

Scotsmen oppose war adventure in Mideast

Reverend Alistair Drummond is a Minister of the Church of Scotland, for the Parish of Kelty, Fife. He preached the following sermon in the third week of August, which was then sent as a letter to the editor of the Edinburgh daily, the Scotsman. It is reprinted with the permission of the author.

What are we doing in the Middle East at the present time? As surely as our Armed Forces are there, we are all there by implication. Our news programs and newspapers are full of commentary on the crisis in the Gulf. Every utterance of certain key people is broadcast to millions. Strong words are spoken, accusations of lies, counteraccusations. The covers are taken off the war machines, muscles are flexed and the war lords strut about on their podiums; together we find ourselves on the brink of destruction.

Stock exchange indices tumble, interest rates are once again threatened and inflation becomes a more daunting prospect. Like all the Western and Westernized nations, we are in the Middle East with weapons of destruction at the ready because, to maintain a life that we think worth living, we must control what happens to the world's greatest reserves of oil. We are there to make sure that Middle East oil is always available to us. If it were not for the oil, and Western dependence on it, I sincerely doubt whether the U.N., spurred on by the U.S., would have intervened against the annexation of Kuwait.

The self-righteousness of the Western powers is hideous in the extreme. Of course, outrageous statements and claims have always been necessary in time of war to convince men and women to sacrifice themselves for the cause. A very thinly disguised fear is what motivates us to declare war in all but name.

We are faced with a potentially more unified Arab world, intent on bringing the West's greed to a halt, intent on demanding a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth. And why shouldn't they be intent on such things? If Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have been inclined to sell at the dictate of the West, their precious resource for a pittance and a few trinkets to line the pockets of their princes, is it not understandable that the Arab nations as a whole, who have suffered innumerable atrocities at the hands of Western crusading empires, should take their neighbors to task and strive together to determine their own future? Is it not understandable that they should use all the economic power at their disposal, in particular the reserves of oil?

I fear for the safety of the thousands of Britons trapped in Iraq and Kuwait. I fear for the safety of the British troops being sent to the Gulf. I still pray, like many others, that there may be a diplomatic path that avoids bloodshed. But the repercussions of what we are engaged in at the present time will be felt by us for a very long time to come.

I shudder at the understandable anger and resentment that is showering down upon us from the Arab peoples of the world. I am ashamed of my country and its decisions. I try to prepare myself for what may come.

Alan Clayton, of the Scottish Socialist Party, a newly formed body which calls for Scotland to break the Treaty of Union with England and return to independent statehood, also warned against war in the Mideast in a letter to the editor of the Sept. 29 Scotsman. Mr. Clayton is a history teacher.

If the West is faced with a Frankenstein, it is one of its own creation. . . . Kuwait is an artificial enclave in the desert. Whatever Saddam Hussein may be, he is certainly expressing the legitimate aspirations of his people for a return of a historic Iraqi outlet to the Gulf. We now have a powder keg in the Middle East, one which could be defused by compromise over the question of Iraqi outlets to the Gulf, but which the British Tory and Labour establishments seem to be compet-

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Iraq says Israel, U.K. thwart U.S. interests

The Iraqi Foreign Ministry released a statement entitled "Gulf policy update" on Oct. 17, which reviews British and Israeli control over U.S. foreign policy. Excerpts from this document, which addresses the Jerusalem massacre of Oct. 8, follow.

While the American administration stage-managed a forceful series of rapid-fire U.N. resolutions regarding Iraqi restoration of its southern province, it engineered a time-delayed, toothless mere slap on the wrist in response to the most recent provocative slaughter of unarmed Palestinian citizens in Al-Quds [Jerusalem]. . . . In the former case, the resolutions were drawn and passage forced in a matter of hours. In the latter case, deliberations dragged on for five days and resulted in a watered-down resolution which criticized only the police and ignored the complicity of the Israeli government. These two actions, juxtaposed, clearly show the bias of American foreign policymakers.

Iraq maintains that this unevenhanded response to

these issues is the result of three forces which override true American interests and define the parameters of the foreign policy of the United States.

The first and most obvious force which proscribes U.S. options is that of Zionism. Zionist influence on American political decision-making and on the media has funneled the focus of American policy to a narrow range of choices in international relations, all of which enhance the Zionist historical goal of an ever-larger Eretz Israel. . . .

The second force influencing American reaction to the current crisis is the desire of the moribund British Empire to reverse the process of the setting of the sun on the remnants of its former colonial empire.

Related to this second force is an Anglo-American cadre of military-industrial interests who seek to establish hegemony over Middle East petroleum resources to control the economic progress of Europe and Japan, thus eliminating the competitive potential of those countries.

Recognizing the limitations of U.S. foreign policy due to these powerful forces, the Republic of Iraq has nonetheless offered, through President Saddam Hussein's peace initiative of Aug. 12, an opportunity for the United States government to both save face and to restore the philosophy of its international relations to a more just and righteous course. . . . We remain firm in our resolve to seek peaceful means to effect a comprehensive solution to the region's disputes, to the benefit of all mankind.

ing with each other to ignite. Apart from the implications for the Western economies of this deliberate inciting of a militant pan-Arabism, there remains the awesome prospect of Gorbachov being overthrown by a Soviet military establishment appalled at the massive U.S. military build up so close to its southern borders. The British army of liberation, invisible while Saddam Hussein was slaughtering Kurdish nationalists with poison gas, is now in place to recover the lost rights and liberties of spiders and sand flies, as it did in its day for the penguins of South Georgia. If major international conflict or world war develops, I hope and pray that the young people of Scotland individually and collectively decide upon the nature of their relationship with the British state and the inevitable demands it will make upon them.

Professor I.A. Willock, a specialist in Jurisprudence at Dundee University and a highly respected lawyer, writes in an October issue of the Scottish Legal Action Group's bulletin an editorial entitled "At the brink of war." It reads, in part:

The buildup towards war with Iraq is fraught with such devas-

tating consequences that Scottish Legal Action offers its mite of support to the growing movement for a diplomatic solution led by Mr. [Edward] Heath. . . . The administration of Kuwait must be open to negotiation. It is quite unacceptable that the future of the world should be imperiled to put back in power a despotic family. . . . President Saddam Hussein is another kind of tyrant, but he does appear to enjoy much popular support. He is clearly no madman, but an adroit politician who has been able to play upon Arab enmity towards Israel. A war with his 1 million-strong army, seasoned by their eight-year-long conflict with Iran would be such a protracted and bloody one if fought with conventional weapons, that there would be a strong temptation for nuclear and chemical weapons to be used, with their incalculable long-term consequences. . . . Clearly Kuwait is a matter of national pride to the Iraqis. But their need to export oil is another potent factor. There must be a way to devise a form of government for Kuwait acceptable to Iraq, the Western Powers and the Kuwaiti people, and thus avoid a war which would disrupt the whole world, but devastate the countries at the center of it.