

Introduction

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 opened the eyes of many to the turbulence and turmoil of political events in the Arab and Muslim world. Those attacks to some extent signalled the beginning of a new age – both in terms of the new dangers to world order from amorphous, fluid, non-state terror structures such as Al-Qaeda, and in terms of the response to these dangers on the part of Western governments, under United States leadership, in the new ‘War on Terror’.

President George W. Bush, and along with him many respected political commentators, characterized the 9/11 atrocity as an attack on freedom and civilization by people who hate both. Indeed, many opinion-makers deride the idea that the 11 September terrorist attacks could have been somehow linked to American foreign policy. To seek such connections may be seen as adding insult to injury or unpatriotic. At the same time, it is clear that such an outrage could not appear simply out of the blue.

No attempt to understand the new ‘War on Terror’ and the terrorist attacks that preceded it can succeed without attempting to analyse the context of both. Such an analysis, of course, is not an attempt to justify such appalling terrorism – but simply to scientifically discover the political, economic and historic policies on the part of the United States and the West that may have cultivated the extreme psychological grievances that inspire terror.

The conventional wisdom portrays the 9/11 attacks and previous such terrorist atrocities against US and Western targets in a false ahistorical light that isolates such events from the

wider context of Western policy in the non-Western world. The general idea is that the terrorists responsible for such atrocities, due to their inexplicably and intrinsically evil nature, possess an unfathomable hatred against Western civilization and the values it supposedly holds most dear. This idea is integral to legitimizing the new 'War on Terror' that has commenced in the aftermath of 9/11.

Harvard political scientist Professor Samuel Huntington is well known for establishing a theoretical context for this idea in the form of an academically acceptable theory of international relations. His 'clash of civilizations' thesis is a particularly stark example of how many elements of Western academia attempt to justify the concept of an unfathomable Islam-West divide and a new, inevitable cold war with Islam.¹ The thesis is also highly influential in US policy-making circles. Tim Hames, a leading politician in the Republican Party who is very close to the Bush administration, claimed only one day after the attacks that Huntington's thesis was dominating the US political scene.² Huntington has most recently presented a summary of his work in an article titled 'The Age of Muslim Wars' for *Newsweek* magazine. The article's introductory synopsis asserts that:

Contemporary global politics is the age of Muslim wars. Muslims fight each other and fight non-Muslims far more often than do peoples of other civilizations. Muslim wars have replaced the cold war as the principal form of international conflict. These wars include wars of terrorism, guerrilla wars, civil wars and interstate conflicts. These instances of Muslim violence could congeal into one major clash of civilizations between Islam and the West or between Islam and the Rest.³

Huntington's thesis builds upon a long tradition of Western political animosity – motivated by geostrategic interests – in the Middle East, since the end of the cold war. Such animosity, it

seems, is justified by repeated reference to the intrinsically violent character of the 'Other', in this case, of 'Islam'. This ideological duality between the intrinsically superior civilization of the West and the intrinsically bestial civilization of the 'Other' is not a new phenomenon in international relations, but rather builds upon a longstanding tradition of warmongering.

Indeed, the new 'War on Terror' being led by the United States in the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks is an extension of the same fundamental plans and principles that have motivated and directed US foreign policy since the Second World War. On the pretext of fighting against international terrorism, the US Government is in reality attempting to expand and consolidate its global pre-eminence in accordance with longstanding strategies that have been contemplated and elaborated over a period of decades. The roots of the new 'War on Terror' go all the way back to the international political climate that resulted in the cold war with the Soviet Union. In order to clearly grasp the continuity between these successive periods in the development of world order, we need to go back to the foundations of that order under US direction.

Post-War Planning for World Control

The essential structure of world order envisaged by the US Government in the post-Second World War period was candidly described in a now declassified top-secret planning report produced by the US State Department's policy planning staff, headed at the time by George Kennan. The secret memo, produced in February 1948, states as follows:

We have about 50 per cent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 per cent of its population . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period

is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives . . . We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction . . . We should cease to talk about vague and . . . unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we will have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.⁴

This document affirms that primary US goals are orientated towards securing economic domination, or in other words, control over world resources. This domination must be institutionalized by establishing a global pattern of political relationships throughout the world, in which such US domination can be maintained. Altruism and world-benefaction are therefore not relevant to US goals. In fact, the very ideals that have always been traditionally associated with the United States are here being dismissed as ‘vague’ and ‘unreal objectives’. US monopoly over world resources will inevitably create a global economic disparity, at the expense of the human rights, living standards and decisions of the populations of the non-Western world.

It comes as no surprise then that the process of decolonization initiated by the British Empire was, in reality, an attempt to reconfigure that Empire in order to allow colonial control to continue to survive in the face of increasing problems. Decolonization therefore constituted a front for covert colonialism – or rather, neo-colonialism.

As historian Professor Cranford Pratt of the University of Toronto observes in his study of decolonization, ‘all that Hailey, Cohen and other colleagues [the British planners who drew up the plans for decolonization] advocated can be interpreted as

shrewdly designed to protect and advance British economic and political interests in these changing circumstances.⁵ In fact, the planners even admitted that the essence of the so-called process of decolonization ‘was a plan to convert (or reconvert) formal into informal empire as the need arose’ in order that ‘such colonial reform would extend the life of colonial control’.⁶ Thus, regarding the process of decolonization in the Middle East, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee observed in 1947 that ‘we shall constantly appear to be supporting vested interests and reaction against reform and revolution in the interests of the poor’ – in other words, maintaining the entrenched domestic social, economic and political structures under colonial rule favouring colonial interests, despite the withdrawal of colonial forces.⁷ The form of imperialism that resulted from this strategy was described well by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first post-colonial president. Nkrumah, as part of a growing awareness among the elite in post-colonial Africa, saw first hand that the granting of formal independence and national sovereignty to African states by the colonial powers was a purely token gesture that failed to substantially alter relations between the former and the latter. The term he coined to describe this stage of imperialism was ‘neo-colonialism’:

Neo-colonialism is . . . the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.⁸

But as British global power steadily declined, the US gladly took its place, taking Britain in particular under its wing as a

‘junior partner in an orbit of power predominantly under the American aegis’, as described in a declassified British document.⁹ A series of other documents produced during the Second World War by the War and Peace Studies Project of the Council on Foreign Relations, which enlisted the participation of top government planners, confirms that ‘the British Empire as it existed in the past will never reappear . . . the United States may have to take its place’.¹⁰ Policy planners set out to fulfil the ‘requirement[s] of the United States in a world in which it proposes to hold unquestioned power’ (1940). This implied the implementation of ‘an integrated policy to achieve military and economic supremacy for the United States’, including the plan ‘to secure the limitation of any exercise of sovereignty by foreign nations that constitutes a threat to the world area essential for the security and economic prosperity of the United States and the Western Hemisphere’.

The documents further state that the United States ‘must cultivate a mental view toward world settlement after this war which will enable us to impose our own terms, amounting perhaps to a *pax-Americana*’. Accordingly, it was decided that the definition of the ‘security interests’ of the United States be extended to include regions of the world that are ‘strategically necessary for world control’. A State Department memorandum of April 1944 clarified the philosophy behind this concept of Western ‘access to resources’.¹¹ The philosophy was: equal access for American companies to world resources, but not for others;¹² the US domination of Western Hemispheric production while US holdings are diversified elsewhere;¹³ and in summary, ‘the preservation of the absolute position presently obtaining, and therefore vigilant protection of existing concessions in United States hands coupled with insistence upon the Open Door principle of equal opportunity for the United States companies in new areas’.¹⁴

It was well understood that these policies, if expressed honestly, would be highly unpalatable to the general public around the world. For example, Council on Foreign Relations documents from mid-1941 recognized that a ‘formulation of a statement of war aims for propaganda purposes is very different from a formulation of one defining the true national interest’. It was further noted: ‘If war aims are stated, which seem to be concerned solely with Anglo-American imperialism, they will offer little to people in the rest of the world . . . Such aims would also strengthen the most reactionary elements in the United States and the British Empire. The interests of other peoples should be stressed, not only those of Europe, but also of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This would have a better propaganda effect.’¹⁵

Propaganda and the Necessity of a Permanent Threat to ‘Civilization’

In accordance with the need to establish ideological legitimacy for Anglo-American imperialism, it was essential – as part and parcel of war propaganda – to manufacture a global threat that would provide justification for military interventions designed to expand the US empire.

By fabricating a malignant global threat to the very existence of Western civilization, the great powers could legitimize the illegitimate use of force. And this is how the cold war, the apparently noble defence against global Communist aggression, escalated. Former US statesman and noted scholar George Kennan, who had originally proposed the aggressive US strategy of Russian containment, admits that the threat of Russian military expansion that justified US policy during the cold war did not exist:

I . . . went to great lengths to disclaim the view, imputed to me by implication . . . that containment was a matter of stationing mili-

tary forces around the Soviet borders and preventing any outbreak of Soviet military aggressiveness. I protested . . . against the implication that the Russians were aspiring to invade other areas and that the task of American policy was to prevent them from doing so. ‘The Russians don’t want,’ I insisted, ‘to invade anyone. It is not their tradition . . . They don’t want war of any kind.’¹⁶

Kennan also noted that ‘the image of a Stalinist Russia poised and yearning to attack the West, and deterred only by [US] possession of atomic weapons, was largely a creation of Western imagination’.¹⁷

The Soviet/Communist threat was therefore certainly exaggerated far beyond reality to legitimize Anglo-American imperialism. This has been further documented in detail by British historian Mark Curtis, a former Research Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, in his book *The Ambiguities of Power*. Curtis digs deep into newly declassified British documents, proving country-by-country that the real motivation behind US military interventions during the cold war was not Soviet deterrence but the crushing of popular, indigenous nationalist movements for independence, and the establishment of US control over strategic regions.

On 1 January 1999, *The Guardian* reported on some such documents from 1968. Among them was one based on an analysis by the Foreign Office Joint Intelligence Committee, summarized by *The Guardian* as follows:

The Soviet Union had no intention of launching a military attack on the West at the height of the cold war, British military and intelligence chiefs privately believed, in stark contrast to what Western politicians and military leaders were saying in public about the ‘Soviet threat’. ‘The Soviet Union will not deliberately start general war or even limited war in Europe,’ a briefing for the British chiefs of staff – marked Top Secret, UK Eyes Only, and

headed *The Threat: Soviet Aims and Intentions* – declared in June 1968. ‘Soviet foreign policy had been cautious and realistic,’ the department argued, and despite the Vietnam War, the Russians and their allies had ‘continued to make contacts in all fields with the West and to maintain a limited but increasing political dialogue with Nato powers ...’

National Security Council Directive – NSC68 – clearly affirms that US military interventions during the cold war would have been pursued whether or not the Soviet Union constituted a threat. ‘Our overall policy at the present time may be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish ... This broad intention embraces two subsidiary positions. One is a policy which we would probably pursue even if there were no Soviet threat.’

But as Kennan confirmed, there was no such ‘monolithic and ruthless conspiracy’ emanating from the Soviet Union, as it had been described by President John F. Kennedy. That did not stop British and American government officials from pretending that there was, in order to justify imperialism. Former Under-Secretary of State and future Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett said pointedly about the international Communist threat, ‘if we can sell every useless article known to man in large quantities, we should be able to sell our very fine story in larger quantities’.¹⁸

During the cold war, as noted by historian Howard Zinn, Professor Emeritus at Boston University, the US administrations of the time ‘worked to create an atmosphere of crisis and cold war’. Even though ‘the rivalry with the Soviet Union was real’, the United States ‘presented the Soviet Union as not just a rival but an immediate threat. In a series of moves abroad and at home, it established a climate of fear – a hysteria about Communism – which would steeply escalate the military bud-

get, stimulate the economy with war-related orders. This combination of policies would permit more aggressive actions abroad, more repressive actions at home ... Revolutionary movements in Europe and Asia,' that were in fact 'nationalist' in orientation, 'were described to the American public as examples of Soviet expansionism'.¹⁹

The process of empire-building that occurred during this period has been extensively analysed by Professor Andrew Bacevich, Director of the Center for International Relations at Boston University, in his seminal study *American Empire*. Professor Bacevich's well-documented thesis is that the emergence of the American empire was the meticulously planned product of a concerted design. Building upon the works of the American historians Charles Beard and William Appleman Williams, Bacevich observes that during the cold war the US was consciously attempting to expand its empire using every excuse possible resulting from the bipolar division of global power. Prior to the cold war period, the US exploited the two World Wars in the same manner. The basic policy was: to conduct pre-emptive strikes often without justification, when considered necessary (for instance, when annexing the Spanish empire); delay entry into world conflicts until potential competitors were suitably weakened; intervene to stabilize the situation and collect the spoils. The US was thus able to establish its global leadership unchallenged.²⁰

Thus, as former State Department official William Blum observes, between 1945 and 1999 the US had conducted extremely serious military interventions against over 70 nations to secure the following basic imperatives:

- making the world safe for American corporations;
- enhancing the financial statements of defence contractors at

home who have contributed generously to members of Congress;

- preventing the rise of any society that might serve as a successful example of an alternative to the capitalist model;
- extending political and economic hegemony over as wide an area as possible, as befits a 'great power.'²¹

As Bacevich concludes:

The question that urgently demands attention – the question that Americans can no longer afford to dodge – is not whether the United States has become an imperial power. The question is what sort of empire they intend theirs to be. For policy makers to persist in pretending otherwise – to indulge in myths of American innocence or fantasies about unlocking the secrets of history – is to increase the likelihood that the answers they come up with will be wrong. That way lies not just the demise of the American empire but great danger for what used to be known as the American republic.²²

Post-Cold War Propaganda

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, US plans and strategies for the expansion and consolidation of the American empire required a new threat, and a new pretext, to provide humanitarian legitimacy to those plans and strategies. Successive US administrations thus began working incessantly on new threats and pretexts with which to replace the dead threat of Communism. Several spectres of doom came to the fore: rogue states, weapons of mass destruction and, most dangerous of all, Islamic terror.

Former bureau chief of the *Jerusalem Post* and adjunct scholar of the Cato Institute, Leon T. Hadar, documented in the early 1990s how terrorism with an Islamic face became the most

prominent new threat: ‘Now that the cold war is becoming a memory, America’s foreign policy establishment has begun searching for new enemies. Possible new villains include “instability” in Europe – ranging from German resurgence to new Russian imperialism – the “vanishing” ozone layer, nuclear proliferation, and narco-terrorism. Topping the list of potential new global bogeymen, however, are the Yellow Peril, the alleged threat to American economic security emanating from East Asia, and the so-called Green Peril (green is the colour of Islam). That peril is symbolized by the Middle Eastern Moslem fundamentalist – the “Fundie”, to use a term coined by *The Economist*.²³ In 1995, then NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes described Islam as ‘at least as dangerous as Communism was’. He added: ‘NATO is much more than a military alliance. It has committed itself to defending basic principles of civilization that bind North American and Western Europe.’²⁴

Mamoun Fandy of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University reports: ‘The US has placed counter-terrorism at the top of its international and domestic agendas, and much of the political mobilization to win support for anti-terrorism measures has been focused on the need to confront and overcome “Muslim fundamentalism” or “Islamic terror”. Domestically, the US Government won support for sweeping new anti-terrorism legislation through repeated references, both veiled and overt, to the threat posed by Islamic terrorists . . . The US identifies all political activities that mobilize using Islamic symbols as “terrorism” aimed at undermining Washington’s grand strategy in the Middle East . . . US policymakers continue to use “Islamic terror” as the replacement for “the Communist menace” or the “Evil Empire”, as the ideological enemy against which all US policy should be aimed. The US is still thinking in state-based, cold war terms.’²⁵

And that, of course, brings us back to the controversial ‘clash

of civilizations' thesis of Samuel Huntington, a thesis which projects the probability of a future cataclysmic war between Western and Islamic civilizations.

11 September and the Function of Terror

The 'clash of civilizations' thesis provides a stunningly convenient ideological framework in which to situate the new threat posed by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is a fluid non-state international network of terrorist cells which has tentacles all over the world, and yet due to its fluidity remains as elusive as ever. And such international Islamic terrorism, the reach of which is indefinite and the defeat of which is indeterminable, provides a permanent spectre of imminent doom that is highly convenient for a US government which plans to conduct worldwide operations to expand and consolidate its hegemony.

The new 'War on Terror' undoubtedly builds upon this pre-9/11 policy in the Middle East, a policy motivated less by the reality of an all-pervading terrorist threat, and more by a long-standing regional 'grand strategy' designed to consolidate and expand US global power. Indeed, the series of interventions and the essential strategy deployed in the new 'War on Terror' were extensively planned prior to the 11 September terrorist attacks, in order to target key strategic regions heavily laden with energy reserves, particularly oil. Scotland's *Sunday Herald* refers to 'a secret blueprint for US global domination' revealing extensive military plans endorsed by 'President Bush and his cabinet ... even before he took power in January 2001 ...'

The blueprint, uncovered by the *Sunday Herald*, for the creation of a 'global Pax Americana' was drawn up for Dick Cheney (now Vice-President), Donald Rumsfeld (Defense Secretary), Paul

Wolfowitz (Rumsfeld's deputy), George W. Bush's younger brother Jeb and Lewis Libby (Cheney's Chief of Staff). The document, entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, was written in September 2000 by the neo-conservative think-tank Project for the New American Century (PNAC).²⁶

Other members of the Bush administration who contributed to the report include: John Bolton, Under-Secretary of State; Stephen Cambone, head of the Pentagon's Office of Program, Analysis and Evaluation; Eliot Cohen and Devon Cross, members of the Defense Policy Board, the powerful Pentagon advisory group; and Dov Zakheim; Defense Department Comptroller.²⁷ The plan outlined in the PNAC document, representing the essential sentiments of Bush's cabinet, is therefore worth exploring here in some detail. Principally, the document supports a 'blueprint for maintaining global US pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests'. It also cites approvingly an earlier 1992 Pentagon document authored by Wolfowitz and Libby advocating that the US must 'discourage advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role'.

In this vein, US armed forces operating abroad are described as 'the cavalry on the new American frontier'. A 'core mission' for the 'cavalry' is to 'fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars'. To thus preserve the 'global Pax Americana', the report concludes that US forces must perform 'constabulary duties' – in other words, act as policeman of the world thus undermining the United Nations. Peacekeeping missions, for instance, 'demand American political leadership rather than that of the United Nations'. Instead of the UN, the United Kingdom is pinpointed as a convenient instrument of the

American empire, or, in the words of the PNAC, 'the most effective and efficient means of exercising American global leadership'. Moreover, this overall imperial blueprint amounts to an 'American grand strategy' that must be advanced for 'as far into the future as possible'.

To secure this state of affairs and to prevent any state from challenging the US, a much larger US military presence must be spread throughout the world in addition to the approximately 130 nations where US forces are already stationed. To that end, permanent military bases must be installed in the Middle East, in south-east Europe, in Latin America and in south-east Asia, where no such bases previously existed. Even further, the report endorses the creation of 'US Space Forces' to dominate space, as well as absolute control of cyberspace to counter 'enemies' attempting to use the internet to thwart US interests.

Most pertinent to this study, the PNAC blueprint shows that Bush's cabinet had planned to establish military control over the Persian Gulf regardless of Saddam Hussein and any threat his regime may or may not have posed to the world or to his own people. 'The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security,' the document notes. 'While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.' In one fell-swoop, the document dispels the myth that the Bush plan to invade Iraq was fundamentally motivated by concerns regarding Saddam's regime such as weapons of mass destruction and so on. Such 'unresolved' issues were only useful in providing 'immediate justification' for an intervention designed to expand 'the new American frontier' in order to maintain 'global US pre-eminence'.

But Iraq is only the beginning. Among the other pertinent points raised by the PNAC report is the fact that 'even should

Saddam pass from the scene', the US intends to maintain bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait permanently, despite domestic opposition. The document further lists several other states as dangerous rogues representing a threat to US designs, namely, North Korea, Libya, Syria and Iran. The existence of such regimes requires the establishment of a 'world-wide command-and-control system' under US tutelage. Iran in particular, the report observes 'may well prove as large a threat to US interests as Iraq has', raising the spectre of another US intervention. Worse still, the document advocates 'regime change' in China, to be supported by increasing 'the presence of American forces in south-east Asia' in order that 'American and allied power' provide 'the spur to the process of democratization in China'. Europe is also targeted as potentially rivalling the US.²⁸

Labour MP Tam Dalyell, the highly regarded father of the House of Commons, described the PNAC report as 'a blueprint for US world domination – a new world order of their making. These are the thought processes of fantasist Americans who want to control the world. I am appalled that a British Labour Prime Minister should have got into bed with a crew which has this moral standing.'²⁹

The 'American grand strategy' outlined by the PNAC in 2000, however, was in the making for at least almost a decade. As noted by David Armstrong, an investigative reporter for the Washington DC-based National Security News Service, unclassified documents from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, authored principally by current Vice-President Dick Cheney as well as by other key government officials such as Paul Wolfowitz, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld, reveal continually updated planning 'for global dominance'.³⁰ The series of documents outlines a consistent direction for US foreign policy that Armstrong characterizes as 'the Plan'. The Plan was published in unclassified form most recently as *Defense Strategy for the 1990s*,

when Cheney was ending his term as Secretary of Defense under the presidency of George Bush Snr in 1993. The Plan, ‘a perpetually evolving work’, again surfaced in June 2002 as ‘a presidential lecture in the form of a commencement address at West Point’, and was ‘leaked to the press as yet another *Defense Planning Guidance* ...’

It will take its ultimate form, though, as America’s new national security strategy ... The Plan is for the United States to rule the world. The overt theme is unilateralism, but it is ultimately a story of domination. It calls for the United States to maintain its overwhelming superiority and prevent new rivals from rising up to challenge it on the world stage. It calls for dominion over friends and enemies alike. It says not that the United States must be more powerful, or most powerful, but that it must be absolutely powerful.³¹

The international terrorist threat, following on from the 11 September terrorist attacks, is being used to justify the US drive ‘to rule the world’, implementing plans and strategies that were formulated quite independently (i.e., long before those attacks). Under the guise of fighting international terrorism on a crusade for justice, the US-led ‘War on Terror’ in reality continues a far more familiar tradition of Western crusading for the expansion of power and profit. International terrorism thus plays a functional role in world order under US hegemony. President Bush needs terrorist Osama. Without bin Laden, Bush would have no permanent world-wide target, and thus no legitimacy for the new ‘Pax Americana’. Other bogeymen such as Saddam Hussein – who are alleged (without evidence) to be linked to Al-Qaeda – play a similar role in the strategic and highly lucrative Persian Gulf region, which appears to be one of the first stepping-stones by which the Bush administration intends to consolidate its empire-building strategy in the Middle East and beyond.

Although this study does not specifically argue against Huntington, whose theory is in many ways a product of a rising trend within the Western political establishment, it is intended in part to be a thorough – if indirect – rebuttal of his essential thesis. The study attempts to uncover the thrust of Western policy in the Middle East by contextualizing current events in the light of the historic pattern of that policy. Focusing on the history of Western policy in the Persian Gulf, specifically in Iraq, the work begins by analysing the impact of colonial policy on the Middle East in the early twentieth century. I then discuss how this imperial policy of direct regional control evolved into a more sophisticated system of indirect control in the period after the Second World War, whereby joint Anglo-American power in particular manipulated the political fabric of the region in accordance with Western interests consisting primarily of access to oil and gas.

As a matter of necessity, this consistently involved creating and supporting pliant pro-Western dictators and their corrupt regimes. In order to protect and maintain the stability of this system of indirect control – what might be characterized as ‘surrogate imperialism’ – Anglo-American power has routinely conducted military interventions and orchestrated conflicts in the region. The end-goal of such brutal overt and covert military policies has been simply to secure and protect regional Western interests, normally at the expense of the rights and wishes of indigenous populations.

I study the cases of Iran; the installation of the Shah; the Iran-Iraq War; the installation of Saddam Hussein; the 1991 Gulf War; the UN sanctions regime; the Western record *vis-à-vis* weapons of mass destruction; the apparent renewal of the Anglo-American war on Iraq in 1998; and the Anglo-American drive to invade and occupy Iraq in 2003 as outstanding examples of the historic operation of this regional system of Western (primarily Anglo-American) control.

My thesis, ultimately, is that this record of Western policy in the Middle East, specifically in the Persian Gulf, is unambiguous evidence of a system of surrogate imperialism that has been quite deliberately developed by the Western powers in order to protect and secure their regional interests which have remained fundamentally the same since the colonial era. The significant difference between the new stage of surrogate imperialism and the colonial system from which the former has developed is the more sophisticated and subtle structure of nation-states co-opted, manipulated and to a high degree effectively controlled by Anglo-American power. When that system of control shows signs of collapsing – for instance, by the rise of indigenous nationalism – the necessity of Western military intervention is invoked to protect that system, and brutal military force is utilized to impose Western will. The hysterical Anglo-American drive for war in the Persian Gulf since 11 September 2001 is a late example of this, manifesting at once the imminent collapse of this system of control due to a variety of factors (especially depletion of world energy resources and regional political developments) and the consequent urgent desire on the part of the Anglo-American elite to immediately intervene to protect, consolidate and expand that system. Consolidation and expansion is hoped to be achieved by the military invasion and permanent occupation of the Persian Gulf, converting the Anglo-American alliance – under US leadership – into a direct regional power with the capacity to restructure the entire Middle East.

By unveiling the little understood record of Western policy in the Persian Gulf and its implications with regards to the fundamentally imperial structure of the international system, this study aims to clarify the roots and probable trajectory of current conflict in the Middle East. In doing so, I also hope that this work will contribute to generating a more balanced understanding of conflict and terrorism in the Middle East, thus reinvigorating the

Western approach to security, and perhaps helping to pave the way towards establishing a genuinely peaceful, just and democratic world for all.