

Nationality and race are burdens for some
and sources of pride for others.
That our own pride not become another's burden.

Tōkyō, 2000

ISIS, Israel, and US

Admit our error, withdraw in honor, and help thereby to put an end to the horrific carnage.

Background

HOMESTEADING WITH A GUN

Already before the end of World War II Jewish emigrants began trickling into the British Protectorate of Palestine. At the war's end the protectorate was inundated with European refugees seeking the so-called *promise land* -- an area already occupied by native Arab Christian, Jews, and Muslims for centuries. Common sense tells us that few people would have emigrated to the region had they been truly informed about what awaited them. Once arrived, however, the possibility of returning home was unavailable for most. Though some of the wealthier emigrants were surely able to buy up property from local residents and thus stake out a lawful claim, most emigrants arrived with a minimum of possessions and spent their initial moments in unmitigated squalor. For these latter, the same people who had lured each away from his or her respective European homeland now stood ready before them with arms and munitions and the suggestion that one could keep whatever one could take. It was an offer of free homesteading on *vacant land* that would be cleared with a gun!

Finding leaders for the pending carnage must have been easy, for the newly acquired *promise land* would have to be, once secured, fiercely guarded. There would be nothing better able to fulfill this task than a standing military headed by the very same who would lead the charge against the local population -- in short, the creation of a Jewish state. The unifying forces that would bring it altogether were, of course, an ancient history, a feeling of shared alienation, the creation of a national language that heretofore had been spoken only by religious clerics and a handful of Jewish linguists and historians, the promise of free land, and last, but not least, ample funding from the wealthy Zionists who had long sought possession of a Jewish homeland they could call their own.



The bombing of the Kind David Hotel, 22 July 1946. The building's southern wing housed the headquarters of the British headquarters of Palestine.

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In order to set the ball in motion it was necessary that the British, severely weakened by the war just concluded, be driven out. The formation of a rebel underground and repeated acts of terror against the local British establishment accomplished this task rather swiftly. Once these colonial overseers were driven out, the underground surfaced and open war was declared on the local population. Lacking the wherewithal to defend themselves against the well-armed Zionist bandits, hundreds of thousands of local residents were driven from their homeland in a matter of months -- a homeland whose natural heirs harkened back countless generations. This demographic displacement created an enormous burden on the governments and peoples of bordering states who received with reluctance the fleeing townspeople and peasantry. The Zionists wasted no time in the consolidation of their stolen property and launched a series of bitter wars against their new neighbors who were undertaking measures to defend themselves against further aggression on the part of the colonial invaders. These wars led to the further expansion of the newly formed Jewish state, and what had once been cleared by a mob with guns, would henceforth be defended by the Israeli army. Those in Europe who were aware of what was going on and did not actively support the newly formed state simply closed an eye, for after all they were finally rid of the social pest whom they had blamed for so much mischief in their own lands. Besides, almost all of Europe was preoccupied with post war reconstruction and hardly took notice. In North America there were those who actively contributed to the Zionist effort, and there were those who opposed it. Most simply sat backed and quietly observed while their North American Jewish brethren constructed a smokescreen of privately funded, deftly promoted propoganda that vilified NAZI Germany, poked fun at *backward*, nomadic Arab tribes, and glorified the flight of Jews from Europe to the *promise land*. Many Americans were even led to believe that Palestine was little more than a barren wasteland waiting for European Jews to transform into a socialist paradise.

FURTHER INVASION

In 2003, when the United States and its British ally, the United Kingdom, invaded Iraq, many tens of thousands of people were displaced in an effort to escape the chaos and carnage that resulted with the sudden collapse of the Iraqi state. Many of these displaced persons were Sunni Muslims who sought asylum from the newly forming, Shia-dominated state of Iraq. Many found refuge among the Sunni peoples of northern Syria who welcomed them with reasonable reluctance. Among these asylum seekers were members of the Iraqi Baathist Party who had sustained Saddam Hussein in power for



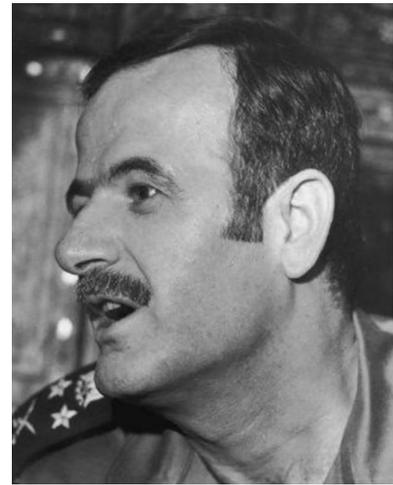
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several decades, and whose names now appeared on the most-wanted lists of the occupying US coalition in Iraq.

HAFEZ AL ASSAD AND THE BAAHIST PARTY

In 1970 Hafez al Assad came to power in Syria in a bloodless military coup. In Iraq Saddam Hussein had not yet served a full decade as Baathist head-of-state. In an effort to consolidate his power and secure the fate of the minority Alawi population of which he was a member Hafez al Assad gradually severed his ties with the Sunni Baathists that had helped bring him into power while he sought accommodation with the region's Shia leaders. Not coincidentally, the Alawis were a Muslim minority that had been declared unIslamic by an influential Sunni cleric already in the 14th century. In this regard the rapprochement with the broader Shia faith of which the Nosairis (Alawis) were an off-shoot was likely a wise move. This activity did, however, drive a stake into the heart of the pan-Arab nation promised by the Baathist parties of both Iraq and Syria and fuel resentment between Saddam Hussein and Hafez al Assad. With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 the socialist autocracy of the Soviet Union disappeared and with it an important source of binding political ideology throughout much of the Arab world.



Hafez Al-Assad (1930-2000)

ON THE NATURE OF TERROR

Terror by its very nature lashes out against soft targets. The reasons for this are several. One, those who engage in acts of terror do not, in general, have the technical and financial wherewithal of those against whom they fight -- namely, established, oppressive states. Not only is it easy for these latter to obtain munitions and form armies, they can also apply coercive force openly and with ostensible immunity, especially, when they have the endearing support of a large political superpower such as the United States. In contrast, peasant and urban rebel militias are largely dependent on hidden, sympathetic, private and government sponsors for their arms and munitions, and what they are able to obtain is usually vastly inferior in lethal potential to that of the armaments wielded by established states. Two, belligerent states tend to place their own security over that of their citizenry. This is because most citizens of most states disapprove of state belligerency and are likely to resist their own government's coercive waywardness. As a result, state-run facilities, no matter their nature and location, tend to be better protected and are difficult for rebel militias to penetrate. And three, by attacking soft-targets the hard-targets -- namely, the governments that are suppose to protect the soft-targets -- are brought into question

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and forced into the open about their own aggression against others. The result is usually greater confrontation and more attention that serves the ends of both government and the rebel militias at the expense of ordinary citizens.

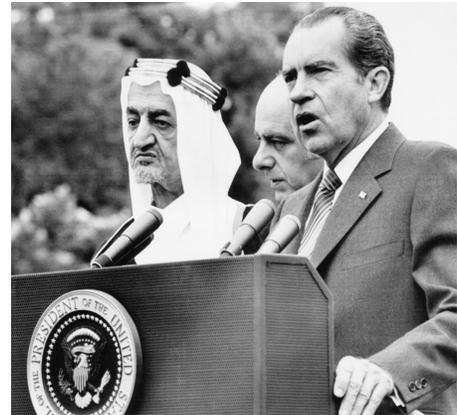
The Spread of Islamic Fundamentalism

Although the Saudis have long been an important source of Islamic fundamentalism, the discovery of oil and the desire for industrial modernization did well to keep the fundamentalists in check within Saudi society itself. Indeed, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism appears to have a very different source. In this regard the covert effort on the part of the United States government to contain Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and Yasser Arafat's *cause célèbre* to resist further Israeli aggression and take back what had been stolen from the indigenous peoples of Palestine were primary sources.

THE DOUBLE-EDGE SWORD OF WESTERN PUBLICITY

Ironically, the terror tactics used by Arafat to bring attention to the plight of Arab Palestinians were copied from those of the Zionist underground that had driven the British out of Palestine only decades before. Unlike those committed by the Zionists and received with little publicity in the West, however, the terrorist activities executed by Palestinian militants received world-wide attention. Indeed, where before it was in the best interest of wealthy European and North American Jews to conceal what was going on in Palestine, now it was to their greatest advantage to advertise it. For, as an established state, Israel could treat the heinous acts of aggression leading up to its formation with historical legitimacy. And, the current acts of terror leveled against Israel in order to reclaim the land that it had stolen could be handled with official distain and advertised to the world community as crimes-against-the-state.

This publicity effort on the part of the world's Jewish community was, however, a double-edged sword: whereas it begot sympathy from many in the West, especially among Christians whose holy shrines, contrary to the wishes of the United Nations by the way, were now under the protection of the Israeli state, it triggered the ire of many in the Muslim East who understood well that *might* was being used to justify *wrong*, and that the victims of theft and aggression were now being portrayed as villainous terrorists.



King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and Richard M. Nixon, 37th President of the United States, during a White House visit, Washington, D.C., 1971.

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What forced Arafat's hand appears to have been the indifference with which the governments of many Arab states viewed the Palestinian plight and struggle, as well as the steadfast support that Israel was receiving from Western governments. This indifference and steadfast support appear largely to have been the work of the US government who, on the one hand, traded guns and butter for oil and GCC support of the *petrodollar*, and on the other hand, blatantly disregarded world opinion on the matter of Palestine and repeatedly, if not openly, then tacitly, sided with Israeli aggression. In addition, there were the humiliating defeats at the hands of the Israelis that the Arab governments of the region had been forced to endure, and that they would sooner forget than risk again.



Yasser Arafat (1929-2004). Founder of Al-Fatah in 1954. In 1969 he became the Chariman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

This, however, was only the beginning.

FUELING THE MOVEMENT - AN ACT OF BETRAYAL

Fearful of the autocratic regimes under which they lived and disappointed by these regimes' indifference and self-indulgence toward continued Western rule, wealthy private actors in the Muslim Arabic community readily supported Muslim devotees who were willing to sacrifice life, limb, and urban comfort to stand up against continued Western support and domination. The question of Palestine, though on-going and seminal, was no longer the principal issue, for it was now clear to many that the imperial hand of Western aggression was not unique to Israel and that the people of the several Arab states who once fought to free themselves from their colonial upbringing were still in the throes of Western colonial imperialism.



The Taliban - An Islamic fundamentalist political movement founded in 1994 in Afghanistan.

Having driven out the Soviets, the *Taliban*, once clandestinely employed as *mujahideen* by the US government to contain Soviet advancement in Central Asia, were on the

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verge of total victory in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, their victory posed a serious threat to Western industrial and commercial interests in the region. For, their victory would have meant the formal establishment of an Islamic state -- a state that Western corporations would likely have trouble exploiting to their fullest extent possible. Central Asia is a region with vast natural resources and of certain geo-political importance. To the chagrin of Western industrial interests, the Taliban appeared to be more about political liberation and the establishment of an Islamic religious order than economic development. Surely, many a Western imperialist must have feared a Maoist-like regime with an Islamic bent that would be difficult to penetrate commercially. The *Tragedy of 9/11*, the perpetrators of which remain unknown today, provided the perfect excuse for the US government to invade and establish a "Western-friendly" government conducive to natural resource development on the part of Western corporations. The US orchestrated invasion of Afghanistan after the Soviets had been driven out betrayed the very same who had fought so hard and bravely to free their land from foreign occupation.

ARAB SPRING AND SYRIAN POPULAR RESISTANCE

In 2011, a full eight years after the US-led invasion of Iraq, the Arab Spring erupted. This pan-Arab revolt was a natural reaction to the rising cost of food prices triggered by the inflationary monetary policies of Western governments, a longing desire on the part of local Arab populations to share in Western prosperity rather than its domination, the opportunity to finally rid themselves of the national despots who had ruled over them since their independence, and the newly discovered ability of local citizenry to organize large numbers of people across the internet.

Syria was only one of many Arab countries whose citizenry were swept up by the movement. Unfortunately, Bashar al Assad, who assumed power when his father past away a decade prior, was not well prepared for his position as Syrian leader. Times had changed, and Bashar al Assad took his council from the already sclerosed bureaucracy put into place by his father. This is unfortunate, because a more politically astute leader was needed to bring about the citizen-friendly response needed to quell the largely peaceful and very popular protest that formed the basis of the movement. Seemingly unmindful of the arms, munitions, and rebellious spirit that had poured into his country



Mohamed Bouazizi (1984-2011) A Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire and triggered the Arab Spring.

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after the US invasion of Iraq, Bashar's heavy-hand backfired, and small pockets of armed resistance arose everywhere across the Syrian nation. Unfortunately, this resistance was manipulated by various foreign actors who sought to take advantage of the situation and topple the Al Assad administration. Principal among these foreign actors must have been the Israeli and Turkish governments and independent agents within the Al Saud family, if not the Saudi government itself. Each of these named governments has, of course, its own motivation for seeing the administration of the Al Assad family brought to an end. More importantly, they are all political allies of the US government and as such dare not act rashly against its wishes. Be this as it may, each has the ability to influence US government decisions, and the US government appears bent on dominating any political outcome that the region offers.

FORMATION OF A CALIPHATE STATE

Out of this chaos the Islamic State, whose goal it is to realize the failed promise -- a pan-Arab state -- of the fallen Baathist parties of Iraq and Syria, has arisen. Rather than adopting the defunct banner of Cold War socialism as a salable and unifying political ideology, they have adopted the now vastly more popular banner of Islamic fundamentalism. In effect, they seek to restore the political apparatus of the once widespread, but already very dated Arab caliphate. This goal is, of course, troubled by the theological divide between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and it is this divide along which much of the conflict is currently playing out.



Let us not be deceived by the religious interplay, however, for history has shown repeatedly that religious beliefs are strategically manipulated by established or newly forming states to rally the common citizenry around the more sinister goals of wealth and power acquisition. For, in the end, wealth that you do not create yourself must be taken from others, and without wealth political power quickly fades.

WHOSE LAND, WHOSE ESTATE?

The Gulf States (GCC) have shown that desert land can be made to flourish when sea water is converted into the elixir of nearly all terrestrial life -- fresh water. They have also shown that the application of modern technology can provide not only potable water, but also the means of payment for its production -- the extraction, refinement, and shipping of fossil fuels. The fact remains, however, that these fuels are used in a myriad of other lucrative ways, and that the economies of the West would, at least for a long moment, suffer dearly in their absence. Thus, the competition for the right of

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ownership and use of these underground reservoirs of wealth is intense. And, once again, as in Afghanistan so too in Iraq and Syria, the Western world including Japan that so badly depends on the continued extraction, refinement, and distribution of the region's vast reservoirs fears the loss of their continued access and control.

As a matter of practical political importance, however, one must vehemently challenge the notion that the United States, EU, or Japan has any claim to the natural resources of Central and Southwest Asia that is not freely surrendered by the inhabitants of the region through mutually beneficial exchange. Indeed, what right, that is not excused by sinister imperial might, does anyone have to the land of those who have occupied it for centuries and call it their home? Clearly none. Further, what right does any Western or other power in the region have to determine the type of government or society in which the peoples of this region choose to live? The answer to this question is also clearly none.



Those of the West who claim all of humanity as their own, those of the West who claim the globe as their sphere of influence, those of the West who would watch a Star Wars movie and pretend that all of humanity were in a state of conflict with the universe, and that Western global leadership were required to resist pending alien domination, ought first to clean their own societal doorsteps of political corruption, social decadence, and economic sclerosis and lay down the presumption that they know better how the Arab world should live than the Arab peoples themselves.



Western fears, that access to the natural resources of the region would be denied, were an Islamic caliphate to be resurrected, are ill-begotten. We have only to look to the GCC in order to understand that Muslim Arabs, especially those of the Sunni sect on which the Islamic State is being founded, are eager to engage in trade and develop their nations using the advanced technology of the West. Indeed, the Arab tradition is a long history of trade and commerce. For centuries the Arab people served as an important conduit of commercial activity between the West and the East and profited well from the exchange. The political or religious nature of the region's inhabitants rarely interfered with this all important source of state and tribal revenue. Should it



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make a difference, then, today that Arab nations are now the owners of an important natural resource in demand the world over? It is most unlikely.

Much more probable is that the crony-capitalists of the Western world and their neocolonial political allies, such as the Israelis, have found it financially and politically expedient to take what is not theirs by force with little consideration of the chaos that naturally results when the rights of others are so blatantly trampled.

Historically, war has proven to be an amalgam of industrial and political special interests in which those who produce war materials hold hands with those who wield them in an effort to acquire windfall profits and/or political gain. Those, in the West who would look to the Middle East and disparage the rise of the Islamic State would do far better to look at home and purge their own governments of those who would sooner take by force what is not theirs than engage in trade and production from which all stand to profit and prosper.

THE ISLAMIC STATE AND WESTERN HYPOCRISY

In effect, the rise of the newly forming Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) should be of little surprise to anyone who has been paying attention. The question is whether we will continue to demonize, however stupidly or adroitly, these heroic fighters as ignominious gangs of rabid religious misfits, or credit them for their albeit ruthless effort to establish an orderly Islamic state from amongst the rabble, rubble, and chaos with which Anglo-American society and its friends have beset the region.

Do not be quick to object to this question.

Firstly, our aggressive intervention in the region is well-documented. Secondly, the world press, like our own national press, is highly biased and reports only what serves to mollify the Western public into purchasing the products of their corporate sponsors. In effect, most of us have no way of knowing whether what is reported is true or not. What is more, even if everything that is reported were true, what about all of that which is not reported? Thirdly, is it not presumptuous to believe that our own governments are so much different than all the other governments of the world? Is it not reasonable to assume that the same welded interests of profit-hungry crony-capitalists, racketeering government bureaucracies, and self-aggrandizing national politicians are operative in every country? Have we not sufficient proof of this already in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq? And finally, who are we, or you, to believe that the



The Islamic State of Iraq and Svria (ISIS)

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world would be a much better place, if everyone thought, spoke, and behaved just like us?

Spend a few days in nature to appreciate the profound diversity, separation, and integration, as well as natural beauty and magnificent order that results when the forces of nature are left to their own making? Even in a world such as that cultivated by the Japanese, in which the nail sticking out is readily pounded down, one finds an enormous amount of diversity from individual to individual and region to region. Important is that human communities be allowed to develop naturally and in their own time, for it is tradition and continuity that form the basis of harmonious and productive social relationships -- not intrusive states wielding, guns, missiles, and drones and telling everyone else what to do.

Now, you may feel that those who are seeking to establish an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria are doing quite the opposite and should be punished as a result. Then too, are they doing anything different than what the Jewish emigrants to Palestine did when these latter sought to establish their Jewish state? And, unlike these latter, have not most of those who are participating in the foundation of the new Islamic State, at least, a much closer tie to the land than did the Jewish colonialists? What is more, who brought the chaos to the region with its indiscriminate bombing in the first place? And, is the terror that bombing inflicts on local unarmed populations somehow better than the bloody tactics that the founders of the Islamic State advertise in order to instill fear among those who would resist their purposeful effort?

Well, the answer to these question and many more can only be answered by knowing what is truly going on, but how is this possible when the media that is suppose to provide us with this information is so utterly biased against Islamic fundamentalism? What is more, the rebels have made it clear that they prefer to advertise their own propaganda. Further, they have gone out of their way to discourage the presence of the Western media whose gathered facts would surely be distorted by the West's own propaganda machine. In short, the only way to know what is truly going on is to be there and live among the people who are experiencing it, but who among us is willing to risk life and limb to find out?

And this, in the end, is the whole point, is it not?

You will not do it, because you are content to live within your own society -- the one in which you grew up, the one with which you are familiar and that you dare not leave for fear of the unknown. So, why then, do you insist that others are any different and should not, just like you, resent the presence of foreign armies in their own backyard -- to say nothing of the sunny and starlit skies overhead? Well, those armies are mine

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and yours, as they are funded by our own hard-earned labor through taxation and inflationary government spending that steals from us in a manner that most only poorly understand.

IS THERE NO WAY OUT?

But, we cannot just leave, you say. We owe it to our friends in the region!

Excuse me, but is a friend not someone who is like you enough so that you can get along, but sufficiently different so that you complement one another and make a better whole when you are together?

It is surely true that the peoples of Central and Southwest Asia are sufficiently like us that they could be our friend, for after all human beings, no matter their cultural upbringing, are still human beings. This said, culture, language, history, and religious belief, when taken together, present a formidable barrier that impedes communication and mutual understanding. Even if this hurdle could be easily jumped and mutual understanding achieved, still this would not change the fact that we live in a world of scarcity. In effect, the competition for the region's resources would not disappear.

Contrast the just described notion of friendship, for a moment, with that of a mutually beneficial trade relationship between two voluntarily contracting partners. Each knows the other well-enough to make the trade, but neither cares very much about what happens to the other so long as he returns for the next exchange. It is precisely in these kinds of exchanges where the state often plays a vital role, for it is a founding purpose of most states to insure that the contractual agreements between trading partners are kept and those that cannot are discouraged. Now you may prefer that the rules of contractual exchange be decided by your own society, rather than someone else's. Alas, in this regard every society is the same; this is the reason that we sign international treaties with mutually agreed enforcement and unilateral severance. Important is that the various states get along and stop seeking to overthrow one another.

Indeed, family and community are generally quite capable of handling most everything else, and it is surely in the family and local community where most everything else should be decided. Furthermore, these kinds of necessary close relationships have a much better chance of developing in the close-knit social bonding of comrades-in-arms than in the estranged



Tony Blair, British Prime Minister, with President George W Bush at his ranch. 30 November 2009. Photo by Reuters

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relationships created by the flight of hapless refugees received in foreign lands whose populations would generally prefer that they never arrived. Can there be any act more cruel and frightening than aerial bombardments against which you are helpless to defend yourself?

Of course, getting the powerful socialists who run our modern welfare-warfare states to come to grips with the efficacy of local communities and free markets is a problem in and of itself -- a problem, whose solution, however, is not unrelated to the imperial interests of these same masters-of-state.

THE HOLY SHRINES OF CHRISTIANITY

For many hundreds of years Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Semites have populated the region in near total harmony. Before the formation of the state of Israel the language of the local Jewish inhabitants was a dialect of Arabic. Now, the Ottoman empire may not



Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem.

have been perfect, but it did a far better job of maintaining peace and justice in the region than the French and British imperialists who pitted local tribes against one another in order to better control them in the wake of World War I.

So, what makes you believe that the Israelis are better protectors of the Holy Shrines of Christianity than Muslims? A simple reading of the Qur'an and Bible shows far more similarity between these two religions than a similar comparison of either with the Jewish *Talmoud* -- the prescriptive backbone of Jewish society. Further, what flight of imagination allows you to believe that an island of Jewish, colonial, crybaby-bullies who constantly threaten their neighbors with armed incursions and aerial

bombardments can better defend the Holy Shrines of Christianity than peace-loving Muslims, Jews, and Christians native to the region?

Indeed, where hath our common sense and sense of human decency gone?

We must call back our arms and munitions, promote trade instead of war, and reclaim our natural right to self-determination in our own local communities -- a right that we sacrificed long ago when we allowed our nation's founding principles to be set aside in the name of a "more perfect union" -- our basis for today's empire.

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ARAB DESPOTS

Many people in the West look to the Islamic world and see only autocrats. As a result, they believe that Islam begets autocrats and view those who adhere to Islam as intellectually inferior and culturally backward. This impression is intensified when we see the Islamic State's calls for the establishment of a caliphate state, Sharia law, and world Islamic domination.

If people in the West would only descend for a moment from their throne of material and technological superiority, and ask themselves who it is that sustains these autocrats, then they would probably also let fall their robes of moral supremacy and discover in their naked purity just what hypocrites they truly are. More importantly perhaps, they might also discover just how ridiculous they appear to anyone who has bothered to look behind the curtain of social propriety that allows them to turn away in nonchalance as crony-capitalists, racketeering bureaucracies, and self-aggrandizing politicians strip these people of their natural right of self-determination.

Of course, I do not see this happening now or even in the near future. For, our national and global media have sold out to their corporate sponsors; and our system of education, all too eager to serve itself and the state, no longer teach the principles on which our country was founded.

Other than our material wealth that is rapidly dissipating, are we really so much better off? Tyranny comes in many forms; its most lethal form is stealth.

THE RUSSIANS

Hopefully it is clear to everyone that the United States and Russia have never entered into direct conflict. In the popular mind the Cold War was a war of ideology. In the minds of those who waged and profited from the ideological tension, it was better thought of as a struggle between competing states to control the remnants of the fallen British, French, and Japanese empires. The tools used to wage war between the American and Soviet empires were the fear of nuclear annihilation on the one hand, and a difference in political ideology on the other. Whereas the fear of nuclear annihilation held the domestic populations of each empire in check at home, political ideology was used abroad to rally local populations for the purpose of wresting political control of the former British, French, and Japanese colonies. These overseas political battles tended to be very hot as they were fought over artificially created geopolitical boundaries that often correlated poorly with the local populations who inhabited the land.

Whereas the Soviets promoted state ownership of the means of production as a rallying cry for local inhabitants to form new independent states from the political vacuum created by British and French withdrawal, the United States promoted democratically

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elected governments that could be more easily controlled or manipulated by American corporate interests. The ideological wars that resulted, though openly waged among the local political groups whose political futures were at stake, were often funded and guided covertly by the competing Soviet and American empires both above and below the radar of their respective domestic populations.

The occupation of Europe, although an important part of the post-war imperial competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, was much more a question of how the spoils of war would be divided among the occupying armies of Central Europe. The ideological struggle was not fought by vying indigenous populations seeking to wrestle control of the national bureaucracies abandoned by previous colonial masters, rather, it was imposed from without and above by the imperial wills of the occupying armies.

As we all know the ideological struggle was eventually won by the United States and its Western allies including Japan, for the simple reason that state ownership of the means of production cannot bear the economic fruit that private ownership and free market competition can. What is left of the two empires is their respective nuclear arsenals and many of the various commercial, industrial, and political ties that once bound each to its own respective sphere of ideological interest.

Ironically, the result of this imperial struggle has been one of political and economic convergence, Whereas the Russians, Chinese,



America gone astray.

and those with whom they once shared close political and economic ties have abandoned state ownership of many of their respective nation's means of production, the peoples of the United States and Europe have watched as their respective governments have become increasingly socialistic in nature. What is left are competing social-democratic states with varying degrees of centralized political power largely manipulated and/or influenced by private corporate interests -- in short, the ideological barrier has been overcome and has been replaced by global crony-capitalists.

Unfortunately for the crony-capitalists and the racketeering political bureaucracies over which these former wield substantial control and influence, crony-capitalism is not an ideology that could ever be a popular rallying cry among those who are themselves not crony-capitalists -- the vast majority of human kind. It is for this reason that religion has

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resurfaced as an important rallying point and source of political division, as well as sexual and racial equality, abortion, and the environment. These are all notions that affect large swaths of people with very real consequences, but for which no solution exists that is not arbitrary in nature and therefore a matter of political contention and an excellent source of diversion from the true crony-capitalist agenda -- the accumulation of wealth and power for the purpose of control, manipulation, and amusement.

In the end, one must therefore ask, who cares whether the crony-capitalists and racketeering bureaucrats of Russia or those of the United States control the Middle East, for they are all pretty much the same and care very little about those whom they control and manipulate as they play their games of control and manipulation. In effect, it makes no sense to support either, and no matter who wins, the outcome will be pretty much the same -- bad for anyone, but them and their closest friends.

Yes, there are those who would defend crony-capitalism so long as it enriches the lives of everyone. Let us not be fooled by their sugar-coated candy, for theft is not a recipe for a prosperous and well-functioning capitalist society, or any other society for that matter.

Conclusion

Taking all of the above into account, one must then ask why it so matters to you today that small bands of native Iraqis and Syrians, as well as other Islamic Arabs, psychologically torn by the endless warring in their native homeland, might be funded by wealthy Saudi, Qatari, Turks, and others in the region? One must further ask, why it so disturbs you that someone would seek to harm another based on his religious or political beliefs in an effort to consolidate his hold on a piece of land currently occupied by foreign invaders and previously held by his own ancestors?

Indeed, might it just be that you are not Muslim and do not wish to be held culpable for the shortcomings of your own parents and grandparents? Or, might it be, rather, that you feel yourself superior and care little that your own government seeks to impose your cultural, political, and religious beliefs on others? Or alternatively still, might you believe that the rise and fall of empire is an inevitable outcomes of human progress, that America is now at the height of her imperial glory, and that you might just as well go along for the ride than regret the impending fall over which you have no control anyway?

Put away these silly notions. For, empire, war, and economic boom and bust cycles are only inevitable so long we consent to their inevitability.

Nationality and race are burdens for some
and sources of pride for others.
That our own pride not become another's burden.

Tōkyō, 2000

The vast majority of those living in America and the West have nothing to gain from the current wars on drugs, poverty, terror, and global warming. Nor, do they have for the most part very much to gain from the endless discussions about income, racial, and sexual inequality.

Yes, we are all born equal before the law, but what kind of law is it that is forever changing and depends on the political party in power for its formulation and enforcement? And, what kind of law is it when a small group of men and women dressed in black robes and sitting in an isolated chamber in a distant city can with a little deliberation and a simple stroke of a pen change the course of human events in our own nation? These are all the trappings of the same Arab despots that we so despise and readily, if not discretely, then openly support.

For a long time the great attraction of the West was its economic prosperity and individual freedom. With the rise of democratic socialism, however, economic prosperity has been gradually replaced with oppressive government regulations, onerous tax burdens, military hegemony, social decay, the ever declining value of our national currency, and stunted economic growth.

Oh yes, we are still much better off than the rest of the world, but we are living off our legacy, as we mortgage the future of our own children, grand children, and great grand children with ever increasing government debt and control over our personal lives. The spirit of the freedom loving individual who once provided for himself and his family and defended both with his life and limb has been replaced with a spirit of mindless consumption, contrived personal identity, near total dependence on the labor of others, and obedience unto those who wield the power of the state no matter the source of their philosophical and/or moral legitimacy.



The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America by Charles Édouard Armand-Dumaresq (1826-1895)

Alas, it is the path that our parents and grandparents have chosen for us, but it is not a path that we must continue up. For, each step higher along this misguided journey, the steeper will be our fall when we reach its inevitable conclusion. We are living far beyond our means in the illusion of a legacy negatively

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transformed already a century and a half ago. The technological innovation that we see about us, although surely a worthy pursuit, conceals our true condition. What we once were and still pretend to be is not what we have become.

When our nation was founded we were hailed throughout Europe as the harbingers of political liberty and economic freedom. Today, we are just another empire in a long series of the same. Only the level of technology and concomitant social adaptation to that technology has changed. We show all of the symptoms of the same imperial disease that has infected every empire before us. Are we to go on treating our own symptoms and ignore the cure? Are we to go on pretending how great we are while we continue to lay the foundation of our own demise?

The world on which we are inflicting our *greatness* will continue to resist us and send its messengers of violence and destruction until the pretense is over, and we have recognized our illness. It is up to us, however, to recognize our error and no one else. And, in this regard we have only two courses of action: continue to expand until our imperial bubble bursts, or halt the expansion, reassess, and charter a new course.

Now, it is surely the case that times have changed and that the founding documents of yesteryear upon which our nation was founded would be written differently today than they were written then. Nevertheless, the underlying principles, fears, and arguments would be very much the same. What we must do today is revisit our roots and reexamine these principles, fears, and arguments, for the modern state is every much the menace that it was when we engaged in our first war of secession and declared independence from the British crown. In fact, the modern state is far more dangerous, for it wields technologies of control, manipulation, and destruction several orders of magnitude larger than those of 18th century English, France, and Spain.



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Our nation was once revered for what it promised, today it is feared for its accomplished might. Is it not that, what we have accomplished is very different from what it was that we set out to accomplish? Let us return to our original goal, not as conquerors of indigenous peoples on already occupied land, but as humble students of our wise forefathers who risked, and often sacrificed, their lives and their fortunes for our own freedom and prosperity against an imperial occupying force.

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