

# The Persian Gulf crisis and Britain's new imperial order

by Mark Burdman

A careful scan of the British press of late August to mid-September would dispel whatever doubts there may be, that the real motivation behind the Anglo-American war drive in the Gulf is to use the crisis as a pretext for erecting a new global imperial order, modeled in essence on the old British Empire. In the British scheme of things, the “dumb giant” United States is to provide the brawn for this imperialist system, while Britain will supply the “brains”—and the cheerleading sections as the blood of American youth is spilled. The ultimate aim of the neo-imperialist venture is to secure raw materials and other resources for domination by London, and to reduce the non-white populations in the Southern Hemisphere, through wars and other means.

As *EIR* has emphasized in a just-released background report, what is now unfolding in the Gulf is a “splendid little war” of the classic colonial type.

This neo-imperialist advocacy the papers owned, either wholly or in part, by the Hollinger Corporation. The chief executive of this Canada-based corporation is Conrad Black, a senior figure in such oligarchist institutions as the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission. Hollinger board members include Lord Carrington, former British Foreign Secretary and NATO Secretary General; former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Peter Bronfman of the family business and financial empire led by Edgar Bronfman; Paul Reichmann of Canada's Olympia & York conglomerate; and other influentials from the Anglo-American-Canadian world of power and finance.

## ‘Some will call it imperialism’

On Aug. 26, senior correspondent Bruce Anderson of the wholly Hollinger-owned *Sunday Telegraph* proclaimed that the Gulf crisis was making it “increasingly clear that . . . there is only one military superpower left, the United States,” and that the U.S. now forms, together with Britain, an “English-language linguistic superpower.” According to Anderson, “the Americans are happy to draw on British expertise, especially as regards the Arabs.”

A backup in the same day's *Sunday Telegraph* quoted a Whitehall source: “We [America and Britain] contribute different things. The Americans have the power and the firepower. We have knowledge of the Gulf, strong economic

links and our contacts in the area which we have been constantly promoting.”

The Anderson piece was followed by an Aug. 27 article by commentator Robert Kilroy-Silk in the London *Daily Express*, a tabloid owned in part by Hollinger. He began with a blanket racist attack on Arab-Muslim culture, claiming that Saddam Hussein's “Nazi” behavior is “only the latest example of the practical application of a religion and culture that places little value on human life, is contemptuous of women and which scorns Western civilization and culture.” Adding insult to injury, he ranted, “Yet virtually everything of value in the Arab world—its medicines, technology, transport, consumer durables and, yes, the armaments and even the suit the dictator donned for his broadcast—is the product of Western, not Arab, civilization. This is one of the reasons why the West should not pack its rucksack and withdraw from the desert once Saddam has been dethroned.”

The West, insisted Kilroy-Silk, must “plan for a long stay” in the Gulf. “Some will castigate an occupation as being neo-colonialism, or imperialism. Let them. The truth is that the West has to look to its own economic interest the way that the Arabs protect theirs. . . . There is the harsh fact that the Western life-style, prosperity, stability and civilization depend on the free flow of Gulf oil—oil that is Western, not Arab. It was discovered, extracted, exploited and developed by the West. . . . It's a rough old world we live in. Someone has to be the top dog, and it had better be us.”

The following week, the *Sunday Telegraph*'s chief editorialist Peregrine Worsthorne proclaimed, “The old slogan ‘better red than dead’ should now read ‘better imperialist than dead.’ ” Under the title, “Imperialists for peace,” Worsthorne insisted that what the world needs now is “a new form of imperialism directed against the countries of the Third World.” He couches this in terms of the necessity of creating a new worldwide “anti-barbarian alliance,” to control the flow of advanced weaponry to “primitive peoples” in the Third World. This would mean a “return to colonialism” (see *Documentation*).

## Back to the Congress of Vienna

One week later, the Sept. 9 *Sunday Telegraph* struck again. Under the title, “The dangerous end of empire,” com-

mentator Geoffrey Wheatcroft stated that regional wars like the current crisis in the Gulf have risen from the decay of imperial systems. He then wrote: "The case for imperialism can be summed up in [the] word stability. As well as holding apart peoples who would otherwise be at one another's throats, great empires are preoccupied with administration and thus inherently pacific." They only fight against each other when they are "approaching their last days."

According to Wheatcroft, it was the French Revolution which unleashed democratic-national passions across Europe, leading to wars and conflicts. "By contrast, from 1815 to 1914 Europe was afflicted with remarkably few wars, and those few were caused by national upheavals—and by the decay of empires. . . . Wise English statesmen of the 19th century favored propping up the Ottoman Empire for as long as possible. . . ."

"After 1945, we might have been more cautious if we had understood the deeper causes of the most terrible of wars, the ultimate legacy of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Instead we—the West European powers—embarked upon the greatest imperial dissolution of all, the 'decoloniza-

tion' of Europe's tropical empires. The consequences can be seen today from the Gulf to Southeast Asia. . . .

"For the former imperial powers, the 45 postwar years have meant unprecedented peace and prosperity. In part, that was just because they had shed the burdens of empire, but partly it resulted from the stability imposed by a new imperial order, American and Russian. Those two imperial superpowers fought nasty little proxy wars, but never went to war with one another."

That Wheatcroft would invoke the 1815-1914 period so fondly, is an echo of Hollinger board member Henry Kissinger's notorious 1950s doctoral thesis, in which he praised the 1815 Congress of Vienna and Austria's Count Metternich and Britain's Foreign Minister Lord Castlereagh as his favored model, and portrayed the 1815-1914 period as a nearly idyllic period of stability and peace. Also noteworthy, is that British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, a key diplomatic manipulator in the Gulf crisis, models himself on Lord Castlereagh.

From a critical standpoint, British liberal writer Anthony Sampson, writing in the London *Independent* Aug. 31, com-

## Worsthorne: 'better imperialist than dead'

*On Sept. 2, London Sunday Telegraph chief editorial writer Peregrine Worsthorne issued a call for creating a new global imperial order, citing the Iraq-Gulf crisis. The editorial was published under the title, "Imperialists for Peace." Worsthorne is a senior figure in the British conservative establishment. He is the adopted son of the late Montagu Norman, former director of the Bank of England, whose imperialist commitments drove him to help install Adolf Hitler in Germany. Excerpts follow:*

. . . Saddam Hussein is by no means unique. The politics of gangsterdom are pretty well endemic in Third World countries. Nor will new examples find much difficulty in getting high-technology weapons. And once they arrive, those arms require little skill from the soldiers using them. That is the paradox. The more advanced the weapons technology, the easier it is for primitive peoples to use it. . . .

So the advanced industrial world is faced by lawless dictators whose military and propaganda machines are of the late 20th century but whose political culture comes from the age of Tamerlane. Europe, thank God, has outgrown such figures. Its societies have become too complex, too linked to each other, for new Hitlers and Stalins

to arise. But the capricious tyrants of the Third World have it in their power to disrupt the world economy and, if they obtain nuclear weapons, to devastate whole areas of the earth for years to come.

So much is obvious. Much less obvious is what should be done about this truly dreadful new problem. On whose shoulders should fall the burden of preventing the barbarians gaining possession of, and using, nuclear weapons? Realistically speaking, the answer has to be the United States and other advanced nations. In the old days, the British Empire faced many Saddam Husseins. A gunboat and a brigade of troops sufficed to deal with them. . . . These local tyrants usually ended their days in exile on a large heap of empty gin bottles. Happy days.

Coping with Saddam Hussein, however, requires several American divisions and a vast assortment of the most advanced weaponry. It is costing the United States alone \$46 million a day. Keeping the U.N.'s Peace is a lot more expensive than keeping the King's Peace once was.

Yet as soon as one says the West as a whole must once again shoulder the white man's burden, most people either shudder with horror or smile indulgently at what they dismiss as the lucubrations of a nostalgic Colonel Blimp. Imperialism in their eyes stands for Western assumptions of racial superiority, for the denial by the West of the backward races' right to self-determination. Holding these views about the iniquity of imperialism in the past, how can high-minded people be expected to see it as a force for good—indeed for human survival—in the future? . . .

mented that the approach to the current Gulf crisis could not be understood outside the context of a new strategy of North versus South wars, the original strategy for which was first developed by Metternich and Castlereagh.

For many Ibero-American and African countries, claimed Sampson, the new geopolitical strategy emerging for the 1990s is "just what they have dreaded: instead of West versus East, it is North versus South. While the South has the natural resources, which they regard as the real wealth of the world, the North has the money and the armies." According to Sampson, "It is a long way from the aspirations of the '70s. Then, in the wake of OPEC's first victory, the radical South proclaimed the New International Economic Order. . . . Today the changing pattern of power evokes a very different memory in the Third World. It harks back to when the 19th-century empire builders began in the first place, when they competed for the world's riches. . . . To put it baldly, it looks very much like neo-colonialism."

But the roots of the policy go much deeper, Sampson asserted. The current "concert of powers" that is coming into play against Saddam Hussein "recalls the great age of

Metternich and Castlereagh after Napoleon, when the Congress of Vienna carved out the shape of Europe and the world powers played their great game of chess—the era about which Henry Kissinger wrote a celebrated book and on which he based much of his later diplomacy."

While such a "concert of powers" seems to have a lot of value in creating a "more peaceful and law-abiding world," Sampson wrote, the problem is that it "depends on maintaining every kind of *status quo*, both internal and external, and ignoring any human complications that interfere with the chess game—particularly human rights. In the early 19th century, when the Turks committed atrocities against the Greeks, both Metternich and Castlereagh pressed the Czar not to interfere with the Turks, to protect the 'consecrated structure' of Europe. The danger of today's new concert—if such it is—will be the same right across the world, but particularly in the Middle East." The Middle East could soon devolve into a mess of "internal revolts, fundamentalist movements or new demagogues," while the world may see "future Saddam Husseins" emerging in response to the rich countries' strategy.

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What the world now so desperately needs is a responsible country, or a group of responsible countries, which see it as their most solemn duty to prevent nuclear weapons ever falling into the hands of countries unresponsive to reason. Here we come to the rub. Can the high-minded in the West bring themselves to admit that this can only mean, in practice, Western countries having the right to interfere politically in the affairs of non-Western countries? . . .

All races may be equal. But when it comes to the matter of evolving political systems in whose hands nuclear weapons can be most safely entrusted, some are more equal than others. This does not mean that Britain and America are morally superior; only that they enjoy political systems and cultural values that make it virtually certain that a fanatic never gets his finger on the trigger.

What about Hiroshima? What about the slave trade? . . . Objections are easy to make. None of them, however, begins to invalidate the central truth that the world now needs a new anti-barbarian alliance which will face the dangers arising out of the coincidence of Third World politics and advanced weapons technology. This would have many tasks. It would have to maintain an intervention force which could be transported rapidly around the world. It would have to sponsor severe measures to prevent dealing in weapons of mass destruction, send the dealers to jail and dismantle the networks of illegal arms procurement.

Yes, this will be a new form of imperialism directed against the countries of the Third World. But before those

countries complain, let them examine their own record in dealing with their neighbors. Let them count the instances of chauvinism and aggression against other states over the last four decades. Let them see, too, what type of rulers they have had. If peace-keeping is imperialism, so be it. Let the Third World try what it can do in the way of imposing good international behavior by means of regional organizations. Nigeria and other African countries are trying to do something of the sort in Liberia. Good luck to them. But if this does not work, then the industrialized democracies cannot stand by while the dangerous toys are taken out of the nursery cupboard to be used on the boys next door.

The NATO alliance achieved its objectives. Its effects have been entirely beneficial, bringing peace to Europe and freedom to East European countries. The same could be done to parry the new threat. But everyone must help with troops or with money. For if the work is not done, all will suffer the consequences. I have sought to make this point before in respect of Third World famine, arguing that nothing effective could be done to prevent such human disasters—particularly in Africa—without the advanced countries re-exerting political control—i.e., a return to colonialism. To that humanitarian argument must now be added the new dimension of preventing nuclear catastrophe. The old slogan "better red than dead" should now read "better imperialist than dead." Western hawks and doves, idealists and realists, reactionaries and progressives should all now agree on this. Only a new anti-liberal consensus can avert disaster.