



# Colonial Projects and Schemes Toward the Arab Homeland: From the Campbell-Bannerman (1907) to the Greater Middle East (2004)

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## **Abstract:**

The study posits that the West recognized at an early stage the importance of the Arab world because of its geographic location, oil wealth, economic potential, and civilizational weight, in addition to the role of Islam as a spiritual force, which led it to seek to limit the region's power by fragmenting it and maintaining a state of division. This effort was facilitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, the fragmentation of Arab forces, and the occupation of Iraq. The study examines the most prominent Western projects and policies aimed at reorganizing the region, beginning with the Balfour Memorandum and extending to the Greater Middle East Initiative. It also highlights the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration, and the division of the region that resulted from them, in addition to the Treaty of Sevres, the San Remo Conference, and the sharing of mandates and oil among the Allies, as well as attempts to integrate the Middle East within regional frameworks such as the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. Following the decline of British and French influence and the United States' inheritance of their role, particularly after the failure of the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956, the United States proposed the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 and linked the region to military and economic agreements to confront communism, culminating in the Greater Middle East project.

**Keywords:** Greater Middle East; United States; Balfour's promise.

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## **Introduction:**

The Arab world occupies an excellent geographical position, where three continents converge: Europe, Africa, and Asia. Hence, its importance derives from its location at the heart of the Old World and its strategic centrality. Owing to this unique position, it has been able to link the West, represented by the European world, with the East, represented by the Asian world. After the discovery of oil, international attention shifted from location to the wealth concealed beneath its land.

## **2. Historical Roots of the Greater Middle East:**

The region is known as the Middle East, and this term is among the most common and widely used. It can be said that the Middle East is difficult to define clearly or definitively. This is not because the region is merely a verbal invention in the vocabulary of global politics since the late twentieth century. Rather, the difficulty in defining the Middle East stems from the fact that it is an amorphous region, meaning that it can expand or contract on the map of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The term Middle East is a political expression that consistently entails the inclusion of non-Arab states within the region and, in many cases, the exclusion of Arab states from it. In Western writings, the Middle East appears as a region comprising a mixture of nationalities, races, religions, peoples, and languages, in which plurality and diversity, rather than unity and homogeneity, constitute the norm.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of the Middle East is not a neutral designation. It has appeared in numerous Western studies addressing geographical, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, and these studies have sought to

consolidate this concept for strategic political motives. Western writings promoted this concept during the past century when it gained prominence in British strategic thought. The concept of the Middle East is attributed to the British intelligence officer Thomas Edward Gordon 1833-1914, who was also director of the Imperial Bank of Persia, in an article in which he warned the British government of the Russian threat to British interests in India through its advance in Persia, now Iran.<sup>3</sup>

However, the concept of the Middle East became associated in academic circles with the American naval officer General Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, who wrote an article in September 1902 on the Arabian Gulf and international relations, published in a British periodical, in which he alerted the British government to the importance of the Middle East for the Empire. He was subsequently followed by Valentine Chirol, foreign affairs correspondent for The Times, who produced a series of articles on the Middle Eastern question. This was followed by the book by Hamilton entitled "Problems of the Middle East", which was published in London in 1909.<sup>4</sup>

After the First World War, this term gained wider currency when Winston Churchill, then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, established what became known as the Middle East Department in 1921. This body was entrusted with administering Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq. During the Second World War, the British established the Middle East Supply Centre and the Middle East Command.<sup>5</sup>

George Lenczowski states in his well known work "The Middle East in World Affairs" that no sound foreign policy can "ignore the Middle East and its impact on the rest of the world." Throughout history, the Middle East has been, and continues to be, the focus of attention for many conquerors, empire builders, and great powers, in addition to numerous scholars, researchers, and those interested in international affairs.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the ambiguity surrounding the definition of the Middle East region stems from a preconceived notion that has led to confusion among three terms: the Middle East, the Arab world, and the Islamic world. The Arab world includes the western part of the Middle East and extends beyond it into North Africa and the savanna belt from Senegal to Sudan. The Islamic world encompasses the entire Middle East and extends beyond it in various geographical directions. Much of the ambiguity that renders the delineation of the Middle East difficult is attributable to the multiplicity of names and terms used in the past and present to refer either to the entire region or to parts of it. Among these terms are the Levant, the ancient or classical East, the classical deserts, Southwest Asia, the Near East, the Middle East, and related designations.<sup>7</sup>

Different writings at the present time almost unanimously employ the term Middle East as a substitute for earlier designations. In English, French, and Arabic, in United Nations classifications, and in many yearbooks that address particular regions, the name Middle East recurs as the region encompassing the states extending from Iran to Egypt and from Turkey to Yemen. A given author or institution may add Libya, Sudan, one of them, or only Cyrenaica and northern Sudan. Accordingly, the Middle East is limited to a group of West Asian states with the addition of Egypt, and sometimes Sudan and Libya, while Greece is excluded despite its cultural similarity to the Middle Eastern region.<sup>8</sup>

When the First World War broke out and the pressure of the Axis and its supporters intensified against the British and their allies, they resorted to exploiting every possible means that might assist them in achieving victory. They therefore contacted Sharif Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, who was likewise seeking communication with them. Contact was established through Sir Henry McMahon, their High Commissioner in Cairo. Hussein and McMahon exchanged ten letters that culminated in Britain's recognition of the independence of the Arab lands for Sharif Hussein. In return, Sharif Hussein pledged to declare a revolt against the Turks and to join the Allies.<sup>9</sup>

Among the most important motives for the Arab Revolt was Sharif Hussein's personal ambition to restore the glories of his ancestors that had been taken by the Ottoman state and what he regarded as the rights of the Sharifate that had belonged to his forebears. From a nationalist perspective, the activity of the Arab movement intensified and Arab aspirations for separation from the Ottoman state increased. This was

further compounded by the injustice of the Unionists who assumed control of power after 1908 and attempted to efface Arab culture. The Unionists intensified their centralizing policies and repression of Arab leaders, particularly in Syria, where they were engaged in political activity. Death sentences were issued against a group of Arab youth. Consequently, leading figures of the national movement in Syria demanded that the Hijaz take the initiative in proclaiming the revolt and that Sharif Hussein assume its leadership and direction.<sup>10</sup>

Here we observe that Arab nationalists sided with the Allies in order to achieve their national objective. During the revolt, many Arabs conscripted into the Turkish army joined it. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of Arabs remained loyal to the Ottoman state, which in their view represented the Islamic Caliphate. The Arab public was divided into two principal groups:

- The first group found the opportunity opportune to rid itself of the unjust Turkish regime, with all its injustice, repression, and oppression, which had extended historically over a long period. At the same time, it was encouraged by the proposals of freedom, democracy, national independence, and Arab unity that the West, the Allied powers, was proclaiming to the Arabs and promising to realize immediately upon the end of the war and its victory.

- The second group adopted a cautious stance toward Western proposals and intentions. It neither believed them nor felt reassured by them. Consequently, it adhered to Turkish authority and the existing reality despite its injustice, racism, and intelligence-based repression, not out of affection for it but out of fear of the West and the projects, plans, and potential conspiracies it might carry. It is perhaps very difficult to defend an existing evil in order to avoid a greater and more dangerous one. For this reason, the first group gained greater popular support, particularly in the Hijaz, Iraq, and the Levant.

Within this popular climate, Sharif Hussein declared the revolt against the Turks, allied with the French and the British. Most Arab youth serving in the Turkish army joined him, and fighters flocked to him from every direction. From these forces emerged the nucleus of the first modern Arab army in centuries, albeit under Western military guidance in terms of planning, objectives, decision-making, armament, and supply.

The British pushed the Arab army to the front lines in successive battles that extended from the Hijaz to beyond Aleppo, that is, to what are now the Turkish borders. In doing so, it bore most of the immense sacrifices and heavy losses in confronting the Turks and their allies from the Axis powers.

As soon as the victorious armies reached Turkish territory, the war ceased without affecting Turkey's unity and sovereignty. The Allies then produced what they had previously agreed upon among themselves, foremost among them the "Campbell-Bannerman Report," the "Sykes-Picot Agreement," "San Remo," and the "Balfour Declaration," disregarding the promises they had lavished upon the Arabs regarding unity, freedom, democracy, national independence, and other commitments. Thus, Sharif Hussein went to sleep upon dreams of unity, freedom, and justice, only to awaken and find himself, without realizing or intending it, having served Western interests and its supreme colonial objectives.

The extent of the West's long-term strategic plans for the Arab nation became evident through the deception and cunning they embodied, the consequences of which we continue to experience to this day. What, then, are the most significant of these plans and agreements that the West insisted on implementing, with all the implications, objectives, and purposes they contained?

### **1. Campbell-Bannerman Report (1907):<sup>11</sup>**

This report represents the summary of what the European states agreed upon at the conference held in London and named after the British Prime Minister at the time. Participants included Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, and Spain. Among its contents were:

"the necessity of working to separate the African part of this region (the Arab homeland) from its Asian part by establishing a strong and foreign human barrier on the land bridge that connects Asia to Africa

and links them together to the Mediterranean Sea, so that in this area, and in proximity to the Suez Canal, a force friendly to colonialism (Israel) and hostile to the inhabitants of the region would arise.<sup>12</sup>

The conference also recommended that states with common interests should work to maintain the fragmented and backward condition of this region and to keep its people in their state of disunity, ignorance, and underdevelopment.<sup>13</sup>

### **3. The Sykes-Picot Agreement:**

During the First World War, the Allies sought to resolve the Eastern Question definitively by agreeing to partition the Ottoman Empire. The idea of division matured when Britain and France concluded a secret agreement with Russia. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was concluded between Britain, France, and Russia in the spring of 1916.<sup>14</sup>

This agreement resulted from a meeting between the foreign ministers of France and Britain in 1916. Contacts had begun in early 1915, and agreements were concluded between France, Britain, and Russia. Hardly had McMahon finalized his arrangement with Sharif Hussein when the British Foreign Office initiated negotiations in London with the French government. It was agreed that Russia would achieve its ambitions by annexing Istanbul and the Straits to the Tsar's possessions, while Russia in return recognized the rights of France and Britain in the Asian territories of the Ottoman Empire. The British share extended from the far south of Syria and included Iraq, namely Baghdad and Basra, as well as the entire region between the Gulf and the area allocated to France. The ports of Haifa and Acre were included within the British share, which was colored red on the map. France retained the greater part of Syria, a large portion of Anatolia, and the Mosul region in Iraq, which was colored blue on the map.<sup>15</sup>

After the end of the war, each of the two states, France and Britain, was to divide its share into two entities differing in administration, systems, institutions, and other aspects. France's share consisted of two parts, one blue and the other designated by the letter "A". Britain's share also consisted of two parts, one in red and the other symbolized by the letter "B". Thus, four new states emerged from this agreement, in addition to the State of the Hejaz and the multiple emirates that followed, which constitute what is known today as the Gulf region. It was also decided that the area colored brown on the map would be Palestine under a special international administration.<sup>16</sup>

This agreement constituted a betrayal of Sharif Hussein and the Arabs, as it contradicted what he had understood from his agreement with Britain. It was also an arrangement that fragmented the Arab East in order to prevent its progress and unity. When Sharif Hussein learned of the agreement and sought clarification from his ally, it resorted to evasion and deception. He nevertheless continued to trust Britain, believing that it would stand by him after the war, while British representatives in the Arab East, foremost among them Lawrence, fostered this sentiment.<sup>17</sup>

### **3. The Balfour Declaration of 1917**

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was not the only betrayal directed by Britain against the Arabs of the East; another blow was delivered, and its wound continues to bleed to this day, when the British Foreign Secretary issued the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917.<sup>18</sup>

This was the promise in which the British Foreign Secretary Balfour, in the name of His Majesty's Government, granted Palestine as a national homeland for the Jews, in implementation of what had been stated in the aforementioned Campbell-Bannerman report.

These agreements and plans were immediately put into practical application, revealing how naive and good hearted Sharif Hussein had been in his dealings with the West, which attached no importance to the interests of peoples or to noble human values.

Thus, the Middle East is not merely a name but an old idea that predates what Shimon Peres announced in 1991 regarding the term "the New Middle East." It also differs from the "Greater Middle East" advocated by officials in the administration of former U.S. President George Bush. This notion dates back to the early twentieth century and referred to the region located between India and the Arabian Peninsula. It then

gained wide circulation after the First World War, and the term became prominent in the documents of the international settlements that followed the war, particularly those concluded at Sèvres and San Remo<sup>19</sup> between 1919 and 1920.<sup>20</sup> According to these settlements, the Arab Mashreq and its oil wealth were divided among Britain, France, and the United States of America. At the San Remo Conference, held from 19 to 26 April 1920, Britain and France divided the Arab territories. The distribution of mandates was followed by an oil agreement signed by the two states on 24 to 25 April in the name of the Turkish Petroleum Company.<sup>21</sup>

The United States Department of State feared that the division of sovereignty over the Arab territories under mandate might include absolute supervision over their natural resources, and it regarded the San Remo Oil Agreement as evidence of British French collusion. Prompted by the oil industry, the United States Department of State did not recognize the concessions granted during the Ottoman period, and the United States government informed the British ambassador in Washington that it did not consider the San Remo oil agreement between Britain and France to be an appropriate solution for regulating economic opportunities in the mandated territories and therefore did not recognize it.<sup>22</sup>

Curzon<sup>23</sup> justified the San Remo oil agreement as compensation for France for relinquishing its rights in Mosul. The United States responded that its non membership in the League of Nations should not deprive it of the benefits embodied in the principle of equal opportunity, particularly since the mandates in the Middle East were the outcome of the general victory achieved by the Allies, which could not have been realized without the American contribution.<sup>24</sup>

The United States Department of State argued that, as the state that assisted Britain and France against Germany and the Ottoman state, it possessed the right to share in the spoils after providing the necessary support to the Allies during the war, including oil that helped operate their military equipment.

Undoubtedly, the circumstances and difficulties surrounding the British concessions led Britain to adopt a more flexible stance in an attempt to secure American support prior to the Lausanne Conference of 1923.<sup>25</sup> This was because the new Turkish government began demanding the annexation of the Mosul region, and it was possible that the United States government might support the Turkish claims. In addition to these Turkish assertions, Mosul was experiencing unrest among Kurdish tribes. The British government agreed to a final settlement on 31 July 1928, followed by the signing of the integrity agreement known as the Red Line Agreement concerning the participation of American capital in the Turkish Petroleum Company, which became known from 1929 as the Iraq Petroleum Company.<sup>26</sup>

When the State of Israel was declared in 1948 and Palestine was seized, Ben Gurion considered that Israel existed within a predominantly Sunni Arab environment. Israel therefore emphasized the concept of the Middle East as a civilizational designation to suggest that the region was not an Arab majority but rather composed of ethnic and religious minorities. Consequently, Israeli media and governmental circles promoted the Middle East and the Middle East issue in order to dilute the Palestinian question and Arab identity.<sup>27</sup>

Western attempts were made to integrate the Middle East, including the Arab states, into a regional framework. Among the most prominent of these was the Tripartite Declaration of 20 May 1950. The Tripartite Declaration issued on 20 May 1950<sup>28</sup> by the United States, France, and Britain aimed to guarantee Israel's security and to threaten the Arabs should they decide to recover their territories by force. The declaration included the opposition of the three governments to an arms race between the Arab states and Israel. The three states also agreed to work together, within the framework of the United Nations and outside it, to oppose any attempt to alter the 1949 armistice lines by force, and insisted on preventing any imbalance in the balance of power between the Arabs and Israel.<sup>29</sup>

This was succeeded by the formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955, which represented a tangible implementation of a strategy intended to contain the Soviet Union. The Eisenhower administration (1953-1961) upheld the conventional American policy in the Middle East and implemented a plan of Western protection for the area, while also augmenting the establishment of military outposts to encircling the

Soviet Union. The Middle East, because to its geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, was significant for American national security. This necessitated the establishment of alliances and military blocs among the governments in the area from the American viewpoint.<sup>30</sup> Following the unsuccessful Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956, the United States sought to assume the roles of Britain and France in the Middle East. In 1957, it launched the Eisenhower Project, which sought to unify the area through various military and economic accords under the guise of countering any communist assault, both foreign and domestic.

Western plans and maps continued to promote the concept of dividing the Middle East in a manner that would serve Israel's stability. In February 1982, the plan of the Israeli journalist Oded Yinon was published in the Israeli journal "Kivunim" under the title "A Strategy for Israel in the Eighties." It was later presented to the world in English by the Israeli American legal scholar and professor of organic chemistry Israel Shahak under the title "The Israel Plan for the Middle East." The Yinon Plan is based on two principal premises: that Israel should transform into an imperial power, and that the Arab world should be redivided into small, ineffective states incapable of confronting Israeli imperialism.<sup>31</sup> The plan also calls for dismantling central states by exploiting ethnic, religious, and communal heterogeneity<sup>32</sup> across the Arab countries.<sup>33</sup>

This document, pertaining to the establishment of "Greater Israel," serves as the foundation of the policies of the Zionist political factions represented in the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as in the strategies of the Israeli military and intelligence agencies. This plan aims to undermine Arab governments and later fragment them as part of the Zionist expansionist agenda, involving colonization in the West Bank, the displacement of Palestinians from Palestine, and the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Israel. It was additionally stated that "Greater Israel" would encompass territories of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and would create several proxy states to maintain its dominance in the region, asserting that the Yinon Document signifies a perpetuation of the British colonial agenda in the Middle East.<sup>34</sup>

The maps of the British orientalist Bernard Lewis appeared as though they were a modified model of the Yinon Plan in light of regional and international changes. Although his plan was completed in the early 1980s, detailed information about it was not published until the early 1990s. The features of his plan appeared in an article published in the American journal "Foreign Affairs" in 1992 entitled "Rethinking the Middle East". This came in the aftermath of two significant historical events: the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the Second Gulf War resulting from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Lewis regarded that war as the end of Arab nationalist thought and, based on what he described as his Jewish sensibility, predicted that the Arabs would thereafter abandon direct wars against the Zionist entity and become preoccupied with conflicts among themselves, which he termed "the end of Arab nationalism", implying the loss of the fundamental function of Arab regimes.<sup>35</sup>

Bernard Lewis was the first to call for a project aimed at partitioning and fragmenting the Middle East from Pakistan to the Maghreb, having raised this issue on the eve of the establishment of Western imperialism of the Zionist entity on the land of Palestine in 1948. Subsequently, the Zionist orientalist Bernard Lewis, English by origin and American by nationality, published a study in the journal of the United States Department of Defense (the Pentagon) in which he proposed further fragmentation of the Islamic world from Pakistan to Morocco and the creation of more than thirty new political entities. This proposal implied transforming the Arab and Islamic world into a "paper mosaic" composed of 88 states instead of 56 states. Such a proposed division would entail schisms, conflicts, wars, and suffering, increasing the weakness of these entities and exacerbating their fragility. Bernard Lewis was explicit when he stated: "This fragmentation of the Islamic world is the true guarantee of Israel's security, which would be the strongest amid this 'mosaic'."<sup>36</sup>

The Greater Middle East and its extension, namely the New Middle East, constitutes the axis of American and Western policy toward the region. This policy is based on the premise that the Middle East in its current boundaries has become obsolete, and that the Sykes Picot division of 1916 has eroded and

deteriorated, no longer responding to the needs of the region or to American strategy. It also rests on the necessity of dismantling existing states into smaller entities composed of sects and denominations. From the American perspective, such a course would naturally be consecrated through blood and violence, and it is inconceivable that it would pass without upheaval.<sup>37</sup>

Tel Aviv, through Shimon Peres, presented its vision of what he described as the Greater Middle East in 1993. The Israeli timing was appropriate following the disintegration of the Arab security system after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the war against Iraq in 1991, and the Madrid Conference in 1991, which ended the notion of an existential conflict between the Arabs and Israel and opened the door to a Middle Eastern system that would fill the vacuum created by the collapse of the Arab order.<sup>38</sup>

Despite everything, and notwithstanding the magnitude of the harm inflicted upon the Arabs since the early 1990s, the Middle Eastern vision continued to encounter strong resistance that refused to accept Israel as a Middle Eastern state, even in the presence of peace agreements with many capitals in the region. To circumvent popular rejection, the concept entered through the gateway of economics. The Middle East economic conference was therefore held in Casablanca in 1994 and subsequently repeated in Cairo, Amman, and Doha, in an attempt to integrate Israel into the Arab system on the one hand and to entrench a political and intellectual reality as an alternative to the idea of Arab nationalism that had dominated Arab consciousness and Arab political movements for most of the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup>

These attempts failed or came to a halt after the Al Aqsa Intifada in 2000. This, however, did not signify any abandonment of the project's objectives. Rather, it paved the way for a shift toward a different pattern of American dominance, namely a transition to a more aggressive approach that did not hesitate to openly declare its intentions. The neoconservatives had assumed power in Washington under the leadership of George Bush, while Ariel Sharon took office in Tel Aviv. A new era began for the region and the world. The new administration in the White House concluded that Bill Clinton's diplomatic methods had failed to capitalize on the collapse of the Soviet Union and that it was necessary to consolidate American supremacy. Consequently, it initiated its global project for domination of the twenty first century by force, beginning with the Arab region under the banner of the New Middle East.<sup>40</sup>

The Middle East Initiative advocates for the imperative of enacting change within the territory delineated by the initiative, spanning from Mauritania on the western edge to Pakistan on the eastern edge. The program delineated three primary objectives as a foundation for the reform process: promoting democracy and good governance, fostering a knowledge society, and enhancing economic prospects. The project underscores the significance of Arab women occupying a prominent position in public life.<sup>41</sup>

The matter did not stop at this point, but moved to the official level when the term "New Middle East" first appeared in 2006 in statements by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, marking the emergence of the New Middle East project. This project took shape after the terrorist attacks that struck the World Trade Center towers in New York City on 11 September 2001.<sup>42</sup> The timing of the launch of the initiative preceded the Arab Summit Conference held in March 2004 by one month and came one year after the occupation of Iraq.<sup>43</sup>

The most prominent development resulting from this was a fundamental transformation in international relations, particularly between the United States and its allies on the one hand and Arab and regional states on the other.<sup>44</sup> The initiative suggested that the United States would not deal with the Arabs according to the logic of the carrot and stick, but rather according to the imposition of a *fait accompli*. This view is supported by the American disregard for the opinions of Arab government leaders on the issue of reform, while consultations were held with leaders of European states.<sup>45</sup>

The Greater or New Middle East project, which is neither greater nor new, aims to protect American and Israeli interests, eliminate national resistance in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, and subsequently complete the American Israeli project in the region under the banner of peace and the principle of two states in order to achieve normalization in Arab Israeli relations.<sup>46</sup>

The initiative likewise constituted the first step in the long American trajectory toward changing the conditions of the region in order to secure its interests. Its efforts focused on restructuring the cognitive and intellectual foundations of societies. It appears that the United States began implementing some of the plans it had conceived prior to the war on Iraq concerning the alteration of the Middle East map. Through its experience in Iraq, it decided to initiate a phase of collective transformation rather than addressing each state individually.<sup>47</sup>

The emergence of this project coincided with the appearance of the map proposed by the American colonel "Ralph Peters," which was first published in the United States Armed Forces Journal in June 2006 under the title "Blood Borders: How a Better Middle East Would Look." Although this map was not issued by any official American authority, it was used at the NATO Defense College to train senior military leaders and officers. This map was based on earlier maps of the Middle East, including those drawn after the First World War during the tenure of former American President Woodrow Wilson. Peters described the current borders in the Middle East and Africa as distorted boundaries established by Europeans to serve their own interests.<sup>48</sup>

An examination of the Peters map reveals several proposed changes, the most significant of which concerns the region of the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran triangle, through the creation of an independent Baluchistan carved from the borders of the three states. It also proposes the establishment of a Kurdistan state comprising parts of present-day Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, as well as the detachment of another portion of Iran in favor of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, it envisions a Sunni state in Iraq combining areas of Iraq and Syria where a Sunni majority is present, an Alawite state along the Syrian coast, and a state for Arab Shiites, most of which would lie on Iraqi territory and surround Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. Saudi Arabia would receive the largest share of restructuring in Ralph Peters' vision, whereby its northern part would be annexed to a "Greater Jordan," a state of holy sites would be established in Mecca and Medina "similar to the Vatican," and its southern portion would be absorbed within Yemeni borders.<sup>49</sup>

The flow of maps did not cease even after the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions. In September 2013, other theses appeared during the period 2013-2014. Over the previous two years, additional proposals for dividing the region were presented through strategic studies centers and international press platforms. These proposals do not merit classification as "plans" because, first, they are closer to predictions, second, they emerged in the writings of certain analysts rather than from decision-making circles, and third, they lack a unifying strategic objective linking them together. Among these proposals is the "city-state" thesis, a model expected to spread in the Middle East in the coming decades: Jerusalem, the Hijaz, Dubai, Baghdad, Misrata, and Jabal al-Druze, all cities considered candidates for independence as self-contained entities with distinct characteristics. There is also the idea of dividing Pakistan and Afghanistan into four states, as well as the well-known New York Times article: "How Could Five Countries Become Fourteen?" Some projections predict an air strike against Iran, to which Iran and Hezbollah would respond by attacking Israel and launching missiles at certain Gulf states. As battles escalate, Iran would close the Strait of Hormuz, followed by the partition of Iran and the establishment of an Arab Shiite state. Most of these proposals agree that Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia would resist partition in its conventional sense, but portions would be detached from them: Sinai from Egypt, Kurdistan from Turkey, and the Hijaz along with southwestern and eastern Saudi Arabia. These three states are expected to evolve into failed states. As for the Arab states anticipated to be divided sooner or later, they are Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Lebanon.<sup>50</sup>

## **Conclusion:**

The achievement and consolidation of Arab fragmentation constituted a central axis of Western policy. The entry of the United States into the arena of competition and the division of influence came relatively late compared with Britain and France. Colonial planning for control and the partition of influence did not cease. Since ancient times, the West had recognized the geostrategic importance of the Arab region and its hidden wealth, and it regarded the Arab region as a zone of continuous conflict with the West.



Foreign dominance has been, and continues to be, an obstacle to the aspirations for any unification project, such as those of Muhammad Ali and Sharif Hussein, in order to secure political and economic interests. This has been pursued through the implementation of a divide and rule policy and the creation of sectarian, ethnic, and religious divisions to execute fragmentation plans. This process was further facilitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, the dispersal of Arab power, and the occupation of Iraq.

Following the Second Gulf War and during the American embargo on Iraq, the Arab region was subjected to an attempt to reformulate its conditions. This represented the third attempt, after two previous efforts, to reorganize its geopolitical map in accordance with the interests of the major powers dominating the global order. The first attempt occurred after the First World War, following the decline of Ottoman influence. The second formulation took place after the Second World War, when international relations were structured in a manner serving the victors. Although Arab states gained formal independence, control persisted in new political and economic frameworks, leaving these states under domination and dependency within relations of fragmentation.

With the end of the Cold War and the dominance of the United States over the global order, the latter sought once again to reformulate conditions by reshaping a new geopolitical map aimed at deepening fragmentation and dependency in accordance with the new transformations.

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9-Hasan Sabri Al-Khuli, *Palestine between Zionist and Colonial Conspiracies* (United Arab Republic, 1968), p. 11.

10- Qadri Qalaji, *The Great Arab Revolt 1916–1925* (Beirut: Company of Publications for Publishing and Distribution, 1994), p. 189.

11-Muhsin Salih notes in a study that some researchers found this document in respected Arabic sources written by authors known for accuracy, in addition to the Palestine Documents file issued by an official Egyptian institution presumed to have high credibility. He himself used the document in his writings and lectures before recognizing its problematic nature. After traveling to Britain and conducting dedicated research, he found no trace of the document. Earlier, Anis Sayigh also failed to locate it, though he found documents indicating the convening of imperial colonial conferences during that period, with hundreds of related files preserved in British archives. However, the text of the so-called Campbell-Bannerman document does not exist among them. The absence of the document does not necessarily prove that it never existed in the same or similar form, yet it also does not allow for definitive claims of its existence. See: "The Campbell-Bannerman Document: Genuine or Forged?", *Al-Jazeera Online*. Jassim Sultan also mentions in his book *Philosophy of History* that the Campbell document was released after the expiry of its legal classification period for only two weeks before being reclassified due to concerns about its implications. See: Jassim Sultan, *Philosophy of History*:

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Strategic Thinking in Understanding History (Umm Al-Qura for Translation and Publishing, 4th ed., 2005), p. 77.

12-Hasan Sabri Al-Khuli, *Palestine between Zionist and Colonial Conspiracies*, op. cit., p. 10.

13-Ibid., p. 10.

14-George Antonius, trans. Nasser Al-Din Al-Asad and Ihsan Abbas, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, 8th ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Ilm Lil-Malayin, 1987), p. 348.

15-Omar Abdul Aziz Omar, *History of the Arab Mashreq 1516–1922* (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiyya), p. 461. See also George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, op. cit., p. 350.

16-George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, op. cit., p. 350.

17-Mahmoud Saleh Al-Mansi, *The Contemporary Arab East* (1990), p. 10.

18-Ibid., p. 10.

19- The Supreme Allied Council signed the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey on 10 August 1920 in the French city of Sèvres near Paris. The treaty detached the Arab provinces from the Ottoman Empire, including Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Article 22 recognized these territories as independent entities subject to guidance until capable of self-government. Mandatory powers established local governments in these regions, with the exception of Palestine. See: Shafiq Al-Rashidat, *Palestine: History, Lesson, and Destiny* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1991), p. 72.

20- On 25 April 1920, the Supreme Allied Council met in San Remo and, on the basis of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and in accordance with the wishes of the peoples, decided to place Palestine under British mandate, Syria and Lebanon under French mandate, and Iraq under British mandate, while respecting local aspirations. See: Shafiq Al-Rashidat, *Palestine: History, Lesson, and Destiny*, op. cit., p. 71.

21- This was an Anglo-German investment project that obtained concessions for oil exploration in northern Iraq from the Ottoman Grand Vizier on 28 June 1914, before the outbreak of the war, though it was not ratified by the Ottoman parliament. The British Anglo-Iranian Company, following the concession granted to the Australian adventurer William Knox D'Arcy in 1901 to explore and exploit oil in the rocky mountains of Iran near the Arabian Gulf, turned its attention toward Iraq. D'Arcy prepared a report on oil prospects in Baghdad and Mosul and submitted it to both the Ottoman government, which exercised sovereignty over Iraq, and the British government. Based on this report, the Turkish Petroleum Company was formed in 1912 by Turkey, Britain, and Germany. The company obtained permission from the Ottoman government to search for oil in the provinces of Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra. In 1913, however, Britain acquired Turkey's share in the company, giving the British government 50 percent of the shares, while Germany and the Anglo-Dutch Shell Company shared the remaining 50 percent. Germany's share was later transferred to France under the Anglo-French agreement of September 1919. See: Raafat Ghoneimi El-Sheikh, *Modern Arab History*, p. 39.

22-Khairiya Qasmiya, "The Development of American Policy in the Arab World during the Interwar Period," op. cit., p. 57.

23-Curzon: one of the prominent statesmen of the British Empire for 27 years. He served as Viceroy and Governor-General of British India between 1898 and 1905 during the reigns of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII, and later served as British Foreign Secretary from 1919 to 1924 under King George V. See: "The Life of Lord Curzon," in the series *Pioneers of the Arab Mashreq*, Al-Bayan Newspaper, United Arab Emirates, 6 August 2014.

24-Mustafa Ahmad Abdul Rahim, *The United States and the Arab Mashreq*, op. cit., p. 16.

25-The Treaty of Lausanne was concluded between the Allies and Turkey on 24 July 1923, replacing the Treaty of Sèvres. Ankara had called for the conference in 1922 to negotiate peace. Curzon, head of the British delegation, presented four conditions, including the abolition of the Caliphate and the proclamation of a secular state. The Turkish delegation initially rejected these demands with the support of the National Assembly and returned home. Mustafa Kemal later decided to implement these changes. On 24 July 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne was signed, restoring Turkish sovereignty over the territories of present-day Turkey and abolishing foreign capitulations. Turkey was proclaimed a republic under Mustafa Kemal, followed in 1924 by the abolition of the Caliphate and the order for Sultan Abdul Majid to leave the country. See: Ismail Yaghi, *The Ottoman State in Islamic History*, 1st ed. (Riyadh: Obeikan Library, 1996), p. 231.

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- 26-Mustafa Ahmad Abdul Rahim, *The United States and the Arab Mashreq*, op. cit., p. 16. See also Khairiya Qasmiya, "The Development of American Policy in the Arab World during the Interwar Period," op. cit., p. 59.
- 27-Ahmad Salim Al-Barsan, "The Greater Middle East Initiative: Political and Strategic Dimensions," op. cit., p. 43.
- 28-The Tripartite Declaration: a statement issued by the United States, Britain, and France during the meeting of their foreign ministers in London to discuss issues related to peace and stability in the Arab states and Israel, particularly the shipment of arms and military materials to these countries. The three governments announced their opposition to an arms race between the Arab states and Israel. See: Palestine Documents File, Ministry of National Guidance, General Information Authority, vol. 1, p. 1077, document no. 259.
- 29-Ibid., p. 1077, document no. 259.
- 30-Ibrahim Khalil Al-Allaf, "John Foster Dulles and His Middle Eastern Policy, 1953–1959," *Dunya Al-Watan Newspaper*, Baghdad, 22/30/1916.
- 31-"Balkanization" of the Arabs: the Israeli strategist regarded Iraq as the greatest Arab strategic challenge to Israel, which led the author of the document to identify Iraq as the central focus of the "Balkanization" of the Middle East and the Arab world. Yinon called for dividing Iraq into a Kurdish state and two Arab states, one Shiite and one Sunni, and argued in the early 1980s that the first step toward achieving this would be a war between Iraq and Iran. He further noted that the plan proposed by Joe Biden, then Vice President during the presidency of Barack Obama, advocated similar ideas. Yinon also called for the division of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Somalia, and Pakistan, as well as North African states, predicting that fragmentation would begin in Egypt and spread to Sudan, Libya, and the rest of the region, with Arab and other states divided along ethnic or sectarian lines according to their internal conditions. See: "Old Israeli Documents Discuss Contemporary Regional Wars," Al Jazeera Net, 19 February 2016.
- 32-The term "race" refers to a group of people who share similar and distinctive physical characteristics, whereas "ethnicity" refers to a group united by a common name, a myth of shared origin (which explains similarities among group members), a shared history, and a distinctive culture, and who are associated with a specific territory, in addition to a general sense of solidarity among its members. The concept of ethnicity has increasingly gained prominence as a broader term, since it does not focus solely on biological traits but also includes cultural dimensions and other non-material aspects of identity formation. Race is often viewed as a negative classification based on exclusion, in contrast to ethnicity, which is considered to promote a positive collective identity based on inclusion. See: Anas Abu Arish, "What Is the Difference between Race and Ethnicity? And Why Do Some Consider Race a Crime?," *Dunya Al-Watan* (online), published 20 October 2016.
- 33-Ahmad Abdullah, "Oded Yinon Plan: Greater Israel," *Ahwal Misr*, 7 September 2016.
- 34-"Old Israeli Documents Discuss Contemporary Regional Wars," Al Jazeera Net, 19 February 2016.
- 35-Abdul Aziz Al-Turki, "The Jewish Shadow behind Partition Projects (2)," *Al-Bayan Magazine*, no. 352, 9 January 2016.
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- 37- Abdul Alim Muhammad, "The Greater Middle East: Between Yesterday and Today," *Al-Ahram*, Wednesday, 12 April 2017, year 141, no. 47609.
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- 39-Ibid.
- 40-Ibid.
- 41-Khalil Al-Anani, "The Greater Middle East Initiative," *Al-Siyasa Al-Dawliyya*, no. 158 (October 2004), p. 98.
- 42- Issam Salim Al-Shanti, "Bush's Project in the Region: 'A Camel that Gave Birth to a Mouse'," *Al-Bayan Newspaper* (UAE), 2 December 2007.
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46-Issam Salim Al-Shanti, op. cit.

47-Khalil Al-Anani, "The Greater Middle East Initiative," op. cit., p. 100.

48-Mohamed El-Sayed Suleiman, "Partition Plans: From 'Sykes-Picot' to the 'New Middle East'," Al-Masry Al-Youm, 1 November 2017, 23:54.

49-Ibid.

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