

Blind Imperial Arrogance

by Paul Wolf, 26 September 2003

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Subject: Blind Imperial Arrogance



1. Blind Imperial Arrogance (7/20/03)
2. Fallujah: A multilayered picture emerges (9/26/03)
3. 47 rockets seized near Kabul (9/26/03)
4. Three of a kind: India, China and Russia (9/17/03)
5. RAW & Mossad: The Secret Link (9/8/03)
6. Russia: An army at war with itself (9/27/03)
7. CIA paid mullahs to counter anti-US feeling [?] (9/24/03)

Blind Imperial Arrogance

Vile Stereotyping of Arabs by the U.S. Ensures Years of Turmoil

By Edward Said, *The Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 2003

The great modern empires have never been held together only by military power. Britain ruled the vast territories of India with only a few thousand colonial officers and a few more thousand troops, many of them Indian. France did the same in North Africa and Indochina, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Portuguese and Belgians in Africa. The key element was imperial perspective, that way of looking at a distant foreign reality by subordinating it in one's gaze, constructing its history from one's own point of view, seeing its people as subjects whose fate can be decided by what distant administrators think is best for them. From such willful perspectives ideas develop, including the theory that imperialism is a benign and necessary thing.

For a while this worked, as many local leaders believed -- mistakenly -- that cooperating with the imperial authority was the only way. But because the dialectic between the imperial perspective and the local one is adversarial and impermanent, at some point the conflict between ruler and ruled becomes uncontainable and breaks out into colonial war, as happened in Algeria and India. We are still a long way from that moment in American rule over the Arab and Muslim world because, over the last century, pacification through unpopular local rulers has so far worked.

At least since World War II, American strategic interests in the Middle East have been, first, to ensure supplies of oil and, second, to guarantee at enormous cost the strength and domination of Israel over its neighbors.

Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate. These ideas are by no means shared by the people who inhabit that empire, but that hasn't prevented the U.S. propaganda and policy apparatus from imposing its imperial perspective on Americans, whose sources of information about Arabs and Islam are woefully inadequate.

Several generations of Americans have come to see the Arab world mainly as a dangerous place, where terrorism and religious fanaticism are spawned and where a gratuitous anti-Americanism is inculcated in the young by evil clerics who are anti-democratic and virulently anti-Semitic.

In the U.S., "Arabists" are under attack. Simply to speak Arabic or to have some sympathetic acquaintance with the vast Arab cultural tradition has been made to seem a threat to Israel. The media runs the vilest racist stereotypes about Arabs -- see, for example, a piece by Cynthia Ozick in the Wall Street Journal in which she speaks of Palestinians as having "reared children unlike any other children, removed from ordinary norms and behaviors" and of Palestinian culture as "the life force traduced, cultism raised to a sinister spiritualism."

Americans are sufficiently blind that when a Middle Eastern leader emerges whom our leaders like -- the shah of Iran or Anwar Sadat -- it is assumed that he is a visionary who does things our way not because he understands the game of imperial power (which is to survive by humoring the regnant authority) but because he is moved by principles that we share.

Almost a quarter of a century after his assassination, Sadat is a forgotten and unpopular man in his own country because most Egyptians regard him as having served the U.S. first, not Egypt. The same is true of the shah in Iran. That Sadat and the shah were followed in power by rulers who are less palatable to the U.S. indicates not that Arabs are fanatics, but that the distortions of imperialism produce further distortions, inducing extreme forms of resistance and political self-assertion.

The Palestinians are considered to have reformed themselves by allowing Mahmoud Abbas, rather than the terrible Yasser Arafat, to be their leader. But "reform" is a matter of imperial interpretation. Israel and the U.S. regard Arafat as an obstacle to the settlement they wish to impose on the Palestinians, a settlement that would obliterate Palestinian demands and allow Israel to claim, falsely, that it has atoned for its "original sin."

Never mind that Arafat -- whom I have criticized for years in the Arabic and Western media -- is still universally regarded as the legitimate Palestinian leader. He was legally elected and has a level of popular support that no other Palestinian approaches, least of all Abbas, a bureaucrat and longtime Arafat subordinate. And never mind that there is now a coherent Palestinian opposition, the Independent National Initiative; it gets no attention because the U.S. and the Israeli establishment wish for a compliant interlocutor who is in no position to make trouble. As to whether the Abbas arrangement can work, that is put off to another day.

This is shortsightedness indeed -- the blind arrogance of the imperial gaze. The same pattern is repeated in the official U.S. view of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the other Arab states.

Underlying this perspective is a long-standing view -- the Orientalist view -- that denies Arabs their right to national self-determination because they are considered incapable of logic, unable to tell the truth and fundamentally murderous.

Since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, there has been an uninterrupted imperial presence based on these premises throughout the Arab world, producing untold misery -- and some benefits, it is true. But so accustomed have Americans become to their own ignorance and the blandishments of U.S. advisors like Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami, who have directed their venom against the Arabs in every possible way, that we somehow think that what we do is correct because "that's the way the Arabs are." That this happens also to be an Israeli dogma shared uncritically by the neo-conservatives who are at the heart of the Bush administration simply adds fuel to the fire.

We are in for many more years of turmoil and misery in the Middle East, where one of the main problems is, to put it as plainly as possible, U.S. power. What the U.S. refuses to see clearly it can hardly hope to remedy.

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Fallujah: A multilayered picture emerges

By Pepe Escobar, *The Asia Times Online*, Sept 26, 2003

FALLUJAH - This is the heart of the Iraqi resistance. Fallujah, with a population of almost 500,000 people, traditionally "the city of mosques", is now called "the city of heroes" as it is at the core of the Sunni triangle (Baghdad-Ramadi-Tikrit) where most of the resistance to the US occupation is taking place.

President George W Bush told the United Nations on Tuesday that he is not willing to give back full sovereignty to Iraq any time soon. US Proconsul L Paul Bremer said last week that Iraqis are not yet capable of ruling themselves. The citizens of Fallujah have other ideas.

The highway from the capital to Fallujah - 43 miles (69 kilometers) west of Baghdad and the scene of one of the fiercest tank battles of the war in April - passes past Abu Ghraeb prison, one of the symbols of Saddam Hussein's repression which is now the American occupation's largest prison.

Practically every day in Fallujah there are attacks against the Americans. And the repression is also fierce - all around Fallujah. This Tuesday, for example, the 82nd Airborne intervened with full force in al-Sajr, a village 15 kilometers north of Fallujah, leaving two big craters in the courtyards of two houses.

At the Fallujah hospital, Abed Rashid, a 50-year-old retired civil servant, said that he was sleeping with his family on the roof of his house when he heard Kalashnikov fire. As he ran downstairs, American helicopters started firing what he believed were rockets. Rashid,

wounded in the chest and left foot, says, "This is genocide. This is not about overthrowing a government or regime change." Two boys, Hussein, 11, and his brother Tahseen, nine, were also severely wounded. Their father, Ali Khalaf Mohammed, 45, was killed.

The mayor

The mayor of Fallujah, Taha Bdaiwi, officiates in the Qaem Maqameiah - a building that not without irony was the former general security headquarters of the Ba'ath Party. The ante-chamber of his office is a true court of miracles, where an endless stream of citizens wait patiently to express all sorts of grievances. Says a local sheikh, "When the Americans are attacked on the highway, they always come to the nearest villages. And they take many prisoners, without any evidence. There was an attack near a factory: they took all the families living around it, including the women. They are using families as human shields. Some of the arrested are older than 50."

Many people in Fallujah repeat the same story: when American soldiers search houses for guns and find nothing, they take all the cash and gold. Fallujah's erratic supply of "national electricity", as the locals put it - two hours on, two hours off - is due to resistance attacks: "Last week there was no electricity because of resistance attacks. Electricity depends on loyalty to Americans." A pipeline was bombed twice in one week "because people believe this oil is not benefiting Iraq". But a local branch of Rafidain Bank was never attacked - even if there are always two American soldiers inside: "People know they are protecting their money."

Taha Bdaiwi's office walls are conspicuously adorned by two military maps of Fallujah, from Fort Stewart, Georgia, one of them a satellite photo, as well as two diplomas offered by the American military for his collaboration. The new chief of police keeps coming in and out. The mayor cannot give any orders without first negotiating with an American military official sitting in the same building. Bdaiwi, already involved in civil administration beforehand, says, "This area is bigger than Tikrit. People complain services are very poor." He spends most of his time in meetings with teams in charge of rebuilding and reconstruction. The money will come from the city's budget, but mostly from the Americans, who from April to September spent US\$1.9 million. The city gets a paltry monthly 360 million dinars (US\$1 = roughly 2,200 dinars) from the Ministry of Finance to pay for salaries and services. Anything else has to come from the Americans.

"There are many projects in the pipeline - a water project, a bridge, a hospital, civilian complexes - but no new projects," says the mayor. He is trying to bring energy from Baghdad and Ramadi. "I demanded two big generators, but they have not arrived yet." He bought two generators for water plants, but at present the Americans deliver water for some areas every day. He lists the key popular demands: water, electricity, security and health. The mayor admits indirectly that the real story about the pipelines is that the Americans want Iraqi police to protect them because they don't want more American casualties. But the mayor is a realist, "We need the Americans to pay. We do everything we can. We can't do anything without money. We need them."

The sheikh

Sheikh Khaled Saleh, a Sunni cleric in his early 50s, says that "although unorganized and without leadership, the Iraqi resistance is a ball of fire in America's face that will bring its end in Iraq". His sermons at Friday prayers draw thousands every week to Badawi, one of the main mosques in the "city of mosques". Sheikh Saleh is sure that thousands of young men in Fallujah were and still are influenced by Osama bin Laden and his positioning as an heroic Arab mujahideen. The sheikh is also sure "we have made the Americans dizzy".

Fallujah is littered with graffiti. Some is pro-Saddam. None is pro-bin Laden. All encourage local citizens to harass and kill American soldiers. Posters plastered across the city warn everyone to stay very far from US convoys to avoid being hit. In the kebab shops, people say, "The Americans are cowards. They are now afraid of any gunshot coming from anywhere."

The citizens

A group of prominent citizens of Fallujah got together and agreed to talk to Asia Times Online to explain "the real situation", as they put it. Considering the fact that for the Governing Council in Baghdad and for Bremer, anybody telling the truth about the occupation can be accused of "incitement to violence", their identities should be protected.

This week, the Governing Council's spokesman, Intefadh Qanbar - a protege of Pentagon protege Ahmad Chalabi - told the media that the offices of television networks al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya in Iraq would be closed. Within two hours, this decision by the council turned into "no cooperation from the council" for two weeks - which for all practical purposes means nothing considering that the council sits in a bunker in Baghdad and is extremely uncooperative anyway.

Bremer's legal advisers have in fact established press censorship in Iraq. And al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya are prime targets as they remain fierce critics of the occupation. Under the current press censorship laws, even to report about the killing of Iraqi civilians near Fallujah by missiles from American helicopters could fall into "incitement to violence".

For starters, the citizens of Fallujah don't agree with the usual statistics according to which the Shi'ites make 62 percent of the Iraqi population. After a careful tabulation of the population in the main Iraqi cities, they insist more realistic figures would be 6 million Kurds, 8 million Shi'ites and 8.7 million Sunnis: this would prove their point that Sunnis are woefully under-represented in the Governing Council.

For Fallujah citizens, "The mayor is an honest man. He was one of the most wanted by Saddam's regime. His family is one of the top five families in the city. Most of the population trust him and chose him." They insist that "people here are as religious as the Shi'ites in Najaf. So the population did not agree with the way the Americans came to Iraq." Unlike Baghdad, no shops in Fallujah sell alcohol or CDs. At least half of the population was satisfied with the fall of Saddam: "We didn't want Saddam. But after the invasion, with the bad behavior of the Americans, people are saying it was better under Saddam." The citizens are keen to stress that in the first two months after the fall of Baghdad, there was

absolutely no resistance.

The resistance officially began on June 28. "A peaceful gathering went to the mayor's building. There were troops inside. Then it went to a school: there was a military base inside. People were shouting: 'We want democracy, electricity, water'. The Americans opened fire, at first in to the air. Then against people. An old woman in her house beside the base was hit, along with her three sons: one was dead, one lost his leg, another lost his kidney. Many people went to hospital to donate blood. There were 73 wounded. They had to wait for more than two hours to be sent to hospital. No car could carry more than one wounded - and one car only every 30 minutes. The next day people went to the cemetery. As is our custom, they opened fire in the air to celebrate the dead. Many American helicopters and convoys then came and opened fire. That's how it started. There were 21 dead in two days."

The citizens of Fallujah add, "The Americans have no right to invade houses, search our women and also steal gold and money. The Americans played a double game with the Iraqis. They said they would give us democracy. People only understood what they meant when they came. Outside Iraq, they treat dogs better than Iraqis."

The United Nations "is controlled by America. It will never help Iraq. It's not independent. If the UN comes, it will be attacked. Any foreign forces - Turkish or Pakistani, even Arabs. These forces will do what the Americans want, in an indirect way. No Arab countries will send soldiers, because they support the resistance."

The citizens of Fallujah say that there are no American patrols in the city any more: only convoys coming from and going to Baghdad: "If there are three convoys, at least two will be attacked. Every convoy crossing Fallujah is covered by air support. If there is a patrol, the American soldiers attract children living in the area and use them as human shields. Is that freedom?"

The 25-member, American-appointed Governing Council is considered by everybody in Fallujah "an imported government". With two glaring exceptions: Dr Hashimi, a Shi'ite and a diplomat, who barely escaped an assassination attempt last Saturday (widely condemned in Fallujah); and Mohsen Abdul Hameed, from the Iraqi Islamic Party, actually the Muslim Brotherhood. During the Saddam era, Hameed lived underground building the clandestine Brotherhood base. Ahmad Chalabi, who is the rotating chairman of the council until the end of this month, is regarded as an "Ali Baba" - thief - and the butt of many jokes. It is widely assumed that at least 85 percent of the Iraqi population does not trust the Governing Council.

For the citizens of Fallujah, the Najaf bombing in which Ayatollah Baqr al-Hakim was killed was the work of the Americans, "to split Shi'ites and Sunnis". They are totally convinced that the Americans engineered the bombings of the Jordanian embassy, the UN headquarters and in Najaf so that they could "go ask help for from the UN to get rid of their problems".

The resistance

The citizens of Fallujah are adamant: the resistance is composed of members of families angry with or victims of violent American behavior, as well as former army soldiers and officers. They swear that they have not seen any Arab fedayeen (fighters) - and definitely no

al-Qaeda. And there are no Ba'ath Party members in this indigenous resistance: "They are bad people. They have money. If you had money, would you risk your life resisting?" They insist that "the main reason for resisting is loyalty to your own country".

Dr Kamal Aldien Alkisim, born in the ancient city of Heet on the Euphrates, tortured by Saddam's regime and general secretary of a new political party - the Iraqi National Fraction, which "emphasizes Iraq's unity and independence on all its land" - supports the struggle in Fallujah. "The resistance here does not have any relation with any groups. It is led by families. The main reason is the bad behavior of the Americans. There is no relationship with Saddam or Islamic groups. These groups are using the name of Fallujah." The locals are adamant that they have never seen anybody from self-described resistance organizations like Owda (Return), led by one Mohammed al-Samidai from Mosul, or Afaa ("Snake"), which sprang up from the Ba'ath Party in Kirkuk, or even an alliance of the Ba'ath with tribal elders coordinated by one Abu Hasan from Hajiwa.

The citizens of Fallujah don't care about Saddam's cassettes routinely broadcast by Arab satellite networks: "Saddam is a spy. He sold Iraq. When CDs of Saddam calling for a jihad were distributed, people in Fallujah stopped the resistance for a few days." They insist on a big mistake made by the West is "to think that Saddam is the resistance just because he is a Sunni".

After a lavish lunch, enter Sheikh Abu Bashir, one of the most prominent sheikhs in the region, a high officer in the Iraqi army, wounded in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The sheikh does not mince his accusations against Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and member of the Governing Council: he says that he witnessed many episodes of cruelty against villagers in the mid-1980s and accuses Talabani of complicity in the Halabja massacre of Kurds in 1988.

The Sheikh concurs that "the biggest problem for the Americans is when they dissolved the army. "They were trying to damage Iraqi society. So everybody immediately joined the resistance." The sheikh says, "The Americans now demand UN forces because they are in a circle of resistance and they cannot get out. When they started the war, they had no rights from the UN. So they have to leave this country, even by force. This is not just my opinion, our God ordered us to resist them as invasion forces."

These citizens of Fallujah are not part of the armed struggle. They only admit that the stream of attacks against Americans are conducted by very small groups armed with roadside bombs, rocket launchers and Strella anti-aircraft guns. Most are former army officers, with the operations financed by local businessmen ready to donate thousands of dollars. The regimental force is always the tribal chief.

Convincing tools for the young and the restless are multiple: defense of tribal values, defense of the motherland, and most of all defense against the "bad behavior" of the Americans. The mujahideen can count on total popular complicity. When al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya - the nemesis of the Governing Council - show images of American casualties, not only in Fallujah but also in Baghdad, people stop talking and their faces lighten up. The running commentary is inevitable: "We thanked them for our freedom, but they should have left long ago." At least in Fallujah, as far as the American occupation is concerned, the battle for

hearts and minds is irretrievably lost.

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47 rockets seized near Kabul

Hi Pakistan, September 26, 2003

KABUL: Police on Wednesday seized 47 rockets loaded with deadly cluster bombs that were aimed at the Afghan capital, Kabul, and were ready to be fired, state television said.

The report could not be independently confirmed. Afghan police officials, Nato-led peacekeepers and the US military were not immediately available for comment. Afghan TV said the 122mm rockets were discovered on a hillside overlooking Kabul, some 15 kilometres north-east of the city - well within the rocket's range. Each warhead carried 91 small anti-personnel bombs, it said. It said the rockets were fused and ready to be fired at a moment's notice.

No other details were provided in the report. If the rockets had been fired, the attack could have been the most deadly on the city in months. Meanwhile, suspected Taliban fighters fired 10 rockets at two US military bases near Afghanistan's insurgency-hit eastern border with Pakistan, a US military spokesman said on Wednesday. Eight of the rockets landed near the base at Shkin in Paktika province and two landed near a base in north-east Kunar province late Tuesday but neither caused any casualties. Afghan officials say resurgent Taliban forces have controlled the border district of Barmal since seizing it last month in a bloody assault. They have also claimed control of four other districts in Paktika and neighbouring Zabul province.

Separately, Taliban commanders secretly met elusive leader Mullah Muhammad Omar last week and vowed to step up attacks on Afghan government and US-led allied troops, a commander said on Wednesday. Taliban guerrilla commander Mullah Sabir, alias Mullah Momin, told Reuters by telephone from an undisclosed location that Omar appeared "delighted" by a recent spate of Taliban attacks.

At the meeting on September 17, held somewhere in southern Afghanistan, Omar urged around 50 top military commanders and former governors not to slow their activities, Mullah Momin said.

"I salute my Taliban Mujahideen brothers and the Afghan people. They have courageously carried out their Jihadi responsibilities for the last two years to defend Islam," Omar was quoted as saying.

"All the Taliban commanders should carry out the duties entrusted to them as a personal responsibility," he added. "All Taliban and ordinary Muslims are informed that without further wait and patience they should continue their responsibilities."

Omar also asked the Afghan people to look for "traitors" and warned that their failure to do so could seriously hurt the movement. "Taliban should not make new Mujahideen

organisations like the one set up during Jihad against Russian occupation because Taliban movement is sufficient (for the purpose)," he said. Mullah Momin said he had started spreading Omar's message to other Taliban commanders who were not present at the meeting, adding that the leaders had agreed to "accelerate" attacks.

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Three of a kind: India, China and Russia

By Sultan Shahin, *The Asia Times*, Sept 17, 2003

NEW DELHI - As the foreign ministers of India, China and Russia meet this week in New York as part of a trilateral process that began two years ago, diplomatic observers and analysts are busy appraising the strategic implications of their growing affinity. Some see it as leading to the establishment of a "strategic triangle" to save the world, particularly Asia, from the uncertainties of a unipolar world that resulted from the collapse of Soviet Union. Others dismiss it as routine and inconsequential, pointing to the primary foreign-policy goal of all three to get in the good books of the sole superpower and to resolve their bilateral problems.

All observers, however, agree on one point. The foreign-policy compulsions that brought the three together in the first place two years ago have only grown stronger since the US-led coalition invaded and then occupied Iraq. The United States went to war claiming that its security was in grave and immediate peril from Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and his terrorist links. But no WMD have been found in Iraq, and no link between Saddam's regime and international terrorism has been discovered. This has nearly silenced those in India and Russia, and perhaps behind closed doors in China, who continued to claim despite overwhelming evidence that the US had no imperialist ambitions and was only trying to rid the world of terrorism and WMD.

Officials in all three capitals, New Delhi, Beijing and Moscow, keep stressing that their growing strategic closeness is not directed against any third country, meaning the United States. Indeed, all three are separately engaged in improving their bilateral relations with that country; economic compulsions and demands of globalization force them to do so. But the historical and contemporaneous context in which this axis is being forged slowly and cautiously makes it difficult to hide the fact that, like the rest of the world, they, too, are scared of US unilateralism and the so-called doctrine of preemption.

The United States with its daisy cutters and tactical nuclear weapons and a long history of using them on false pretexts is their newest neighbor in whichever direction they look. This does nothing to calm their fears in the post-Cold War world. But neither are they quite comfortable with one another, with unresolved or irresolvable bilateral problems dogging their relations, nor happy with the idea of their strategic alliance being eventually forced to take anti-US positions.

After all, even in the war against Iraq, all three took a position, though individually and without any prior consultation, that went against the US stand. Even earlier they had declared together that they would strive to promote a "multipolar world". This obviously doesn't suit

the United States, the lord and master of the present unipolar system, in which it even threatened last year to make the United Nations obsolete. Indeed, if the UN is back in US reckoning, it is only because the Iraqi people are fighting the occupation and the US requires both troops and financial assistance to hold on to its occupation of Iraq.

While a different picture was beginning to emerge in the last decade of the 20th century, none of the three countries was particularly close to the United States for several decades prior to that. Russia, of course, was the leader of the Soviet Union and waged a Cold War against the US for almost half a century. Russian President Vladimir Putin and before him presidents Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev were all soldiers of the Cold War. China had managed to grow out of the Soviet embrace and developed a detente of sorts with the US much earlier. But India had continued to take a non-aligned position, which in effect turned out to be pro-Soviet on most issues, almost until the end of the Cold War. Yet India never really had a relationship of hostility with the United States, except briefly when the nuclear-powered US Sixth Fleet moved into the Bay of Bengal as a show of support for Pakistan during the 1971 India-Pakistan war that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

It is not surprising, therefore, that among the three nuclear powers gradually and rather inexorably being thrown together by the tide of history, India is the most ill at ease. Though determined to make the 21st an Asian century and committed to work for a multipolar world, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Hindu fundamentalist colleagues have for long considered the West a civilizational ally against Islam. Not surprisingly, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government declared India and the United States, the world's biggest and the most powerful democracies, as "natural allies". US President George W Bush could not have forgotten "the irrational exuberance" - the expression used by The Times of India - of New Delhi's response to his declaration on May 1, 2001, that the United States needs "new concepts of deterrence" and to create these it needs to "move beyond the constraints of the 30-year-old ABM [Anti-Ballistic Missile] treaty" and work toward deploying a ballistic-missile-defense system.

Similarly quick and unprecedented in its haste was India's offer of unlimited support to the United States after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack against the US. Even on Iraq, the Indian opposition virtually had to force the government to pass a resolution in parliament deploring the US-led invasion. Even now, speaking in the UN on Thursday, Vajpayee condemned terrorist attacks in Iraq, though speaking earlier Bush refrained from citing India as one of the victims of terrorism, obviously for fear of offending his friend and front-line ally in his "war against terrorism", Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf.

In contrast, the other two parties to the emerging alliance, Russia and China, realized the dangers of a unipolar world led by the US much sooner. The Kosovo crisis became the trigger. Both powers wanted Yugoslavia's national sovereignty to be respected. If at all intervention became necessary, both countries felt it should consist of UN forces from neutral or secondary and tertiary powers, with Russian forces in a leading role.

US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization intervention in Yugoslavia without a UN sanction made both unhappy. Russians found themselves marginalized in a country they had considered part of their sphere of influence. The Chinese sincerely believed, despite vigorous US denial, that the bombing of their embassy in Belgrade was deliberate and

showed complete disregard of the United States for consequences of its actions.

Very early on in the Bush presidency, therefore, US relations with both Russia and China deteriorated. It is this that led to the standoff over the EP-3 plane with China and the espionage tit-for-tat with Russia. The United States expelled hordes of Russian diplomats and the Chinese intercepted a US spy plane and did not release it quickly enough for Washington's liking. Russia and China had already decided that the US was out of control and required effort on their part to keep it from interfering in their respective spheres of influence - the Caucasus and Central Asia for Russia and, for China, Taiwan and the international waters around it.

At stake, therefore, is the very composition of the international system of checks and balances. India, too, is realizing that it is not enough to have seemingly good relations with the US and listen to Washington praising Indian democracy. Thus despite India's growing ties with Israel, which is considered the shortest route into the heart of the Bush administration, India is disappointed and getting angrier by the day. Bush's failure to mention terrorism in Kashmir in his UN speech this week may well prove the last nail in the coffin.

Indian grievances are mainly related to what Vajpayee condemned in his UN speech on Thursday as cross-border terrorism in Kashmir sponsored by Pakistan and the latter's effort at blackmail to bring India on the negotiating table. While US officials strained every nerve to keep India from attacking Pakistan when it moved its army on the border after a terrorist attack against the Indian parliament in December 2001, killing eight policemen, they didn't compel Pakistan to turn off the terror tap.

The India-Pakistan military standoff lasted an entire year; India pulled back its troops after assurances that Pakistan would not allow terrorists to infiltrate into Indian territory. For a time infiltration did come down considerably, but it has resumed. India believes that if the United States could force Pakistan to change its policy toward the Taliban, it can also force it to change its attitude toward militants operating in Kashmir and bring infiltration to a halt.

Nothing much is given out to the media after foreign ministers' annual trilateral meetings. But one Chinese scholar has identified India's positive factors in favor of trilateral cooperation. This gives an indication about the subjects that come up in these discussions.

One, the three powers are faced with a similar security environment and tasks and have similar or close positions on many international issues. All of them advocate a multipolar world and the establishment of a just and fair new international order. Indeed, this is the cornerstone of the emerging strategic alliance, though some scholars are wary of describing it as "strategic" and say that one should be more careful in using such expressions. It is noteworthy, however, that all three countries label their mutual bilateral relations as strategic.

Two, all three countries need to develop their economies and revitalize themselves. To their good fortune, their economies are complementary.

Three, Russia has a special position among the three - it is a traditional ally and partner of

India and also has close ties with China. Its special role could help facilitate development of trilateral cooperation.

Four, this cooperation, though just started, has already gained strong momentum, largely because of the deteriorating world security environment since the US invasion and occupation of Iraq that has exposed the fault lines in the unipolar world system much sooner than would have otherwise happened.

Along with the foreign ministers' annual trilateral meeting, another practice that began about the same time in 2001 and has now become institutionalized is a consultative meeting of pro-government or semi-official scholars from the three countries, providing vital ideas and feedback to the governments leading to the setting up of agendas for future talks and providing direction to the respective governments. Academics involved in this practice are from the China Institute of International Studies, the RAS Institute of Far Eastern Studies, Moscow, and the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

The first consultative meeting of scholars from these institutions was held in September 2001 in Moscow, the second in November 2002, and the third is scheduled for November this year in New Delhi. The published accounts of these meetings have repeatedly emphasized the anxiety of all three governments that the regular trilateral meetings are not seen as an attempt to forge an anti-US alliance.

The press release issued after the first meeting made the following three points:

Trilateral cooperation among India, China and Russia had a rich and positive potential based on common or similar positions on a broad range of international issues such as democratization of international relations, formation of a multipolar world, opposing hegemony, construction of a fair and rational new international order, and countering international terrorism, extremism, separatism, organized crime and illegal circulation of drugs. All three countries are firm supporters of panchsheel - the five principles of peaceful co-existence. The strengthening of trilateral cooperation does not imply any diminution of national autonomy or of the national identity. On the contrary, constructive interaction must become a guarantee for the full development of the most valuable qualities and genius of all three peoples. Trilateral cooperation does not imply the formation of alliances, blocs, etc.

The most significant aspect of the scholars' discussions in the past two years has been the concern expressed over the dangers of unilateralism and the strategy of preemption. They have emphasized active cooperation to promote multipolarity and democratize international relations. As all three suffer from terrorism, they have unanimously called for international cooperation to combat that scourge.

But some felt that the US-led coalition needed to adopt a more cautious approach. In some cases, the US objectives could not be shared and, in other situations, there were strong reservations to the means used by it. In their view, the United States appeared to be motivated by three goals - to eliminate Islamic extremism, to enhance its status as the sole superpower, and to increase control over the energy resources of the Middle East and Central Asia.

Globalization was seen as having both positive and negative elements. Among the suggestions to contain the negative factors were:

Joint steps to build defenses against the movement of speculative capital. Sharing their experiences in dealing with multinationals. Establishment of a trilateral study group on the World Trade Organization.

The alliance has the potential of emerging as a powerful grouping of nearly half the world's population and playing a significant role in world affairs. But one important step would be that all three countries make sincere efforts to sort out their bilateral territorial disputes. Some progress has been made recently in this direction, particularly in Sino-Indian relations. Since Vajpayee's recent visit to China, a joint boundary commission has started discussing the issue seriously. China and India fought a bitter border battle in 1962.

In Sino-Russian relations, too, progress continues to be made. Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and his Russian counterpart Mikhail Kasyanov, for instance, agreed in Beijing on Thursday in the eighth such "regular meeting" to deepen and diversify their strategic ties. Significantly, Russia invited China to participate in the development of Siberia and also Russia's far east, regions where the presence of a large number of Chinese immigrants has caused some disquiet since a recent census.

There are a great many suspicions regarding long-term Chinese intentions, however, both in India and Russia. China must move to convince its partners in this alliance that it wants to solve its border disputes once for all. Merely signing "eternal friendship" treaties that may lead to war in a mere 20 years, as happened in Sino-Russian relations, will not do. Those two countries fought a short but bitter border battle in 1969 when Chinese troops occupied a Russian island on the Amur River and the Russians fired Grad multi-barrel missiles to wipe out the intruders.

In 1997, Russia and China signed a border-demarcation accord that settled most of their border disputes, except over three islands on the borderline rivers. As exhaustive negotiations over the disputed islands continue, according to one report, the Chinese have been spotted trying to link their territory with the islands by dropping rocks into the river and sinking sand-filled barges in order to have more grounds for claiming the islands.

Two years ago, Russia and China concluded another political treaty, this time only for 20 years, but one that declares the two countries "friends forever, enemies never". The treaty stated for the first time that the two sides had no territorial claims to each other's land. It is to be hoped that this treaty will not meet the fate of the eternal friendship treaty, as it is meant to last only 20 years.

Those who want to fight foreign imperialism successfully must try to keep their own imperialist instincts in check. For, many a time in history, imperialists have benefited from exploiting just this instinct. Since the age of Confucius, the world has looked toward China for wisdom. One cannot help wonder whether some slice of Confucian wisdom is still intact in the Middle Kingdom.

RAW & Mossad: The Secret Link

rediff.com, September 08, 2003

Thirty-five years ago, in September 1968, when the Research and Analysis Wing was founded with Rameshwar Nath Kao at its helm, then prime minister Indira Gandhi asked him to cultivate Israel's Mossad. She believed relations between the two intelligence agencies was necessary to monitor developments that could threaten India and Israel.

The efficient spymaster he was, Kao established a clandestine relationship with Mossad. In the 1950s, New Delhi had permitted Tel Aviv to establish a consulate in Mumbai. But full-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel were discouraged because India supported the Palestinian cause; having an Israeli embassy in New Delhi, various governments believed, would rupture its relations with the Arab world.

This was where the RAW-Mossad liaison came in. Among the threats the two external intelligence agencies identified were the military relationship between Pakistan and China and North Korea, especially after then Pakistan foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto visited Pyongyang in 1971 to establish a military relationship with North Korea.

Again, Israel was worried by reports that Pakistani army officers were training Libyans and Iranians to handle Chinese and North Korean military equipment.

RAW-Mossad relations were a secret till Morarji Desai became prime minister in 1977. RAW officials had alerted him about the Zia-ul Haq regime's plans to acquire nuclear capability. While French assistance to Pakistan for a plutonium reprocessing plant was well known, the uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta was a secret. After the French stopped helping Islamabad under pressure from the Carter administration, Pakistan was determined to keep the Kahuta plant a secret. Islamabad did not want Washington to prevent its commissioning.

RAW agents were shocked when Desai called Zia and told the Pakistani military dictator: 'General, I know what you are up to in Kahuta. RAW has got me all the details.' The prime minister's indiscretion threatened to expose RAW sources.

The unfortunate revelation came about the same time that General Moshe Dayan, hero of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, was secretly visiting Kathmandu for a meeting with Indian representatives. Islamabad believed Dayan's visit was connected with a joint operation by Indian and Israeli intelligence agencies to end Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Apprehensive about an Indo-Israeli air strike on Kahuta, surface-to-air missiles were mounted around the uranium enrichment plant. These fears grew after the Israeli bombardment of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981.

Zia decided Islamabad needed to reassure Israel that it had nothing to fear from Pakistan's nuclear plans. Intermediaries -- Americans close to Israel -- established the initial contacts between Islamabad and Tel Aviv. Israel was confident the US would not allow Pakistan's nuclear capability to threaten Israel. That is why Israeli experts do not mention the threat

from Pakistan when they refer to the need for pre-emptive strikes against Iraq, Iran and Libya's nuclear schemes.

By the early 1980s, the US had discovered Pakistan's Kahuta project. By then northwest Pakistan was the staging ground for mujahideen attacks against Soviet troops in Afghanistan and Zia no longer feared US objections to his nuclear agenda. But Pakistani concerns over Israel persisted, hence Zia decided to establish a clandestine relationship between Inter-Services Intelligence and Mossad via officers of the two services posted at their embassies in Washington, DC.

The ISI knew Mossad would be interested in information about the Libyan, Syrian, Jordanian and Saudi Arabian military. Pakistani army officers were often posted on deputation in the Arab world -- in these very countries -- and had access to valuable information, which the ISI offered Mossad.

When young Israeli tourists began visiting the Kashmir valley in the early nineties Pakistan suspected they were Israeli army officers in disguise to help Indian security forces with counter-terrorism operations. The ISI propaganda inspired a series of terrorist attacks on the unsuspecting Israeli tourists. One was slain, another kidnapped.

The Kashmiri Muslim Diaspora in the US feared the attacks would alienate the influential Jewish community who, they felt, could lobby the US government and turn it against Kashmiri organisations clamouring for independence. Soon after, presumably caving into pressure, the terrorists released the kidnapped Israeli. During negotiations for his release, Israeli government officials, including senior intelligence operatives, arrived in Delhi.

The ensuing interaction with Indian officials led to India establishing embassy-level relations with Israel in 1992. The decision was taken by a Congress prime minister -- P V Narasimha Rao -- whose government also began pressing the American Jewish lobby for support in getting the US to declare Pakistan a sponsor of terrorism. The lobbying bore some results.

The US State Department put Pakistan on a 'watch-list' for six months in 1993. The Clinton administration 'persuaded' then Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif to dismiss Lieutenant General Javed Nasir, then director general of the ISI. The Americans were livid that the ISI refused to play ball with the CIA who wanted to buy unused Stinger missiles from the Afghan mujahideen, then in power in Kabul.

After she returned to power towards the end of 1993, Benazir Bhutto intensified the ISI's liaison with Mossad. She too began to cultivate the American Jewish lobby. Benazir is said to have a secret meeting in New York with a senior Israeli emissary, who flew to the US during her visit to Washington, DC in 1995 for talks with Clinton.

>From his days as Bhutto's director general of military operations, Pervez Musharraf has been a keen advocate of Pakistan establishing diplomatic relations with the state of Israel.

The new defence relationship between India and Israel -- where the Jewish State has become the second-biggest seller of weapons to India, after Russia -- bores Musharraf no end. Like another military dictator before him, the Pakistan president is also wary that the fear of

terrorists gaining control over Islamabad's nuclear arsenal could lead to an Israel-led pre-emptive strike against his country.

Musharraf is the first Pakistani leader to speak publicly about diplomatic relations with Israel. His pragmatic corps commanders share his view that India's defence relationship with Israel need to be countered and are unlikely to oppose such a move. But the generals are wary of the backlash from the streets. Recognising Israel and establishing an Israeli embassy in Islamabad would be unacceptable to the increasingly powerful mullahs who see the United States, Israel and India as enemies of Pakistan and Islam.

With inputs from the rediff Delhi Bureau

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Russia: An army at war with itself

By Stephen Blank, *Asia Times Online*, Sept 27, 2003

Russia's recent announcements that it would obtain and rebuild bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan represents a significant move in its overall military strategy and policy. Certainly it also represents a fundamental aspect as well of Russian policy in Central Asia. That policy has acquired a steadily more integrated character under President Vladimir Putin's leadership. Putin is increasingly using all the instruments of power available to him to try to limit the other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) governments' room for maneuver in both security and economic policy.

Clearly his objective is to create a ring of pliant client states around Russia, all of whom enjoy nominal sovereignty but which in fact have severely circumscribed capabilities for exercising it. These bases are intended to house Russian fighter planes, specifically five Su-25 fighters each at first. But if fighters are to be based there, that raises the question of what kind of air defenses will protect them. Presumably, those air defense capabilities will be part of the CIS-wide air-defense system that has yet to be tested and that one suspects has multiple problems. That system has been a focus of Russian and CIS policy and exercises, suggesting that despite rhetoric to the contrary about terrorism and insurgency being the main threat, in fact the United States remains the main enemy. Other Russian exercises would also lend themselves to that conclusion.

Moreover, the Russian Ministry of Defense has advertised that these bases and their associated air capabilities are to serve as the basis for a CIS Rapid Reaction Force (RRF). While the creation of this RRF follows contemporary international trends, it remains unclear just how much Russia has learned from recent wars and how much of these lessons it is able to implement with its own still unreformed and desperately underfunded forces. Certainly examination of Russian military literature suggests that its commanders could not begin to imagine what the United States achieved in Afghanistan and Iraq, let alone implement those lessons and synergies of men and weapons systems in modern war.

Certainly, there is no sign as yet, for example, that the Russian military can perform synchronized air-ground operations, as do the US armed forces, or that it can create a truly

effective RRF that can rapidly reach a theater and sustain operations there effectively. On the other hand, Moscow long ago announced plans to create a special 50,000-man force for deployment in and around the Caspian Sea and has consistently augmented the Caspian Flotilla. Thus these bases may represent steps toward executing the strategic vision inherent in the proclamation of this special force or a recalibration of those earlier plans. At the same time, it is also clear that these bases represent the Russian government's and the military's profound suspicion of US intentions and capabilities revealed in those two wars, as well as their fears about US unilateralism, willingness to disregard Russian interests, and supposed designs, on Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.

Undoubtedly, the United States' capabilities for long-range strikes and for projecting and then sustaining forces far from home must generate considerable anxiety within the Ministry of Defense and government. Thus these bases represent a strategic counter to those US capabilities. But here lies the quandary for Moscow. The announced force deployments for these bases are not power-projection forces. The Su-25 is not a long-range fighter, nor can it synchronize with the ground forces to provide the kinds of joint operations that were a hallmark of the US campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. It cannot produce air cover for ground forces and take out enemy forces at the same time. What these deployments do represent is a determination to stake a claim to "Eurasia", that is, the former Soviet empire, and to build on it in the future.

However, what Russian planners clearly fail to realize is that by virtue of the capabilities and presence they now possess, US forces have utterly undermined the concept of Eurasia as some unique theater off-limits to everyone else. And they have certainly shown long ago the limitations of the Soviet model of force building, which still grips Russian commanders. Not only can the United States project and sustain power into this theater, its victories have led to a situation whereby the entire trans-Caspian region can be considered, at least for some strategic operations, as part of a single Greater Middle Eastern theater. Whereas in both these wars US planners not only transformed the strategic landscape, they also developed novel operational concepts and military organizations to conduct operations. None of this appears remotely possible for Russian planners. One need only look at their entrenched and quite public refusal to entertain ideas of military reform or their inability to develop new tactical or operational concepts to understand that the cognitive gap between them and Western militaries is growing by leaps and bounds.

Military reform is essential to the creation of armies that can wage contemporary wars successfully and both develop and use modern technology. Failing that, a pre-modern relationship between officers and soldiers remains the norm, and that entails all the forms of the czarist "regimental economy", *dedovshchina* (the violent and cruel treatment of young recruits in the Russian army), etc. Certainly, no innovative operational concepts or the means to train soldiers in them will develop out of that kind of army. Neither will it be able to engage effectively on its own, either in counter-terrorism or other kinds of operations associated with the threats it will face in and around Central Asia. Worse yet, nobody should think that counter-terrorism entails strictly small-scale operations. That is emphatically not the case, as the US experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq show conclusively. In contemporary war, forces must be able to dominate across the entire spectrum of operations because contemporary and future war will increasingly present what perhaps the most innovative Russian thinker, retired General M A Gareyev, called "multivariant" challenges, often at the

same time in the same engagements.

Under present conditions, and as Chechnya indicates, Russia's military is simply unable to live in the same conceptual and operational universe as Western militaries do. And what Moscow intends to enforce in Central Asia by reserving command of these putative CIS forces is those areas' military backwardness. This is unlikely to be an acceptable alternative for many of these states. Georgia and Azerbaijan already want to be in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or to enjoy its protection. Other states seek to learn from Western models and tactics. Neither is it clear that Russia can even afford to sustain the forces it hopes to build.

Still, none of these considerations has deterred the military, the most unreformed institution in Russia and one that remains in thrall to atavistic visions of the old *machtropolitik*. There is no doubt that Russia will remain a significant, and possibly the major, player in Central Asia. But if it hopes to achieve that position it will have to reform both its policies and the way it thinks about war and peace. And whether it has the will, the skill, the resources, and the understanding needed to do so still remains a very open question.

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[Disclaimer: Ron Kessler's numerous books on CIA and FBI generally promote those agencies' own views of their work and history. - Paul] **CIA paid mullahs to counter anti-US feeling**

By Tabassum Zakaria, *The Scotsman*, Sept 24, 2003

THE CIA paid mullahs and created fake Islamic religious leaders to preach a moderate message and counter anti-American sentiment in the Arab world after the 11 September attacks, a new book claims.

In *The CIA at War*, Ronald Kessler, an investigative reporter and author of several books about the CIA and the FBI, also details espionage activity in Iraq which supported the March invasion that toppled the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.

For the book, Mr Kessler interviewed the CIA director, George Tenet, and other senior CIA officials. The agency supplied most of the photographs in the book.

"In Islam, as in many other religions, anyone can call himself a religious leader," Mr Kessler is quoted as saying. "So, besides paying mullahs, the CIA created fake mullahs - recruited agents who would proclaim themselves clerics and take a more moderate position about non-believers."

"We are taking over radio stations and supporting clerics," another CIA source is quoted as saying. "It's back to propaganda. We are creating moderate Muslims." Mr Kessler claims the CIA also paid for mullahs to issue fatwas, or religious edicts, urging Iraqis not to resist American forces.

He claims the CIA planted tiny video cameras to track Saddam Hussein, his sons, and other

officials, and monitor the position of Iraqi troops and suspected weapons of mass destruction facilities.

Electronic devices were attached to the undersides of cars that Saddam might use, and radar-imaging sensors were dragged across the ground to look for hidden underground bunkers and storage facilities, the book claims. Mr Kessler does not state exactly when such activities took place.

Mr Kessler claims the CIA and US special forces averted the threat of Saddam blowing up his oilwells. They did this by paying the Iraqi guards who protected the wells to snip wires connected to explosive devices after the war began.

To communicate with Iraqi agents, the CIA gave them devices such as satellite phones hidden in rifles and laptop computers with cleverly disguised programmes that could send and receive encrypted documents.

Mr Tenet is quoted as saying it was up to him to accept responsibility for any mistakes related to the 11 September attacks and not blame specific employees as some in Congress had requested.

"If you think this is about protecting your image or yourself, you're finished. Forget it," Mr Tenet told the writer.

Mr Kessler claims the CIA used agents from intelligence services in Arab countries, including Jordan, Syria and Egypt, to infiltrate al-Qaeda and develop intelligence.

These agents were also used to sow suspicion, so that members of the network would kill each other. The book blames al-Qaeda for 11 September.

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[From "Blind Imperial Arrogance," Los Angeles Times, July 20, 2003]. I can't tell you how tired I get about countries saying they are helping get rid of a dictator or are bringing democracy to a bunch of poor, oppressed people. Occupation, colonization, intervention, imperialism—it's all the same—and it's always there to benefit large, greedy empires. Post-9/11, the U.S. has displayed a stunning blend of arrogance and ignorance of the facts on the ground in the places we are blowing up. Our policy makers have been able to entirely divorce themselves from the consequences of their cascading failures. This is what happens when your intelligence and domestic media feedback loops are corrupted by flattery and opportunists who want to please the boss at any cost and curry favor to maintain access. This is shortsightedness indeed - the blind arrogance of the imperial gaze. The same pattern is repeated in the official U.S. view of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the other Arab states. Since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, there has been an uninterrupted imperial presence based on these premises throughout the Arab world, producing untold misery - and some benefits, it is true. Arrogance of the Vaal is a divination card. A set of eight can be exchanged for a random corrupted unique item with two corrupted implicit modifiers. This item can be acquired in the following areas: Ancient City. Sunken City. This item can be acquired through the following upgrade paths or vendor recipes: This item is used by upgrade paths or vendor recipes to create the following items: Arrogance of the Vaal was created by supporter rel4us. END NOTE S 1. My thanks to David Kim, Jyotsna Singh, and Ihab Shalbak for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. 2. Edward Said, "Blind Imperial Arrogance." Los Angeles Times, July 20, 2003. <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jul/20/opinion/oe-said20>. 3. International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS)