

GENERAL MCCHRYSTAL'S FOLLY

## Britain's Afghanistan Game: Historical Cockpit of War

*EIR Counterintelligence Director Jeffrey Steinberg and South Asia specialist Ramtanu Maitra were interviewed on the Oct. 17 edition of The LaRouche Show web radio, aired every Saturday at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time ([www.larouchepub.com/radio](http://www.larouchepub.com/radio)). The program was hosted by Marcia Merry Baker.*

**Baker:** Our topic for today, “General McChrystal’s Folly,” refers to the title of a paper written recently by Lyndon LaRouche.<sup>1</sup> Of course, it’s referring to Afghanistan, and the drumbeat for the United States to go along this route, of getting yet further completely involved in an insane kind of British imperial policy in this region of the world. . . .

I mentioned the focus about this insane policy that’s being pursued, that the United States should have what some people call another Vietnam—but actually the world is different. It is much worse today.

Let me refer to the context of our discussion. The crash is on: You could call it the October crash, referring to how Mr. LaRouche, in recent weeks, and months, pointed out that there are phase shifts underway, and we are seeing a physical-economic downshift. We don’t just have financial chaos; we have real disintegration of physical conditions of life.

In the midst of that, it’s critical for us to discuss strategic realities, not any one issue, not any one campaign, but the strategic reality of what’s inducing the United States onto these terrible foreign policy paths, which we see in the Afghanistan question. That this has to be faced, and has to be stopped.

Now, I want to point out one thing. Lyndon LaRouche, and his wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, were recently in an international policy dialogue. This was on Oct. 9-10 on the Isle of Rhodes, and Mr. LaRouche has been in Europe, meeting with people. He himself will give an international webcast Nov. 11 (that will be available at [www.larouchepac.com](http://www.larouchepac.com)). And before that, Helga Zepp-LaRouche will also give a webcast, based out of Europe, on Oct. 29 (<http://bueso.de>).

What our focus is today, is that there is a drumbeat for an increased U.S. troop presence, by the thousands, NATO troop presence, in Afghanistan, and this for an extended period of time. This whole thing is the kind of continuation of Great Game politics that you don’t want at all. You certainly don’t want it continued—you want it cancelled.

Jeff, maybe you want to open up the discussion, about what we’re saying when Mr. LaRouche says Gen. Stanley McChrystal’s folly is what we have to face.

**Steinberg:** Well, I think it’s important to go back to March of this year, when the Administration supposedly completed a strategic review of U.S. policy on Af-

1. *EIR*, Oct. 9, 2009, [http://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2009/2009\\_30-39/2009-39/pdf/16-27\\_3639.pdf](http://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2009/2009_30-39/2009-39/pdf/16-27_3639.pdf)



*A Taliban militant (right, with AK-47 rifle), oversees farmers harvesting opium poppy in Afghanistan's Helmand province, 2008. Afghanistan lacks natural resources, so from the standpoint of the British, it is only good for two things: as a strategic pawn in the global chess game, and as a cash cow—the world's largest opium producer.*

ghanistan. Of course, as a Presidential candidate, Obama had made the terrible mistake of saying that, while he was critical of the invasion of Iraq, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the process of getting bogged down in a war in Iraq for five years, he defined Afghanistan as a war of necessity. So, he had already put his foot in his mouth in a bad way during the campaign. And supposedly, this strategic review in March was going to devise some kind of a policy way forward.

Unfortunately, it did no such thing. The review, which some people may remember was presented with a great big ego drum roll, as the first serious reconsideration of the Afghan war policy in a long time, after the Bush Administration dropped the ball, and got fixated on Iraq. But it really didn't present anything new. There was no consideration of how to deal with the fact that the Karzai government was terribly corrupt; that you had a completely out-of-control narco-economy building up—95% of the world's opium and heroin supply coming out of Afghanistan; and there was no decision made on any of the issues that had to be addressed, before you could even take up the question of how to deal with the military aspects of the situation.

So, not surprisingly, a number of months later, after Obama had fired the previous U.S. and NATO commander, Gen. David McKiernan, and replaced him with General McChrystal, they started all over again, and or-

dered McChrystal to do a review and to come up with a commander's set of recommendations.

The outcome was a foregone conclusion. Someone made a comment the other day that if you've got a landscaping problem, and you go to a gardener, and ask him to come up with a solution, he's going to say you're going to have to reseed, and plant a whole new garden, and he'll give you an estimate of what it would cost to do it. If you went to a cement-mason, with the same problem, he'd tell you to dig up the garden, and put in a cement patio.

So, the mere fact that they put McChrystal in the position of coming up with a military strategy, while they were waiting on the outcome of the elections, before deciding on what would be possible from a political or

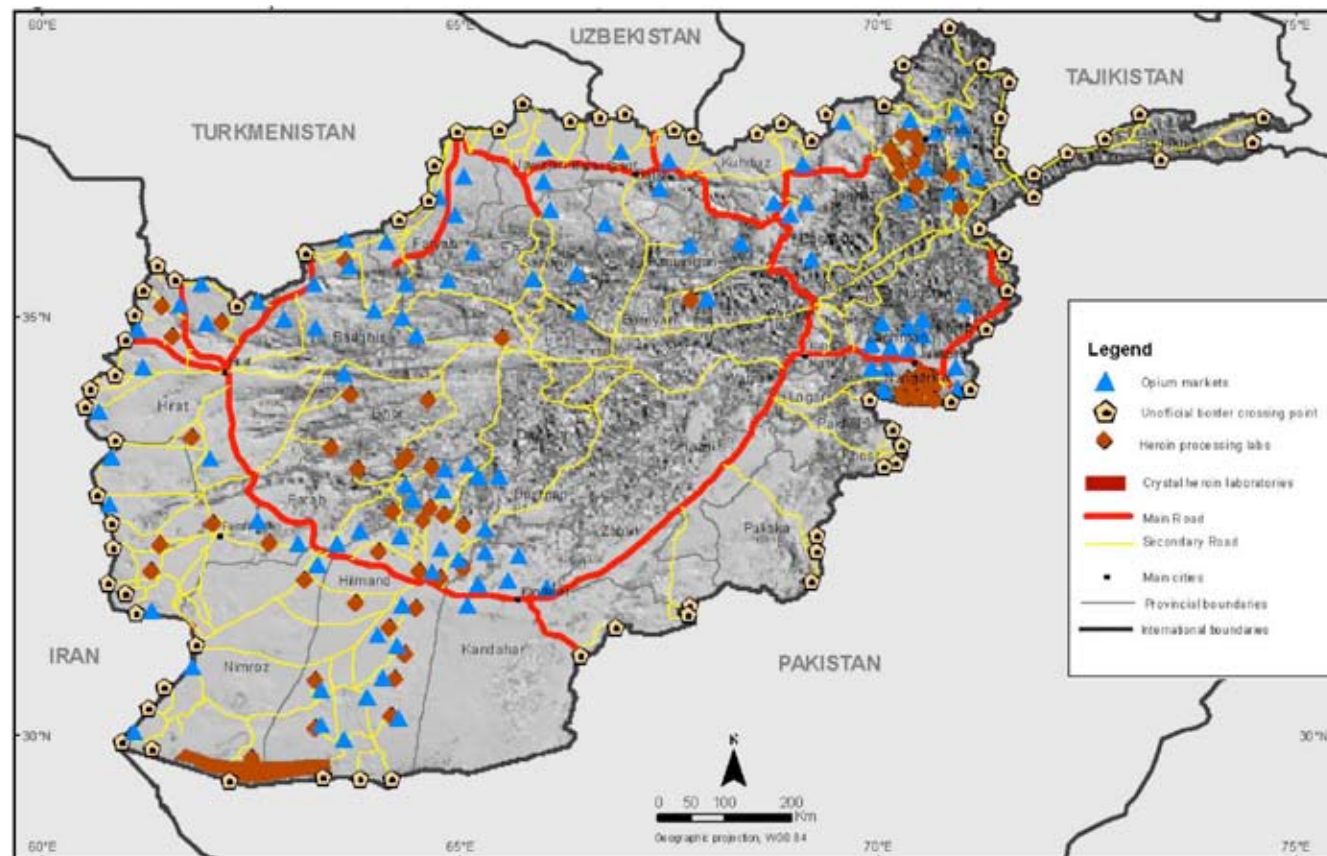
economic standpoint, what could be done in terms of regional stability—it was a guaranteed recipe for disaster. And of course, McChrystal walked right into it, by simply coming back and saying we need—now we know the number!—80,000 more troops, immediately, in 2010.

We don't even come close to having 80,000 troops available, in the rotation. We've still got 140,000, or so, in Iraq, presumably starting to come home, and that won't be completed until the end of 2011.

So, the whole thing was a great big lesson in incompetence. And McChrystal compounded things by concluding that he was expected to be the international sales representative for this expansion, and change, to a full blown Vietnam-style counterinsurgency war. So, he went off to London, and gave a public speech, a very highly publicized speech, at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and basically said that there is no alternative to his plan for a gigantic troop expansion, and a shift from counterterrorism to full-blown "hearts and minds" counterinsurgency operations, like a Vietnam in the mountains. And so, it finally reached a point of embarrassment, that this thing was really handled like Amateur Hour, that the President was dispatched to Copenhagen—he was on his way back from that whole Olympic fiasco that we won't even talk about—but he was essentially ordered that he had to discipline McChrystal, and tell him to keep his mouth shut.

FIGURE 1

## Locations of Opium Markets, Heroin Processing Labs, and Unofficial Border Crossings in Afghanistan



UNODC report, "Illicit Drug Trends in Afghanistan," 2008.

But in the meantime, if there's a silver lining in the whole fiasco, it's that now, very belatedly, there is actually some kind of policy deliberation being forced, and there are at least two alternatives to the McChrystal folly that are on the table. A lot of this is out there in the news, so I can summarize it really quickly: Vice President Biden is basically saying that the McChrystal plan should be flat-out rejected; that we should greatly narrow the mission to a limited counterterror mission, targeting primarily al-Qaeda, and also targeting, in a more limited way, the Taliban. And he's talking about a plan that could result in an immediate drawdown of American troops, and preparation for an exit strategy. He's also been emphasizing more focus on Pakistan, than Afghanistan.

And then, you've got a kind of middle ground, far less than what McChrystal is demanding, but kind of a healthy center, involving Secretary of State Clinton, Secretary of Defense Gates, and National Security Advisor

General Jones, who are insisting that a strategy has to be devised first, before any decision can be made on military deployment. And they're adamant against a big troop buildup, as per what's been requested by McChrystal.

So, they're going to take another week or so to bat these things around. It's probably a very valuable educational process for the President, who doesn't know much about anything, to be sitting around and participating in discussion among some adults, who, whether you agree with their positions or not, are actually trying to come up with some way out of a mess that's been going on for eight years, and gets worse by the hour.

I think that's pretty much where things stand in terms of the Administration deliberations, and I would just caution people, that 99% of what's coming out in the media, is total rubbish and propaganda, and is probably, more than anything, aimed at trying to force a *fait accompli* on the President and his national security advisors, to try to jam them, to force a decision. And the



people most actively trying to do that, are in the McChrystal camp.

### No Strategic Policy Is Defined

**Baker:** Well, there are many things to draw out from what you said. One thing is the pedigree of continuing this kind of presence anyway, since 2001, that's actually creating chaos in the region. Maybe, Tanu, you want to address that. Mr. LaRouche was stressing just a few hours ago, that what you really want to do, is just solve problems, not once and for all, but contribute to order and peace in the greater region at large. Instead of this!

**Maitra:** Yes, I think that what is missing in all these deliberations, going back to President Obama's March announcement of the policy: Nothing has been defined very clearly as to when we plan to withdraw from that place, or whether we have a plan to withdraw from that place. The two major problems that we have created over these eight years of stay, which is that 44,000 tons of opium has been produced during these eight years—which is about 20,000 more than what the world consumes! And this opium has been converted into heroin, and in addition to that, there is marijuana, hashish, and all that.

Now, where is that, in this Afghanistan policy that we are trying to resolve by killing Taliban, or killing al-Qaeda? How do you deal with this thing? Because this definitely has created a very serious problem in Iran, which is next door, and then, as far up north as Russia, a very important nation, and a nation like that should not be undermined by opium and heroin. But that has been done. Nowhere has it been addressed by the President, or the President's advisors, how to stop this degeneration of the region, caused by these eight years of continued war.

The second thing, is that there are many reasons why Pakistan is involved in this warfare. But the process has also degenerated Pakistan's situation in a very big way, and one must remember that Pakistan perhaps still has the best army of all the Islamic nations. Whenever the Islamic nations in the Middle East get into problems, they bring in the Pakistan Army for protection and security.

Now, the process may have started years before, but



U.S. Government Photo

*Starting in the 1950s, the United States was engaged in building infrastructure in Afghanistan; Americans who were involved in the projects saw the country as rich with potential for development. Shown here is the Grishk Dam in Helmand Province, built by the U.S. before the Soviet invasion in 1979. All this infrastructure has been destroyed.*

really, during these eight years, the Pakistan Army has taken a very heavy beating. Pakistan, as a country, has taken an enormous beating, and its economic condition has gone down steeply. And we are not talking about a nation of 15 million people, or 20 million—this is a nation of 150 million people, which borders not only the Muslim nations, but also Central Asia, China, and also India.

All the effects of these things—the regional instability—are spreading like spokes of a wheel, in all directions. And we have no way of controlling it. There's nothing in our Afghan policy which addresses the fact that through these issues, the much bigger harm has been done, and this bigger harm can get the whole region into much bigger trouble; and we must take measures, through deliberations with these regional powers, and regional nations, to stop the rot that has begun.

That, I think, is one of the major shortcomings in the deliberations that are taking place at this time.

### Legacy of a 30-Year War

**Baker:** Regarding increased opium production, in the early '90s there might have been 2,000 tons, but then it went up to 4,000, 7,000, 8,000 tons a year, so the trend

is clear. And in agriculture, during the same time, you have a tremendous degradation of an already tricky system for 35 million people in Afghanistan. But, there was a system in the past that functioned.

**Maitra:** Yes, I think that the agricultural difficulties that the Afghans face today, cannot be fully attributed to this eight-year war. I think that the 30 years of war that they've been going through, which began in 1979, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan: The huge bombing, then the mining, and all this kind of thing that was done, basically destroyed the Helmand River Valley, which is a huge wheat-production area in the South.

Then, one should go back and look at the 1950s, when the U.S. was building all this. Most of the Helmand River dams, and the barrages for agricultural purposes, were built by the Americans.

And, at one point in time, the capital of Helmand, which is today also the capital of opium, probably, is known as Lashkar-ga. The *ga* means fort, and *lashkar* means soldiers. So, a fort for the soldiers. But the Lashkar-ga, once upon a time, in the 1950s, I have gone through articles which said that Lashkar-ga was going to be the New York of Afghanistan—that's what the Americans were saying. That it will be the most dazzling city, in the middle of the desert, and all that kind of thing.

All that is gone. The bombing, the incessant war for 30 years, civil war, then the foreign troops, and the Taliban, and everything that Afghanistan has gone through so far, has destroyed everything. All the infrastructure is gone, excepting the railroad that surrounds Afghanistan, which is a good thing, but in the present context, is also a bad thing, because it takes the opium and heroin all over the place.

## British Imperial Influence

**Steinberg:** Let me jump in, because I think what Tanu just went through gets to a very fundamental thing here, which is that we're talking about a Thirty Years War, and we're talking about an Opium War. These are two hallmarks of the British Empire, and the British have historically looked at this whole area, as an area of their colonial sphere of influence. And I think it's important to remember that we have two situations globally, which stand out above all others, as the running sores that just become more and more entrenched, more and more difficult to conceive of a way out of. One is this situation in South Asia, and other is the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In both cases, you had areas of British imperial control—a British mandate in the case of Palestine. And

when the British, at the end of World War II, were forced to face a regroupment moment, where they could no longer maintain their colonial empire in the previous form, in both South Asia, and in the Middle East, what they did on their way out the door, was set up partitions that were aimed at creating permanent conflict.

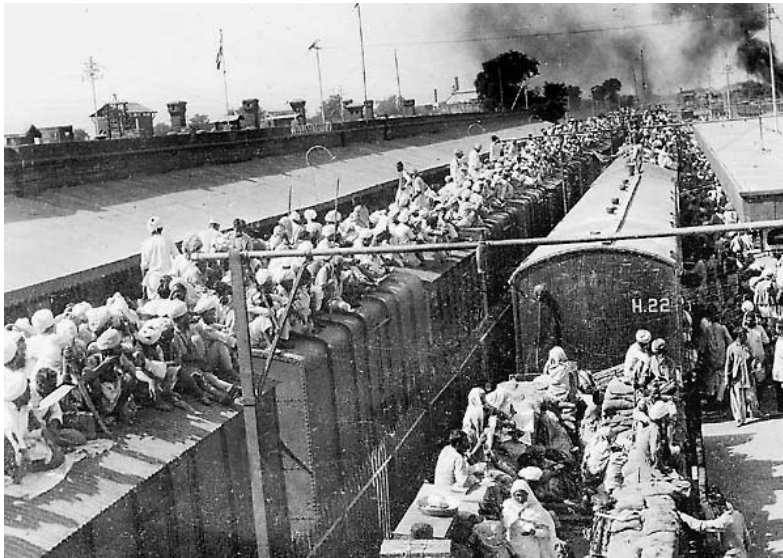
And in fact, some of the Americans whom I've spoken with, senior retired military people, some of the people directly involved in this belated, serious attempt to do a policy review, have said that you have to look at the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, from the standpoint that there are two overlapping, simultaneous wars going on: an American-commanded NATO war, a coalition war, against al-Qaeda and Taliban, and then elements of the continuing India-Pakistan conflict, which overlay this situation. And if you don't take that into account, instead of the conventional way it's presented, as NATO vs. the terrorists, you really miss the boat.

Because Pakistan, especially the Pakistani military, looks at Afghanistan as their strategic depth. India has been heavily involved historically in backing the Northern Alliance against the Taliban; throughout much of the 1990s, you had that phase of the civil war in Afghanistan, in which, really, you had a surrogate war between India, backing the Northern Alliance, and the Pakistani ISI [Inter-Intelligence Services], backing the Taliban. There are elements of the current situation, particularly with the dilemma of how to deal with the Karzai government, and what kind of new government is going to exist, once the electoral mess gets sorted out—you've got this other dimension. And in a certain sense, just as the Middle East is plagued by the legacy and the continuation of the Sykes-Picot imperial division of that region, you've got a similar process in South Asia.

Tanu, you've written about this in great depth, and your articles from *EIR* are being picked up all over the place, as food for thought for people within the region, coming to grips with this. Do you want to say something more on what I just went through?

**Maitra:** Yes, I just want to add one more thing: that when the British Raj left the Indian subcontinent, they broke it into two. They were there for almost 200 years, and the entire elite of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, a third nation, were developed by the British. When they left, there were two nations, and the mindset that they created would not allow the conflicts that they left behind, to be resolved.

One of the hallmarks of the British Empire is that; and the way you build your empire with a small number



Millennium Photo

*The British-orchestrated partition of India in 1947 resulted in the greatest migration of people in history, as 14.5 million people sought safety in either Muslim Pakistan or predominantly Hindu India. Catastrophic sectarian violence ensued: Estimates of deaths range from 500,000 to 1 million. Here, refugees are crammed into a train in East Punjab, India.*

of people, is that you always create conflicts between adjacent groups. This is often been called divide-and-rule policy. But, when you are brought up with that ideology, with that education, it the only system that you are aware of; but you are now heading an independent nation—as it happened in Africa all over, so Africa broke up into small nations, hundreds of nations.

In India-Pakistan, a similar kind of thing exists, that they do not know how to resolve the conflict, because the British Empire *never* resolves any conflict. They *create* conflicts. It is through the creation of conflict that they get hold of the land mass, and therefore the looting and the tax collection, and that was the basic, fundamental of empire-building.

So, when the British left, the existing conflicts between the Indians and the Pakistanis just festered, and now the Subcontinent is broken up into three nations—now Bangladesh has been created, because Pakistan couldn't resolve its own conflict with its eastern wing.

And now, a similar kind of thing is developing in Pakistan. Pakistan's western part, which is the tribal area and Balochistan, has not been taken care of, has not undergone any development. So, it has become criminalized, drugs, smuggling, etc., and all the other things, the criminalization, have alienated the population of that area from mainstream Pakistanis. And Pakistan couldn't resolve that conflict.



*One face of the British Empire in India: Viceroy Lord Curzon and Lady Curzon, after a tiger hunt in 1903.*

And then you come to Jammu and Kashmir. Now, Jammu and Kashmir not only involves India and Pakistan, but it borders China as well. And they couldn't resolve this one.

This mindset that the British have created, is very a very important thing.

## The Financial Dimension

Now, one other thing that I want to add to what Jeff was addressing on Afghanistan, is that Afghanistan doesn't have oil, doesn't have gas, doesn't have anything. Afghanistan is kind of a buffer. If you go south of Afghanistan, you'll find oil and gas all over. If you go west of it, you will find oil and gas. If you go north of it, the same. So, the British considered that this area is not important for anybody, but, for the Empire, it's a very important area. From here you control Central Asia, you control the Middle East, you control the area west of Afghanistan—that is, Azerbaijan, and all that area.

So, for the British, Afghanistan is extremely important, but Afghanistan cannot generate any cash. The only cash it can generate is out of opium. So, when they came in here—this is the first time they've had a long stay, an eight-year stay—other times they got kicked out—they used opium to fund the war to a large extent. And one of things that must be pointed out, is that now that the global financial system has collapsed, one thing





Princeton University



EIRNS/Dan Sturman

*British intelligence hand Dr. Bernard Lewis (left) sold the Carter Administration on his idea that the West should back the spread of Islamic fundamentalism as a “crescent of crisis” on the southern flank of the U.S.S.R. Then-National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (right) was one of his principal instruments. Now, the chickens have come home to roost.*

that has *not* collapsed is this criminal source of money generation. This money is something in the order of \$400-500 billion, in street value, and this is going to the criminal elements, going into offshore banking, going into the City of London, coming into Wall Street, and this is how many of these “respectable banks” are surviving.

## The British-Saudi Connection

**Baker:** Do you want to say anything more, Jeff, on the pedigree of this? You’re describing this specific world-class opium producing center, but this gets us into the international Dope, Inc. Go back 100 and more years, to the China dope trade and so forth. But also, allied with networks very active in this, you have exposed some of the British-Saudi collaboration to keep this all going.

**Steinberg:** Yes, let me say a few things about it, and then, again, I think Tanu should pick up on this, because he’s written some really extraordinarily important, and very in-depth articles on this.<sup>2</sup>

2. “China-Russia-India Accord: Now, More Than Ever,” *EIR*, Oct. 23, 2009, [http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009\\_40-49/2009-41/pdf/eirv36n41.pdf](http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009_40-49/2009-41/pdf/eirv36n41.pdf), “The British Plan: Send More Troops, To Parti-

But, to set the larger framework: It’s broadly known that, going all the way back to the 1970s, when King Fahd was the monarch of Saudi Arabia, that he began a program of funding the export of Wahhabi fundamentalism. South Asia was a very, very important target of this. There’s an earlier history of this kind of spread of fundamentalist Islam into that part of the world, but I would say that the modern period began in the mid-’70s, when King Fahd went on the offensive against communism. Particularly when Jimmy Carter was elected President of the United States, it was no secret that the Saudis thought that the U.S. would wimp out on the Cold War, and so, undoubtedly with an enormous amount of British prodding, they began building up massive numbers of *madrassas* (religious schools), and began spreading fundamentalism throughout this whole area.

At the same time, there was a strategic deployment to the United States, of a senior British intelligence official named Dr. Bernard Lewis, who came out of the old British Arab Bureau, and who came to Princeton University, became an advisor first to Henry Kissinger, and then was much more actively involved as an advisor to the Carter Administration. He promoted the idea that the West should encourage the spread of Islamic fundamentalism across the southern tier of the Soviet Union. They call this the “crescent of crisis.” And so, with heavy Saudi involvement, with the British prodding Brzezinski and others who were profiled as being obsessively anti-Russian, anti-Soviet, they spread the idea that Islamic fundamentalism was a powerful weapon to be used against the Soviet Union, because godless communism is the enemy of Islamic fundamentalism.

And so, you had this alliance between the Saudi and British monarchies, to promote fundamentalism.

And by the mid-1980s, we’d already seen the Islamic Revolution in Iran, other developments, the simultaneous beginning of pretty massive Anglo-American-French-Israeli funding with the Saudis, of the recruitment of what came to be known as the Afghan mujahideen freedom fighters. They were being recruited even before the Soviet Red Army invaded Afghanistan, on Christmas Eve of 1979. So, in other words, with a major role by the Saudis, a major role by the British, and a major amount of stupidity on the part

tion Afghanistan,” *EIR*, Oct. 9, 2009, [http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009\\_30-39/2009-39/pdf/eirv36n39.pdf](http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009_30-39/2009-39/pdf/eirv36n39.pdf), “Who Is the Enemy in Afghanistan? Look Who Created the Taliban: Saudi Arabia and the Brits,” *EIR*, Oct. 2, 2009, [http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009\\_30-39/2009-38/pdf/eirv36n38.pdf](http://larouchehub.com/eiw/private/2009/2009_30-39/2009-38/pdf/eirv36n38.pdf)

of the United States (the Carter Administration), we were off and running. And this was picked up with even greater enthusiasm during the Reagan period.

I remember being up on Capitol Hill, and seeing people who would later reincarnate as the neoconservatives during the George W. Bush period, being the tour guides for the people we are now denouncing as the Taliban, or as narco-lords, opium lords, touring them around Capitol Hill as freedom fighters—the identical people! People used to praise Osama bin Laden as the Tom Marriot of Peshawar. He ran a hospitality operation for the incoming mujahideen fighters recruited from the Arab world and North Africa. They basically emptied out their jails and sent people in to fight in Afghanistan.

But, in 1985, a much more durable deal was struck between Saudi Arabia and Britain, which was ostensibly an arms-for-oil deal, called al-Yamamah. But *EIR*'s own unique investigation has shown that what actually happened is, that yes, there was military equipment manufactured by the Brits, sold to the Saudi Air Force; yes, there were shipments of oil that were used to pay for this. But, within this transaction, enormous amounts of oil were basically sold on the spot market at tremendous markup, and those funds were set aside into an offshore, Anglo-Saudi covert slush fund, for conducting clandestine intelligence operations. At the time it was all vectored against the Soviet Union—kind of a continuation of King Fahd's jihad against "Godless communism." But now, you had a mechanism where hundreds of billions of dollars was sloshing around, available to provide weapons for the mujahideen, to do all kinds of things.

These funds continue to exist. The al-Yamamah program under which this was launched, still exists to this day, hundreds of billions of dollars later. So, you actually have a structure of this Anglo-Saudi cooperation, and unfortunately, successive U.S. governments have liked the idea of being in on the game, and having access to these funds for various purposes.

That's one aspect of understanding how this South Asia crisis is a product of other elements of the Anglo-



ICC

*Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh (with cane) at a 1952 court case, United Kingdom v. Iran, which upheld Iran's nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Mossadegh (who was ousted in a coup a year later) understood the evil duplicity of the British Empire.*

Saudi cooperation. Clearly, intellectually, the British were driving this, and the Saudis were the piggy bank; they had this kind of uneasy coexistence between Aramco and the Wahhabi religious beliefs, that still defines tension points inside Saudi culture today.

Tanu, you may want to say more.

## How the British Play the Game

**Maitra:** I want to add one other thing, throw it into the discussion.

Britain had long been exploiting Iran, and had been in trouble with Iran going back to the Anglo-Iranian Oil days, during the time of Mohammed Mossadegh [Iranian Prime Minister, 1951-53, removed in a coup by the CIA]. Systemically, Iran had come to understand that Britain was one of their worst enemies, and they have said it, and Mossadegh had said it very clearly. In an interview, when the Iranian oil privatization was coming up, in 1953, President Truman sent Averell Harriman to Mossadegh, to cool it down. And this was reported: Vernon Walters—he's long gone—was an aide to Averell Harriman at the time, and he was in a meeting in which Mossadegh was telling Averell Harriman: You do not know them [the British], they are evil, and whatever they touch, they sully it.

Harriman himself was a bit of an Anglophile, no question about it, and he thought that Mossadegh was accusing *all* the Britons of being evil. And he said of the Britons—there are good people, there are bad people,





*Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in Cairo, after announcing the nationalization of the Suez Canal, Aug. 1, 1956. He was a nation builder—maybe not a perfect nation builder; but a nation builder just the same; and the British-steered financial oligarchy wanted him out.*

like among others. But Mossadegh was not addressing an individual Briton; he was talking about the British Empire.

Now, for the Saudis, who preach the most orthodox, medieval variety of Islam, which is called Wahhabism—to them, an Iranian Shi'ite is as much of an enemy as a Hindu, or a Christian, or a Jew. So, one of the things that the British picked up, was that in order to fight Iran, in order to keep Iran under its thumb, it must use Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia was used in this particular case, after the Soviets were defeated, and Afghanistan fell into a civil war. At that point, there was no hope for anybody coming to power in Kabul, so the British-Saudi plan said: Let's create something that no Afghan mujahideen leader can fight, which is the Islamic flag. So, they put up the Islamic flag, and created the Taliban.

The Taliban was created in 1994-95, and they put up the Islamic flag. All the mujahideen leaders who had been fighting with each other before, couldn't fight any more, and at the same time, they sucked the Pakistanis in, because Pakistanis saw that if we have a virulently anti-Hindu, anti-Christian, anti-everything, anti-Shi'a, anti-Jew, government in Afghanistan, it will be very anti-India as well. So, from Pakistan's point of view, in order to develop strategy in depth, and to make that a solid bastion, they supported this. They were not anti-

Iran, per se; they had nothing else. They had no intent other than using Afghanistan as their strategic depth.

The only way the British could come into Afghanistan at that point in time, and have any influence, was riding on the shoulders of Saudi Arabia. The necessity was for them to have control over Central Asia, keep Iran down, and have control over Middle East oil.

So this was the way this Saudi-British operation worked for quite a long time. And one of the things that Jeff pointed out, is that we exposed the corruption and all that, which is involved in all this, the monetary side. But to understand the British-Saudi stuff, you have to remember T.H. Lawrence "of Arabia"; they brought in the Bedouins from Saudi Arabia to rule Iraq, because Iraq is one of the most civilized Islamic

states. And then, Syria, which is the other most civilized—Syria and Lebanon at the time. So they put two Bedouins in the two most civilized countries, in order to control and destroy the Islamic countries.

So, the British game in this is very, very old, and has a long root. If we don't understand that, then we will never be able to fight it.

**Baker:** If you go back to cover the sweep that you two have been talking about, since the Second World War, on the physical economy side, any development there might have been, was suppressed.

Take Egypt, for example, where you had a development decade, with the building of the Aswan Dam, with other intentions, but all of this was beaten back, and suppressed, and so you had an actual degradation of what could have been development in the region.

**Maitra:** This is a bit general, but the fact is that Egypt did have quite a well-established leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. But at that time, our main enemy was the Soviet Union, and anybody who had any shade of red, or anybody who had any connection to the Soviet Union, was immediately attacked as a socialist, and a potential communist. But Nasser was also a nation-builder at the time—I'm not saying he was the greatest nation-builder, but he was a nation-builder. (Saddam Hussein, in a cer-

tain way, was too, and we fought a war against Saddam Hussein—actually, two.)

But Nasser and all these people were dismantled, or forced to leave, because they had their socialist connections. And in a country like Iraq, or a country like Egypt, when you remove these people, it's like a big tree falls in a forest. And then you move in with your Muslim fundamentalists, your Muslim Brotherhood, and this kind of thing, in order to gain control of the place. I actually think that the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, or what direction Iraq will go in the coming years—hopefully not, but there's a strong possibility that it will be again the British-run Muslim Brotherhood. It could be of Shi'a variety, could be of Sunni variety, but the fact of the matter is, [the British would use them] to pull these countries back again, from developing themselves and taking leadership in the area.

### Pakistan's Dilemma

**Baker:** Do you want to say something about Pakistan, Jeff? And also, before the hour is out, the opposite approach, or the higher level, of Mr. LaRouche, talking about four leading powers in the world, leading the way out of this British divide, conquer, and ruin.

**Steinberg:** I think it's also important to underscore that the British make mistakes; they miscalculate. And very often, the miscalculation comes up when you get some effort on the part of leading circles in the United States to sort things out, and figure out how to get out of a mess. We're in a total mess in South Asia, and there's no light at the end of the tunnel, whatsoever. There's the Afghanistan situation, which suffers from the fact that there's really no credible government at this point—we're waiting to hear today whether they're going to actually insist on a second round of elections. The first round was so tarnished by fraud that they're now saying that President Karzai did not get the 50% plus one vote needed to avoid a runoff.

But in Pakistan, there's been an attempt on the part of some of the people in the Obama Administration, not necessarily with any great input from the President himself, but the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mullen, is in constant contact with the head of the Pakistani military, General Kiyani, and with the head of the ISI, the intelligence service, the military intelligence ser-



Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR)

*The Pakistan Army is taking a dimmer view of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, now that its own facilities and personnel are being attacked by suicide bombers. A possible phase-shift?*

vice, General Pasha. And we [the United States] have been providing a certain amount of assistance. We've been trying to make sure that the very weak President Zardari, the widower of Benazir Bhutto, is able to hold on to power. We're trying to do some things to help them out economically. And right now, we're at a very telling moment.

Historically, the ISI has supported these various fundamentalist groups. Really, the Taliban, as Tanu was saying a few minutes ago, are kind of "the new kids on the block." They have only existed since the mid-1990s. But you have other groups, like Lashkar, which was involved in the Mumbai attacks, and a number of other organizations that have a much longer history, much deeper roots, ties to London, ties to Saudi Arabia through financing. And those groups, I think, have made a significant tactical mistake.

In the last two weeks, you've had a whole series of car bombings, suicide bombings, many of them either targetting civilian populations, or targetting military facilities themselves. And so, you've got a situation now where the Taliban inside Pakistan is a different phenomenon than the Taliban next door in Afghanistan, making sure that the Pakistanis have strategic depth, and that they don't have a quasi-surrogate Indian government in power in Kabul. But the embarrassment to the Pakistani military, of these recent attacks, I think may represent a phase-shift. That's what I'm hearing



U.S. State Department

*Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in Geneva on March 6, 2009. If the commission the two set up for U.S.-Russian cooperation makes progress, this would be very helpful for creation of positive alliances in Eurasia.*

from some people in Washington, just in the last 24 hours: that the Pakistani Army is building up between 50,000 and 75,000 troops, and as of today, is moving into one of these tribal area strongholds in Waziristan. And it looks to be one of the most serious actual attempts to break the back of these people, whereas always before, there's been a little bit of military action, and then a ceasefire negotiated, where the net effect is that a safe haven, under the protection of the Pakistani military, has been maintained.

What I'm hearing from people in Washington, is that, with a lot of encouragement from the United States, the Pakistanis are now dead serious about moving in and wiping out this fundamentalist infrastructure, including those elements of Taliban and al-Qaeda that everyone knows are in Pakistan, and not in Afghanistan right now, including Mullah Omar. And as to whether bin-Laden and Zawahiri are still alive, they're in that Pakistan area, if they are alive.

## Prospects for Regional Cooperation

So, the prospect now, is that you could see a significant blow delivered to this Anglo-Saudi-sponsored fundamentalist apparatus, if this military operation is successful—and we're not going to know that for months, probably. But if it proceeds seriously, and it is successful, then it creates a very different situation in Afghanistan as well, and opens up the possibility of some kind of stabilization, and the ability to develop a solution

that has a political, economic, and security dimension. If the U.S. negotiations, as part of the P5+1 [the UN Security Council Permanent Five plus Germany], successfully go forward with Iran, that's another big plus.

If the Hillary Clinton-Sergei Lavrov commission for U.S.-Russian cooperation gets some real traction, that's a very big plus. You could potentially have key elements of a regional alliance, where the real interest for stability is there. If you think of this as a NATO mission, you get into all the complications of the Brits, the Scandinavians, the Dutch. You know, there's a very strong appetite in a number of these European countries for the dope money coming out of the opium and heroin sales from Afghanistan. They run Dubai as their sort of latter-day equivalent of what Hong Kong was during the 19th-Century opium wars.

And so, if you can get cooperation among the regional powers, with the United States; get Russia and China in on that, because they have strong vested interests in that; and if the Pakistanis are encouraged, and are successful in cracking down on this apparatus on the Pakistani side of the border, then you can start to see the shape of an exit strategy for the United States from Afghanistan, and no big U.S. troop buildup, but the development of a regional strategy that has stability, economic development, and cooperation among neighbors at the core of it. And it starts getting at some of the underlying British games, in pitting India against Pakistan, which is the thing that's got to be solved for this ever to be stabilized.

**Maitra:** I'm fully confident that the Pakistan Army, if allowed to carry out a campaign fully, is now in a mindset in which they will be wiping out this al-Qaeda-Pakistan Taliban network. But the real way to defeat the British is, basically, you have to integrate people. Conflicts are where the British move in. Once you have a conflict, even within the country ... like what exists today between Pakistan's tribal areas, Baloch, and the Pakistani Punjabis, and Sindis, etc., etc.—as long as those groupings are not integrated through a long-term policy of development, this will definitely create a crisis.

At the same time, it is also very important for the leaders of these major nations—like China, India, Russia, and Pakistan as well—to recognize that by resolving this conflict, they will be able to open up the entirety of the Eurasian land mass for the development of the people whom they serve. You know, they are not leaders by themselves. They are leaders because people



FIGURE 2

## Main Routes of the Eurasian Land-Bridge



EIRNS/John Sigerson

*The LaRouche movement's plan for a Eurasian Land-Bridge, and eventually a World Land-Bridge, can only be fully realized by defeating the British, and thereby their endless manipulation of regional conflicts.*

made them leaders, and they are supposed to serve them. By maintaining this conflict, they are depriving the people of the benefits they could get, if India-Pakistan, India-China, had huge rail networks, huge infrastructural development: water coming from here, going there, power coming from here, and going there—this entire infrastructure development which is quite possible. . . . All it needs, is that you have to defeat the British by overcoming these conflicts, and taking a developmental mindset.

Everybody benefits from the integration process, and everybody suffers because of the conflicts. So, why hold on to this British empire-building method? We are not building any empire any more. We are trying to serve our people the very best way; we have enough problems to begin with. And so, I think that's what is necessary for the leaders to understand.

This is what Mr. LaRouche has been saying for years and years. . . .

From time to time, political leaders have emerged in South Asia who were moving in the direction of resolving the conflicts: Pakistan's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—he was killed; Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh—he was assassinated; Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi in India were assassinated. These leaders were trying to outmaneuver the Brits by abandoning that conflict-generation game, and trying to integrate things. Not that they have succeeded enormously, but long before they could, they were removed. So that is always the threat. . . .

**Baker:** We've had terrible evil carried out against these nations, but we can reverse it. And this is the opportunity we have now. We conclude on that note: that we can make this the end phase of these failures and evil.