
Profile: Bernard Lewis

British Svengali Behind Clash Of Civilizations

by Scott Thompson and Jeffrey Steinberg

On Nov. 19, octogenarian British Orientalist spook Bernard Lewis wrote an elaborate apologia for Osama bin Laden, a fervent pitch for the inevitability of the “Clash of Civilizations,” in the pages of *New Yorker* magazine. Under the headline “The Revolt of Islam,” Lewis lied that the emergence of “Islamic terrorism” in the recent decades, is completely consistent with mainstream Islam, which is committed to the



subjugation of the infidels to Islamic law. He went through 14 pages of a fractured fairy-tale history of Islam, quoting bin Laden’s Oct. 7, 2001 videotape, where the Saudi expatriate spoke of Islam’s “humiliation and disgrace . . . for more than 80 years”—a reference to the crushing of the Ottoman Empire by Britain and France in 1918. Lewis invented a tradition of jihad, “bequeathed to Muslims by the Prophet”:

“In principle,” Lewis explained, “the world was divided into two houses: the House of Islam, in which a Muslim government ruled and Muslim law prevailed, and the House of War, the rest of the world, still inhabited and, more important, ruled by infidels. Between the two, there was to be a perpetual state of war until the entire world either embraced Islam or submitted to the rule of the Muslim state.” Among all the different “infidels” ruling the House of War, Lewis asserted, Christianity was singled out as “their primary rival in the struggle for world domination.” Lewis cited slogans painted on the walls of Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock from the Seventh Century, assailing Christianity.

Lewis then claimed that the evolution of modern Islamic terrorism, specifically the al-Qaeda terrorism, had a long, proud history within Islam, dating to the Assassins cult of the 11th-13th Centuries. (Lewis wrote a 1967 book, *The Assassins*, extolling the virtues of this secret society.) He also identified Saudi Arabia and Egypt as two regimes legitimately singled out by the Islamic jihadists, for their corruption by

“modernism.”

He concluded, ominously: “For Osama bin Laden, 2001 marks the resumption of the war for the religious dominance of the world, that began in the Seventh Century. . . . If bin Laden can persuade the world of Islam to accept his views and his leadership, then a long and bitter struggle lies ahead, and not only for America. Sooner or later, al-Qaeda and related groups will clash with the other neighbors of Islam—Russia, China, India—who may prove less squeamish than the Americans in using their power against Muslims and their sanctities. If bin Laden is correct in his calculations and succeeds in his war, then a dark future awaits the world, especially the part of it that embraces Islam.”

Bernard Lewis Plan, Take II

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Lewis has, not surprisingly, resurfaced in numerous locations. After all, the 85-year old British Arab Bureau mandarin has been London’s point-man in the United States since 1974, when he was posted to H.G. Wells’ outpost at Princeton University’s Center for Advanced Studies, to secure American compliance with British geopolitical manipulations in the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Caspian Basin, and Central Asia.

To put it bluntly: British intelligence senior operator Lewis is the guiding hand behind the ongoing U.S. neo-conservative drive for a new “Thirty Years War” in Eurasia. This drive is at the heart of the ongoing coup d’état attempt against the George W. Bush Administration, which began with the Sept. 11 irregular warfare attacks on New York City and Washington.

Lewis’ arrival at Princeton, after serving on the faculty of the University of London’s Middle East and Africa faculty (the repository of the original India House files, long officially referred to as the Colonial Department), coincided with then-Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger’s fomenting of the civil war in Lebanon. That persists to the present day, and served as a laboratory for the later “Islamic revolution” in Iran.

Lewis is no mere British quackademic. After obtaining his doctorate in the history of Islam from the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, he joined the university faculty in 1938. From 1940-45, Lewis was, in his own understated words, “otherwise engaged,” as a wartime British Military Intelligence officer, later seconded to the British Foreign Office. To this day, Lewis remains mum about his wartime “engagements.”

Since arriving at Princeton, Lewis has been demonstrably responsible for every piece of strategic folly and insanity into which the United States has been suckered in Asia Minor. The Wellsian “method to his madness” has been the persistent push to eliminate the nation-state system, and launch murderous wars stretching across the Eurasian region.

- During the Carter Administration, Lewis was the archi-

tect of madman Zbigniew Brzezinski's "Arc of Crisis" policy of fomenting Muslim Brotherhood fundamentalist insurrections all along the southern tier of the Soviet Union. The planned fostering of radical Islamist war provocations was known, at the time, as "the Bernard Lewis Plan." Among the fruits of this Lewis-Brzezinski collusion: the February 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini "Islamic Revolution" in Iran, which overthrew the Shah, and sent the once-proud center of the Islamic Renaissance back into a 20-year dark age; and the 1979-1988 Afghanistan War, provoked by Brzezinski's July 1979 launching of covert support for Afghan mujahideen "Contras" inside Afghanistan—six months *prior* to the Soviet Red Army's Christmas Eve invasion.

As early as 1960, in a book-length study he prepared for the Royal Institute for International Affairs, under the title *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Lewis polemicized against the modernizing, nation-building legacy of Turkey's Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. He argued instead for the revival of an Ottoman Empire that could be used as a British geopolitical battering ram against Russia and against the Arab states of the Persian Gulf—in alliance with Israel.

- It was Bernard Lewis who launched the hoax of the "Clash of Civilizations"—in a September 1990 *Atlantic Monthly* article on "The Roots of Muslim Rage," which appeared three years *before* Brzezinski clone Samuel Huntington's publication of his *Foreign Affairs* diatribe, "The Clash Of Civilizations." Huntington's article, and his subsequent book-length treatment of the same subject, were caricatures of Lewis' more sophisticated British Orientalist historical fraud, which painted Islam as engaged in a 14-century-long war against Christianity. Huntington acknowledged that Lewis' 1990 piece coined the term "Clash of Civilizations."

- In 1992, in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Lewis celebrated in the pages of the New York Council on Foreign Relations' *Foreign Affairs* that the era of the nation-state in the Middle East had come to an inglorious end, and the entire region should expect to go through a prolonged period of "Lebanonization"—i.e., degeneration into fratricidal, parochialist violence and chaos.

"The eclipse of pan-Arabism," he wrote, "has left Islamic fundamentalism as the most attractive alternative to all those who feel that there has to be something better, truer, and more hopeful than the inept tyrannies of their rulers and the bankrupt ideologies foisted on them from outside." The Islamists represent "a network outside the control of the state. . . . The more oppressive the regime, the greater the help it gives to fundamentalists by eliminating competing oppositionists."

He concluded the *Foreign Affairs* piece by forecasting the "Lebanonization" of the entire region, save Israel: "Most of the states of the Middle East . . . are of recent and artificial construction and are vulnerable to such a process. If the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil soci-

ety to hold the polity together, no real sense of common national identity or overriding allegiance to the nation-state. The state then disintegrates—as happened in Lebanon—into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties."

- In 1998, it was Lewis who catapulted Osama bin Laden into prominence with a November/December *Foreign Affairs* article, legitimizing the Saudi black sheep as a serious proponent of mainstream, militant Islam. Lewis' piece, "License To Kill: Osama bin Laden's Declaration Of Jihad," showered praise on bin Laden, pronouncing his "Declaration of Jihad Versus Jews and Crusaders" "a magnificent piece of eloquent, at times even poetic Arabic prose . . . which reveals a version of history that most Westerners will find unfamiliar."

Caught In The Act

Osama bin Laden released his 1998 jihad call on Feb. 23, 1998, six months before the truck bombing attacks against the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. The very next day, Bernard Lewis' signature appeared on a widely circulated Open Letter To President Bill Clinton, released by a previously unheard-of entity called the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf, demanding that the U.S. government throw its full support behind a military campaign to overthrow Saddam Hussein. The Open Letter called for carpet bombing Iraq, and for the United States to aggressively give financial and military support for the Iraqi National Congress, yet another corrupt and inept "Contra" pseudo-gang, created by U.S. and British intelligence elements, and based in London.

In addition to Bernard Lewis, the Open Letter was endorsed by former U.S. Rep. Steven Solarz (D-N.Y.), notorious Anglo-Israeli propagandist and spy Richard Perle, convicted Iran-Contra criminal Elliott Abrams, Jonathan Pollard fellow-traveller Steven Bryen, Frank Gaffney, *New Republic* publisher and Al Gore mentor Martin Peretz, Paul Wolfowitz, Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) research director David Wurmser, and Dov Zakheim.

Lewis' public alliance at that time with the leading lights of the "Mega" apparatus—now waging all-out war against the Bush Administration's efforts to box in Israeli madman Ariel Sharon—is noteworthy, but not surprising. Lewis is lionized inside Israel, and by the Israeli Lobby in America as a geopolitical giant. On Feb. 19, 1996, Lewis was feted in Jerusalem, where he delivered the ninth annual B'nai B'rith World Center "Jerusalem Address" on "The Middle East Towards the Year 2000." His son, Michael Lewis, is the director of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee's super-secret "opposition research section." This is one of the most important wellsprings of propaganda and disinformation, presently saturating the U.S. Congress and American media with war-cries for precisely the Clash of Civilizations Bernard Lewis has been promoting for decades.