

but remains open to the idea of a force brought into existence under the aegis of the Security Council.

The end of national sovereignty

The U.N. Charter, established at San Francisco in 1945, is everywhere adamant that the sovereignty and laws of all states be subordinated to the diktat of the Big Five. In addition to their immorality, these provisions are now also anachronistic, since many states, notably Germany and Japan (against which, along with Italy and other former Axis states, the several "enemy states" clauses of the Charter are explicitly directed), but also Brazil and other developing countries, could claim economic, strategic, and even military primacy over a devastated oligarchy like Britain.

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations George Bush is presumably thoroughly familiar with this monstrous edifice of international coercion. Such figures as Thatcher and Kissinger clone Joseph Sisco (the former Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East) have gloated that decisions of the Security Council, such as resolutions 660, 661, and 662 (the last voids Iraq's attempt to annex Kuwait) are *ipso facto* universal and international law, mandatory for all nations. It is the manifest intent of the condominium to activate this principle, first to blockade Iraq by land, sea, and air, and then perhaps to mandate an attacking force of which U.S. forces would be the centerpiece. The new prominence of the Security Council is a frontal assault on the sovereignty of every independent nation on the planet. Where is Stalin's veto-happy U.N. ambassador, the grim Andrei Vishinski, now that the world might derive some benefit from his favorite pastime of tying up the Security Council with his *nyets* and vetoes?

The Persian Gulf: a British lake

by Webster G. Tarpley

Virtually all of the conflicts that have plagued the Middle East since World War II have their roots in colonialism and the British Empire, and the current Persian Gulf crisis is no exception. The Gulf has been a British lake throughout this century, and all of the Gulf actors in the present upheaval are

either former British colonial possessions, or components of the British sphere of influence. In particular, the family of Jabir Ahmad Jabir Sabah, the now-deposed Emir of Kuwait, for whose restoration American soldiers may shortly be called upon to fight and die, and for whose restoration American taxpayers are already paying, has been an imperial satellite and pawn of the British Foreign and Colonial Office for almost a century.

The Gulf as a British lake began well before the exploitation of the area's immense petroleum reserves. British imperialism in the Gulf was a hobby of Lord Curzon during those *fin de siècle* years when he was viceroy of India. This is the same Lord Curzon who gave his name to the Polish line of demarcation.

In the late 1890s, Sheikh Mubarak al Sabah, the ancestor of the present toppled ruler, was a down-on-his-luck petty warlord of the arid Gulf littoral. Kuwait, according to tradition, had been founded in 1710, and an emirate under the Sabah family is said to have existed from 1756 on. The entire region was, of course, formally a part of the Ottoman Empire, and Kuwait remained ultimately subject to the Sultan in Constantinople, but the authority of the Sublime Porte was already tenuous in the upper Gulf, where various petty rulers were seeking to break loose from the Sultan in the direction of the Court of St. James. In March 1897, Mubarak asked to be placed under the protection of the British Crown. The Foreign Office declined, but Mubarak kept repeating his offer.

The British became more interested when they began to perceive that other great powers, notably Russia, might be interested in taking over Kuwait. The British became especially alarmed when it appeared that Kuwait might become the southeast terminus for the Berlin-to-Baghdad railway, which was being projected by Germany. "We don't want Kuwait, but we don't want anyone else to have it," wrote a Whitehall official to Lord Curzon. Lord Curzon was so concerned about countering German influence, that he proposed that Britain occupy Bubiyan Island in order to be able to cut off Kuwait city from access to the Gulf.

Therefore, in January 1899, an agreement was signed between Sheikh Mubarak and Colonel Meade, the British political resident in the Gulf, which made Kuwait a protectorate of the British Crown. One of the provisions of this accord was that it was to be kept secret. Kuwait thus became a British protectorate and was to remain one until 1961, when its nominal independence was established. But as far as the Sultan and even world public opinion were concerned, Kuwait in 1899 remained a part of the Ottoman Empire. According to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, "a shadowy suzerainty may be exercised by the Sultan over the Sheikh, but the Sheikh should not be described as 'technically a subject of the Sultan.' " * In 1899-1902, the Royal Navy employed or threatened armed force numerous times to protect Mubarak from the Turks.

The British found Emir Mubarak an unruly and aggressive ward. In 1901, Lansdowne wrote, "We have saddled ourselves with an impossible client in the person of the Sheikh. He is apparently an untrustworthy savage, no one knows where his possessions begin and end, and our obligations towards him are as ill-defined as the boundaries of his Principality."

Mubarak became involved in a rivalry with another local potentate, Ibn Rashid, for the domination of eastern Arabia. As a result of this rivalry, Mubarak gravitated toward an alliance with another desert warlord, Abdul-Rahman ibn Faisal al-Saud, and with the latter's son, Abdul-Aziz, later King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, who was able to administer some defeats to Ibn Rashid in 1902, and who was later associated with Lawrence of Arabia.

During World War I, the upper Gulf was important as a base of operations for British forces advancing against the Ottoman Army defending Baghdad, with which German General von Falkenhayn served for a time. During these years of 1914-18, the British repeatedly reaffirmed their protectorate over Kuwait.

'Independence' and its aftermath

On June 19, 1961, the British government announced that it was terminating the protectorate of 1899 and was recognizing the sheikhdom as an independent state. At this time, the British government also signed an undertaking, promising to provide military assistance to Kuwait if asked to do so by the Kuwaiti government. Thus was established a purely British obligation to defend Kuwait which remains in force, but which may not have been invoked by Kuwait now in August 1990. If any direct and explicit request for British help has been made by Kuwait, it has manifestly not been honored by the British, who prefer rather to hide behind Churchillian posturing and behind Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.

Several days after London had announced Kuwait's independence, Gen. Abdul Karim Kassem, the prime minister of Iraq, advanced a claim on Kuwait, maintaining that Kuwait had always constituted an "integral part" of Iraq. Kassem argued that under the Ottoman Empire, Kuwait had been juridically a part of the Ottoman province of Basra, and that ethnically, geographically, and socially Iraq and Kuwait were in effect one country, which had been artificially and arbitrarily partitioned by the British.

Kuwait appealed to the U.N. Security Council for help against Iraq, but no action was taken because the U.S.S.R. interposed its veto. London thereupon chose to act unilaterally, and in early July 1961, some 600 Royal Marines landed in Kuwait. The British government announced that it would be willing to withdraw its forces if they could be replaced by a peace-keeping force of the Arab states. British diplomacy had, in the meantime, induced the Arab League to admit Kuwait as one of its members, thus further buttressing its

claim to independence. Arab forces began to arrive in Kuwait by September, and in October the last of the British departed. But in December of the same year, the British placed their Middle East forces on a high alert, in response to reports of new Iraqi attempts to seize Kuwait, which did not, however, materialize.

In October 1973, Kuwait was at the center of world attention as the venue of a meeting of the six largest Gulf oil producers which announced a 17% increase in the price of crude oil in response to the Yom Kippur War involving Israel, Egypt, and Syria at that time. But in March 1973, another acute crisis involving Iraq had emerged. In that month, Iraqi troops occupied a police station in the locality of Sameta, some 2.5 miles inside Kuwaiti territory. Sameta commanded a dominating position over the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. For a time there was the danger of larger-scale fighting, but the dispute was submitted to negotiations, which dragged on to late August without any result, and were then adjourned. In June of this year, the National Assembly voted an appropriation of \$1.2 billion to provide Kuwait with a defense force.

The Sabah regime in Kuwait has been noted especially for its unbridled nepotism, with a 1984 survey showing members of the emiri family holding the posts of deputy prime minister, foreign minister, information minister, interior minister, finance minister, and various sub-cabinet posts. The Sabah clan is known for its sybaritic lifestyle, with yachts, limousines, race horses, and opulent consumption as the order of the day.

The British in Iraq

As for Iraq, it too has a long history of British influence. In the postwar period, Iraq, along with Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan joined Great Britain in membership in CENTO, the Central Treaty Organization, a regional and ostensibly anti-Soviet pact modeled on NATO and SEATO. Iraq was therefore a British ally until 1958, when a military coup deposed the pro-Western Iraqi monarchy, leading to the creation of the regime of General Kassem.

The ability of the Anglo-Americans to manipulate Saddam Hussein was impressively documented in 1980. At this time, it was apparent to London that the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran was threatened with collapse after one year in power. Circles in the Foreign Office estimated that only an armed conflict with a foreign enemy could provide the needed cohesion and preserve the Khomeini dictatorship. Certain of these circles then chose to incite Saddam Hussein to wage war on Iran, primarily for the purpose of consolidating the Teheran regime as the leading pillar of the Muslim fundamentalist revival. Through enticements conducted via the intelligence channels of several countries, Hussein was offered assurances of an easy victory over the Persians that would establish him as the most dynamic leader of the Arab world. In reality, the Gulf war lasted eight years and cost upwards of a million lives.