the war was a precursor of the suicide bomber. In the Japanese case the Western powers had failed to study the Japanese educational system and so they did not understand what was happening. Similarly, it was only recently that they began to appreciate the effect the Saudi-funded madrassas were having across the Islamic world.

The election of President Obama has greatly improved the image of the United States in most countries; 90 percent of Kenyans and 79 percent of Nigerians now express a favourable view. But such sympathy is still much less obvious in parts of the Islamic world with only 27 percent of Egyptians, 25 percent of Jordanians, 16 percent of Pakistanis and 14 percent of Turks expressing favourable views. Now that the focus has turned to Afghanistan with the reduction in the US presence in Iraq, the same split between the Muslim and non-Muslim world is still evident. Only 19 percent of Egyptians, 15 percent of Turks, 12 percent of Jordanians and 4 percent of Pakistanis support the US presence in that country.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Nirad C. Chaudhuri, 'My views of the real East-West conflict', *Encounter*, September-October 1985.

<sup>30</sup> Roger Scruton, *The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat*, Continuum, London, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Walter A. Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintō Ultrationalism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Pew Research Centre, *Chart of Opinion of the United States in 2009*, <http://pewglobal.org/database> accessed 4 August 2009.

## The Role of Cyprus and the Ferment in the Muslim World

The utility of British bases in Cyprus will largely depend upon the quality of the policy for which they are employed. As General Fuller pointed out in the quotation above, it is not that military force is never useful but that it has to be employed only when appropriate. Al Qaeda and other Islamists argue that every Western use of military force in the Muslim world is an attack on the Muslim nation, in other words that the US should not have used force to free Kuwait from Iraq in 1991. Nor do they give the West any credit for its support for Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo, on the contrary they blame it for not helping them soon enough. But these are not necessarily majority views in the Islamic world, the Islamists' objective is to blacken the West in every way and to block its ability to use its conventional forces to beneficial effect.

Different cultures interact economically, politically and ideologically. Friction is inevitable when the Western ideology and the Islamic world come into contact. The magazine of the Global Islamic Front Sada Al-Jihad attacked the 'filthiness of the souls' of Western peoples in July 2009, blamed democracy for the World Wars and described it as 'a great tribulation and a huge catastrophe' because 'Islam and democracy are absolutely incompatible'.<sup>33</sup> Given the difficulty of bridging such differences by negotiation, it is all the more important to try to encourage rapprochement on economic and political issues. Though terrorists are rarely poor and frequently come from the richest and best-educated sectors, many of the current problems in the Islamic world are economic. The West can encourage stability in the region by assisting broad economic development, which means providing technical aid and market access. Only if the Islamic world is generally integrated into the global economy and not just through oil exports can some of the resentment building up in Arab cities be reduced. Politically the greatest advance would be a reduction in Israeli-Palestinian hostility, which would undo some of the damage done by the Balfour Declaration and its implementation. But any compromise would involve concessions which some on either side would reject altogether and all would find very hard to stomach.

Everything that has been written above suggests that the Western leaders have sometimes been extremely poor at assessing the situation in the Muslim world and responding appropriately. They have embarrassed and humiliated themselves over Suez in 1956 and Iraq in 2003, they have left problems in Palestine which have, for decades, defeated all attempts at a solution and they have abandoned those like the Iraqi Assyrians whom they professed to be helping.<sup>34</sup> What is needed is for Western governments to listen much more carefully to experts on the Middle East and to those living in countries like Cyprus which are located in the region. This means following a much more cautious policy than has been the case in the

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<sup>33</sup> Jihad and Terrorism Threat Monitor, 8 July 2009, Middle East Media Research Institute. See also Nirupama Subramanian, 'Extremism's New Face', *The Hindu*, 15 April 2007 and 'Karzai backs down over "abhorrent" marital rape law', *The Times*, 28 April 2009.

<sup>34</sup> R.S.Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1935.

recent past; the distinguished 19<sup>th</sup> century political analyst, Walter Bagehot summarised the views of those who advocate such a diffident style of foreign policy:

We wish that foreign nations should, as far as may be, solve their own problems; we wish them to gain all the good they can by their own exertions, and to remove all the evil. But we do not wish to take part in their struggles. We fear that we might mistake as to what was best; we fear that in so shifting a scene we might find, years hence, when the truth is known, that we had in fact done exactly the reverse of what was meant, and had really injured what we meant to aid. We fear that, amid the confusion, our good might turn to evil, and that our help might be a calamity and not a blessing.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Walter Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, Longmans Green, London, 1895, p. 377.