

III. History

THE FOREVER WARS

Overcoming the Axioms of a Century of Warfare

by Harley Schlanger

This is an edited version of remarks given during a presentation to The LaRouche Organization's weekly Manhattan Project internet program Oct. 14, 2023. Subheads and embedded links have been added. The video is available [here](#).

Understanding this situation will take some thinking; it's taken a lot of thought for me to pull together what has been 30–40 years of work with Lyndon LaRouche. But this is crucial now, because achieving a peaceful resolution to the present crises, including Ukraine and now Southwest Asia, requires overcoming the axioms reinforced by the disinformation industrial complex, acting on behalf of the permanent war party. This disinformation industrial complex-hybrid warfare machine has been supercharged since Oct. 7 to promote war as a solution, and to force people to think they have to choose sides. Of course, the idea is that they want people in the West to choose the side of Israel and ignore the long history of a cycle of violence.

This is occurring as the Ukraine war is sputtering. Support for this Ukraine war in the United States and Europe is dropping dramatically. So, now we have the shift to a different venue—Southwest Asia. It could have been China. While we don't fully know what caused the timing of this, the question implicitly is: How is this being used by outside forces?

The whole point of the media is to build support for war. The media is part of the military-industrial complex; the collection of corporate cartels that makes money from war. But more importantly, they use war

to reshape policy; to make sure that there's no break with what's called the "unipolar order." So they never tell what you might call the back-story, the real history. We're going to take a look at that in this presentation today.

An example is the idea that the Ukraine conflict started on Feb. 24, 2022 when Russian troops moved



U.S. Navy/Jackson Adkins

In response to the Israel/Hamas conflict, the U.S. has committed to "unconditional support for Israel" by, among other things, sending the USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group to the Eastern Mediterranean, and has now sent a second group, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.

into Ukraine. Conveniently, that omits the back-story, such as what happened after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990–91, and the broken promise of no eastward expansion of NATO. It ignores the Western-backed coup in 2014, which threw out a democratically elected President and brought in a regime committed to a destructive war against Russia, ongoing today on

behalf of NATO. It leaves out the 2014–22 period of attacks on the citizens of Donbas, and it leaves out the efforts by Putin to achieve a lasting peace based on a guarantee of security for both Ukraine and Russia.

So, when you look at the conflict now underway in Gaza and Israel, ask yourself: “Did this conflict begin last Saturday when Hamas attacked Israel?” You can go back a long way, including to 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel, and review the cycle of violence. This includes attacks, the reaction to the attacks, the counterattacks, the revenge—and what you see is that there is a cycle of vengeance. Victories within that cycle of vengeance have not brought peace. The question today is: “How does cutting off food and medicine and fuel from the largely civilian population in Gaza ensure peace for the citizens of Israel?” If, in fact, that’s what Netanyahu wants.

The bigger issue is: “How do you overcome the hatred? How do you overcome the antagonism which has resulted from this 75-year cycle?” The only way to do that is to go to a higher approach, what Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche have been calling the return to the Westphalian principle—the idea of no external interference in other nations’ affairs, and establishing relations based on mutual benefit, the interest of the other. This is something that was used in the [Treaty of Westphalia](#) in 1648 to end 150 years of religious warfare; it’s a tested principle. It’s something which could be done today. What we’re going to discuss in looking at this picture is how that could have occurred.

Do Geopolitical Ends Justify Any Means?

To begin, I want to give you a little bit more of the back-story. Let me start by talking about the fact that the Biden administration has sent an aircraft carrier group, the *USS Gerald Ford*, to the region. He sent Tony Blinken to go and pledge full support to Israel. What happens when someone like Blinken goes into a country and says “We’re interested in peace, defending the rules-based order, and that’s why we’re going to support Israel”? Let’s take a look for a moment at who Blinken is, just a brief side-light. I want to do that by taking a look at his mentor, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and what she had to say to justify the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children due to sanctions,



NATO

Tony Blinken’s mentor, Madeleine Albright, U.S. Secretary of State (1997-2001), when asked to justify the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children due to U.S. sanctions, said, “We think it was worth it.” Blinken: “[She] was a brilliant diplomat, a visionary leader, a great and good person....”

largely from the United States’ war against Iraq.

Q: We have heard that half a million children have died [from the sanctions]. That’s more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?

Madeleine Albright: I think this is a very hard choice. But we think the price is worth it.

“The price is worth it.” Today, we see sanctions across the world being imposed by the United States, killing children in Yemen, in Syria, in Libya. Blinken is a protégé of Madeleine Albright. Here’s Blinken’s eulogy to Albright after she died in 2022:

Madeleine Albright was a brilliant diplomat, a visionary leader, a courageous trailblazer, a dedicated mentor, and a great and good person who loved the United States deeply, and devoted her life to serving it. She was also a wonderful friend to many, including me. I will miss her very much.... She believed that the United States must respond forcefully to dictators and tyrants. She created the community of democracies, a

coalition of countries that defends democratic values around the world....”

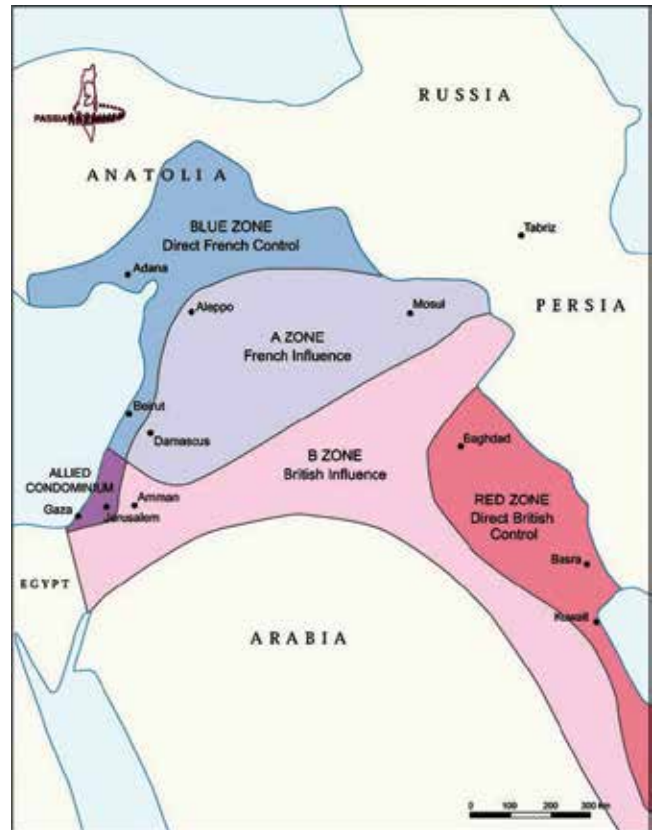
Which, by the way, is just another example of hypocrisy, when the democracies include the Zelensky regime in Ukraine. Blinken went on to say:

Madeleine mentored a generation of diplomats and national security experts. I’m one of the many who benefitted from her wisdom and encouragement. And in her post-State career, she dedicated herself to teaching, continuing to invest in our future diplomats and leaders.... She loved this country, she loved this department, and we loved her back.

You just saw Albright justify the murder of 500,000 Iraqi children. So, when Blinken shows up in Jerusalem to talk about how the U.S. is committed to protecting a rules-based order, one has to ask, “What are these rules exactly?” Because what we’re seeing with the targeting of, and a siege on the civilian population of Gaza, is a violation of international law, a war crime. Keep in mind what Albright said about how it’s acceptable to kill 500,000 children.

Lyndon LaRouche was intimately involved in crafting a plan to break the cycle of violence in the Middle East. He wrote numerous papers on it, and what he kept coming back to is that you have to get outside of the cauldron of violence, outside of the local eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth mentality and look at where it came from, and who is using it for their own purposes.

What LaRouche identified, and what I’ve written about extensively over the years, goes back to the end of the 19th Century, even a little further in terms of British history. Sir Halford Mackinder (1861–1947), Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science, developed the concept of geopolitics—the merger of geography with political activity—drafted essentially as a defense of the British Empire. Through the work of the Fabian Society, Mackinder’s geopolitics became the standard outlook of the British. Mackinder’s [speech](#) of Jan. 25, 1904 laid out a conception of what’s necessary to sustain control of the financial and trading operations of the British Empire by maintaining the law of the sea, and stopping land-based connections and corridors. In particular, corridors that would connect Western Europe with the Eurasian heartland, and also Western Europe with the Middle East—the so-called Berlin-Baghdad Railroad.



Source: Marx Memorial Library, London
In 1916, the British and French colonial powers carved up Southwest Asia by imposing the infamous Sykes-Picot Agreement.

This is crucial, because this is the fear the British had. They saw what Lincoln did with the Transcontinental Railroad to unite the United States, and their fear was that the same thing could happen between Germany, Russia, Japan, China, and even France and the rest of Western Europe, which would have left the British out in the cold. The British Empire would have been undercut dramatically by that. So Mackinder’s idea was to prevent those alliances.

World War I, Sykes-Picot, and British Imperialism

This becomes clear in World War I. There was an effort to pull France away from any relationship with Germany, which led to the Entente Cordiale of 1904 between France and Great Britain. Then the British role in funding the Japanese side of the Russian-Japanese War to bring down Russia in 1904–5, which ended up bringing Russia into an alliance which became the Triple Entente by 1907, which was the basis for World War I.

As the Ottoman Empire was declining, the question was, who would control this area? Would the Russians be able to control it? Would it be under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire? Or, would the British be able to run it? You had various operations in that period. One of the most nefarious was the secret treaty made during World War I between the French and the British, the so-called Sykes-Picot [Agreement](#), finalized in 1916, which carved up the Middle East. It essentially gave the northern part—Syria, Lebanon—to France. (By the way, that mandate for France lasted until 1946, although it was never fully controlled.) And the southern part, which included Palestine, Jordan, and eventually the Arabian Peninsula, to the British. So you have a dividing of the Middle East which included using religious divides, tribal divides, and so on.

So, what's the importance here? That geographical region, which we call the Middle East but is technically Southwest Asia, is an interconnection point between Asia—that is, India, China, the northern part, Russia, Iran—and the connection through Türkiye into Europe and then into North Africa. It's a crucial potential corridor for trade and development, which also includes the maritime capacities of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. For the British, this was key to sustaining the Empire, and that's what Sykes-Picot was all about.

Now, connected to Sykes-Picot was the 1917 [Balfour Declaration](#), in which the Foreign Minister of Britain, Arthur Balfour, wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild saying that the British intend to allow the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

What gave the British the right to do that? Well, that's the mentality of the British Empire—that they control the land and therefore can make these kinds of decisions. And that's embedded in the concept of the rules-based empire. Once you know that, then you look at the situation over the last 75 years since the creation of Israel, and you see that the cycle of violence was



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A letter by British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour—the Balfour Declaration—laid the basis for creating the state of Israel: “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people....”

embedded in the agreements going back to Sykes-Picot and the Balfour Declaration.

This came to a head around 1948 with the creation of the state of Israel, and the destruction of many of the Arab Palestinian communities, the loss of land, the refugee crisis that resulted from that. Look again 20 years later almost to the 1967 War, in which Israel took major chunks of land. Israel took the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, which they later gave back through a treaty. They took the Golan Heights from Syria; they took the West Bank from Jordan; and parts of the Old City of Jerusalem, and Gaza. More than one mil-

lion Palestinians at that time lived in those areas, which suddenly came under Israeli rule. This led to the adoption of UN [Resolution 242](#), which Israel did agree to and did sign, as did Jordan and Egypt. It called for the return of the Occupied Territories, and in return, these countries were supposed to recognize the existence of Israel. They agreed to that. And after the 1973 War, Syria agreed to it.

But what happened in 1973, the so-called Yom Kippur War? Some people say there was an intelligence failure by Israel. How was it that the Arab countries were able to initially carry out a military attack on Israel? Was it an intelligence failure? Was it deliberate? This was the subject of a number of commissions set up by the Israeli government. But think of the context. Post-1971, the end of the Bretton Woods system; a period in between the fixed exchange system and the emergence of the floating exchange-rate system.

What happened after the Yom Kippur War? There was an Arab oil embargo, and the price of oil went way up in Western countries. Where did the money go? It was recycled through Arab governments and companies into Western banks, organized at the time by Henry Kissinger. This was something Lyndon LaRouche was very much on top of and fighting. He referred to it as the “recycling of petrodollars,” and it became the basis of what some people call the petrodollar system. But most importantly, it provided the context in which

a floating exchange-rate system could be carried out, which would then allow the largest private Western banks to have a flow of cash which they could use to control economic policy. That was something that LaRouche addressed shortly after that by calling for an [International Development Bank](#) to take the control of credit away from these banks and put it in the hands of governments so they could invest in physical development of their nations.

A Move for Peace

The situation in the Middle East remained unsettled from 1973 until the late 1980s. But there was a recognition by some in Israel that the UN Resolution 242 and its follow-up resolution had the potential for the basis of peace. Is there a way to achieve an agreement of trading land for peace? This came together when an alliance was formed between Israeli Prime Ministers Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin. It occurred with the adoption of the Oasis Plan in 1993.

But before that, the idea of an Oasis Plan came from Lyndon LaRouche, beginning in July 1990, when he gave a presentation. What LaRouche said is that one of the problems in the area is the lack of water. You need to ensure adequate water for all these countries: You need canals; you need nuclear desalination, and you need water not just for Israel, but for Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. This was something that was circulating widely, and LaRouche was talking with people in Israel and in the Arab world about it.

After 1985, a discussion process emerged in Israel of how to achieve peace based on some kind of coordination which would include the two-state solution—that is, a Palestinian state, and the state of Israel. Rabin then introduced the idea that the Palestinian state needs an economy so it can be stable. In September

Features of the LaRouche ‘Oasis Plan’



The roots of the Oasis Plan for solving the water crisis in Southwest Asia go back to LaRouche’s work in the mid-1970s. He developed it in 1990 while campaigning to stop the First Gulf War.

ber 1993, Rabin made the following statement:

In order to convert the bitter triangle of Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Israelis into a triangle of political triumph and economic prosperity.... Let us build a Middle East of hope, where today’s food is produced and tomorrow’s prosperity is guaranteed; a region with a common market, a Near East with a long-range agenda.

This was part of the [Oslo Accords](#). What most people know of the Oslo Accords is the famous photo of Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shaking hands in

front of Bill Clinton at the White House. And they think that the key to it was that they said, “Well let’s agree to have peace.” The peace was in fact based on Rabin and Peres putting forward the idea in the economic annex of the Oslo Accords, that Israel would make sure there would be industrial investment for the Palestinians. That they would have improvements in agriculture; that they would have access to power, as opposed to it being arbitrarily determined by what Israel wants to give when it’s not punishing them. The idea was that this economic annex would ensure there would be peace based on the benefit for each side. So that there would be an end to the war against Israel, the Arab governments and the Palestinians would accept the legitimacy and security of Israel as a concern for themselves as well, and the Israelis would recognize that security for the Palestinians rested with economic progress and development.

The problem was that while this was agreed to, and Clinton made a commitment to this, the World Bank and the international bankers were in agreement to withhold the funds to begin construction. Hence LaRouche’s insistence that you must immediately start moving earth: Build the roads, build the railroads, build the power plants, build the water projects—this never happened, because the funds were never allocated.

Meanwhile, within Israel, there were attacks on Rabin. Netanyahu and his allies said that this is a violation of Jewish law. Netanyahu said Rabin’s proposal “is removed from Jewish traditions and Jewish values.” The rabbis and the settlers’ movement proclaimed the right to stop or kill anyone whose actions threatened Jewish lives, and claimed that the Oslo Accords were a threat to Jewish lives.

The Oslo Accords did include a political side, which was the granting to the Palestinian Authority of governmental authority over the territories. This also was not to the liking of Netanyahu and his crowd. The polemics against Rabin continued—that he was a threat to Jewish survival. And in November 1995, Rabin was assassinated. That pretty much put on hold his idea of the economic development of Palestine as key to Israel’s



White House/Vince Musi

Two “mortal enemies,” Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin (left) and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat (right), shake hands upon signing the historic Oslo Accords at the White House in Washington, Sept. 13, 1993. The Accords ended the war. Under the annexed economic clauses, the peace was to be a durable one, based on economic development to the benefit of Israel and Palestine.

ultimate peace agreement. Netanyahu never accepted the idea of a two-state solution. So, the Oslo plan was never implemented.

The Situation Today

The narrative in the West is that all of Israel is unified behind Netanyahu and his policy. In an [article](#) titled “Why Did Netanyahu Want To Strengthen Hamas?” published Oct. 11, 2023 in *Ha’aretz*, a leading paper in Israel, Hebrew University Professor Dmitry Shumsky writes:

Netanyahu developed and advanced a destructive, warped policy that held that strengthening Hamas at the expense of the Palestinian Authority would be good for Israel.... The purpose of the doctrine is to perpetuate the rift between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. This would preserve the diplomatic paralysis, and forever remove the danger of negotiations with the Palestinians over the partition of Israel into two states.... That flawed strategy turned Hamas from a minor terrorist organization into an efficient army with highly-trained storm troopers, bloodthirsty killers.

This was Netanyahu’s strategy, to *never* have a two-state solution. And you can see what LaRouche was

saying, that someone is playing this from the outside. The whole idea of Oslo was summed up in the toast that Rabin made at the meeting at the White House between himself, Arafat, and Bill Clinton:

What's necessary is the courage to change axioms. The peace of the brave requires a change in thinking; a recognition that the cycle of revenge must be broken. But to break it, you have to create a circumstance where both partners benefit from the economic development.

That's what LaRouche had outlined. That was the whole essence of the political fight that brought Rabin and Peres together. But the divide was not between the Rabin-Peres government and the Arabs, the divide was within Israel. Groupings, such as those around Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the Kach party, and his followers, argued that the entire Palestinian population must be removed from Israel. Either they accept submission as second-tier citizens—no elections, no right to vote, no say in the policy—and they can stay; if they don't, they should be expelled.

Kahane was killed in 1990, but this outlook continued. It was in the outlook of the person who murdered Rabin. It's in Netanyahu's government today. One of Netanyahu's leading advisors, Itamar Ben-Gvir, his Minister of National Security, is a follower of the Kahaneite view, who is tied to the Kach Party. Ben-Gvir has repeatedly talked about expelling Palestinians if they don't accept their second-rate status. This is a man who is now meeting with people like Blinken to plan out the next phase which, whether Blinken knows it or not (and I'm sure he does know it), is the use of this war in Gaza to expel more Palestinians. Ben-Gvir was one of the people who led settlers on a rampage through the Arab sector of Jerusalem, and who did a romp through the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which helped trigger the most recent uprising.

This is a situation which is set for an explosion, and this is where the outside hand plays a role. The only way to break this is through diplomacy and negotiation which takes into consideration the security and the economic concerns of both parties. The same thing is true of Ukraine, and it's not surprising that the same Blinken and Biden and EU leaders who are giving the go-ahead to Netanyahu to stampede through Gaza and drive more than a million people from their homes, are the same people saying "No negotiations for peace

and security in Ukraine." That's the fight that we're in. Those who think that you can choose the "more virtuous" side and win a war that will force the other side to submit, haven't learned a thing from history. Because that submission leads to increasing anger and rage which will eventually flare up again. That's why the solution has to come from a higher peace movement.¹

That's what the Schiller Institute is fighting for. That's what the International Peace Coalition is proposing. That's what the Westphalian solution has in mind.

The Peace of Westphalia has been explicitly under attack by the same British faction that was behind Mackinder's geopolitics, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration, and the continuation of these kinds of conflicts around the world. Their view is that you cannot achieve peace. In fact, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair came to the United States in 1999, [addressed](#) the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and said we have to get out of the era of the Peace of Westphalia and adopt instead the idea of the "responsibility to protect." That is, the powerful nations that are for the good—namely, the British Empire and its American puppets—have to intervene against so-called "authoritarian states" on behalf of democracy. This is what the whole idea of "democracy vs. authoritarianism" is about, which was, as Blinken pointed out, at the center of Albright's policy, which goes back to Brzezinski and Samuel Huntington, who were British geopoliticians operating in the United States.

This is the fight we have: to overcome geopolitics. This is what Helga Zepp-LaRouche has said has to be at the center of any policy. That's why it's very worthwhile to review in detail what LaRouche put forward in his Oasis Plan—a series of projects which included a credit policy to support investment in science and technological progress to create an increasing bounty, a new wealth that would allow future generations to live in peace and harmony side by side. That's what we're really looking at in this crisis, and that's the only way out of it: To change those axioms.

1. Since this presentation was given, the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council resolution Oct. 18 which called for a "humanitarian pause" to deliver aid to civilians in Gaza. Explaining why the U.S. voted against it, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said, "resolutions are important.... But the actions we take must be informed by the facts on the ground and support direct diplomacy efforts that can save lives." She then complained that the United States "is disappointed this resolution made no mention of Israel's right to self-defense" and didn't "condemn Hamas' terrorism and cruelty."