

## A New Perception of the Middle East Crises

### **Introduction**

This paper is an update of the original paper responding to a seminar conducted in 2003 by the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs (Post War Iraq - Governance, Humanitarian & Reconstruction Issues) in Wellington, New Zealand. It is an explanation of the history behind the major crisis in the Middle East - The Kurdish Crisis.

I have been researching and studying the “Middle East” situation for thirty years. The situation in the Middle East is now reaching extremes never seen before.

### **Crises (?) in the Middle East**

I define the “Middle East” as the group of nations (or peoples) of the Euphrates, Tigris, Jordan and Nile Rivers, bordering the Red Sea or Persian Gulf, all of the Arabian Peninsula, the South Mediterranean East of Tunisia (including Tunisia and Libya) and the North Mediterranean East of Greece (not including Greece).

Most attention to the Middle East centres on the so-called “Arab-Israeli” or “Israeli-Palestinian Arab Crisis”. However, as speakers Graham E. Fuller (“Ex Rand Corporations”), Professor Phebe Marr [National Defence University (USA)] and Dr Gareth Stansfield (Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter), expertly demonstrated, problems in Iraq, especially in connection with the Kurds, are significantly more serious. In effect, the Kurdish problem is a second major crisis, though I believe it is really much more critical than the Arab-Israeli crisis despite the recent (2006) announcements on Israel by the President of Iran.

The purpose of this paper is to look at the impact of some mistakes from more recent history, made in the early Twentieth Century. One of those mistakes belongs to the Egyptologists who remain an impenetrable cabal that needs to be brought out into the open, into an independent forum, for a review of Egyptology’s theories and procedures. When these mistakes are explained, hopefully the reader will see that we have three main crises in the Middle East: the Historical; the Kurdish; and the Arab-Israeli in that order of priority for attention.

### **The Historical Crisis**

Commentators, academics, policy makers and most of the public, assume the books we read on the history of the Middle East are reasonably accurate surveys of the region’s history. This may be a reasonable assumption for the region since the Hellenistic era (e.g. Herodotus, 450 BC). Unfortunately, the Western knowledge base also tends to assume that history before the Greco-Roman era, which defines the term “Western”, is either unimportant or hardly relevant to current events. In the special case of the Middle East those assumptions are incorrect. It is doubly unfortunate that the West’s survey of Middle Eastern History for the period 2400 BC to 300 BC is built on a chronological error that has the effect of putting all the histories of the various nations in the region out of alignment with each other. The Arabs, Kurds, Turks, Iraqis (Assyrians, Arabs and

Kurds) Jews and Persians are principal players in the Middle East today who are affected by this error.

Early 'scientific' Egyptologists such as W.H. Breasted, W.M. Flinders Petrie, Edouard Naville and Sir Leonard Woolley, embedded several mistakes from earlier Hellenistic-era writers into a new 'Western Framework' for the explanation of ancient Middle Eastern history using an Egypt-based chronology. They wrongly placed, by pushing back in time, most of the major dynasties of Egypt by approximately 500 or 600 years. They placed Egyptian personalities of the first millennium BC into the middle of the second millennium BC. They creatively increased the number of truly national dynasties from about 8 to about 26 (up to 500 BC). This affected all other national chronologies.

Before looking at the implications for the Kurdish Question and Iraq, I will refer to two ancient Egyptian personalities to demonstrate the power of a model that revises the chronological framework for Egypt's dynasties and puts all the other national histories of the Middle East back into alignment.

The first is Queen Hatshepsut of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty. She was the daughter of Thutmose (or "Thutmosis") I. He may also have been the father of Thutmose III, the Napoleon of Egypt. Cleopatra's Needle on the Banks of the Thames in London actually belonged to Thutmose III. The SS Cleopatra was the ship which sank while bringing the obelisk to London. The obelisk has become a memorial to several sailors who lost their lives in the mishap. Hatshepsut, since women could not normally rule Egypt, was married to a son from a concubine of Thutmose I and groomed as his consort. Hatshepsut was the daughter of an Ethiopian consort of Thutmose I. As an Ethiopian, she represented the union of two nations, Ethiopia and Egypt, much as James VI of Scotland (and 1st of England) or even Herod of Edom and Israel tried to. Her husband, Thutmose II, died early in his reign and Hatshepsut insisted that she should reign in her own right. Eventually this seems to have been accepted by the ancient Egyptian establishment (c.f., Elizabeth I of England) though she does seem to have been ousted after visiting a land called "Punt" (Israel-Phoenicia).

As the name Hat-Shep-Sut suggests, this was the great Queen Sheba (not "Queen of Sheba") or Sepa, which in Egyptian means one who is a "student of holy words" (hieroglyphs). Queen Sheba embarked on a diplomatic mission to visit Solomon of Israel (950 BC). Solomon and his father David, were two of the most prolific contributors to the Jewish Holy Scriptures. Naturally, as Josephus said of this "Woman who ruled Egypt and Ethiopia", she was "inquisitive of Solomon's philosophy". Hatshepsut is the only woman who ruled Egypt and Ethiopia. Josephus may have erred in some of his writing but on basic geography like this, just 900 years after the event, he can hardly be wrong. Instead, it is the Western Egyptologists who are at fault. Some 3000 years after the event, they have mistakenly placed this queen in 1450 BC instead of 950 BC when Solomon ruled Israel. *Prima facie*, one would expect the Jewish Sources (Josephus and the *Tanaach*) are more likely to be accurate than modern scholars. That is the view I take. Failure to accept Josephus here, is an example of the arrogance of modern 'scholars' which explains why the western system is unable to communicate with different systems of philosophy, for example, in Iran.

Hatshepsut, Solomon and Hiram the Phoenician ushered in a period of great peace, commerce, some say 'science', and prosperity for the whole Middle East in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. This period of peace ended five hundred years of chaos similar to what we see in Iraq today. If this woman could be put back in her proper place in time, and everyone realised what she accomplished, peoples in the Middle East might be greatly encouraged to put down their swords and turn them into ploughshares. Turkish and Israeli plans for fresh-water resources (Turkey) and reticulation (Israeli knowhow) could make this a reality if peace could be achieved today. These plans, together with oil, could make a completely different place out of the Middle East. These are some good lessons from reconstructed history.

The second Egyptian personality I want to refer to is a very unsavoury character compared with Hatshepsut. Yet we get from his bombast the most important clue that there is something very rotten in the state of Egyptology. Merneptah Baenre Hotepirmaat (or Ho'ephir-maat) recorded in the famous "Israel" or "Merneptah" Stele, supposedly in 1210 BC, that:

"Israel's Seed is destroyed; the land is razed to the ground."

The only time the Jews regarded their land as being "razed to the ground" or the only time when they refer to their young men being castrated ("seed destroyed"), was at the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. That was at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar who is also written "Nebuchadrezzar" (see below) in the Jewish Scriptures (*Tanaach*). Merneptah used the term "widow" elsewhere on his *Israel Stele* which recorded for posterity the records of several neighbouring countries of his era. The only time any Jewish source described Jerusalem and Israel as being like a "widow" was Jeremiah in his *Lamentation*. These and many other points demonstrate that a key figure from the 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty is also misplaced in history. Jeremiah refers to a "Pharaoh Hophra, King of Egypt", using a redundant term 'king' for the "pharaoh". This is the Ho'ephir<sup>a</sup> found on Merneptah's cartouches. These connections demonstrate the magnitude of the error - 500 or 600 years. In terms of the span of recorded human history this is a huge error. We are not talking about a few decades, a hazzard of the art of archaeology, but more than half a millennium.

### **The Kurds (the Hatti Lands and Reconstructed Dates)**

According to the reconstructed dates, Merneptah's father (Ramesses II) and grandfather (Sety the Great) had to deal with a crisis in the "Hatti" Lands. Why were the Hatti Lands unsettled and who were the peoples of the Hatti Lands?

From Egyptian hieroglyphs, Egyptologists read of a people called the "Kh-T-A" or Kheta. Sety and Ramesses supposedly lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. Who were the Kheta? One hieroglyphic symbol for 'd', i.e., the palm of a hand, is often read 't'. This suggests the Egyptians did not easily distinguish between the two sounds 'd' and 't'. Rather than read "Kheda" for "Kheta", Egyptologists believed "Kheta" referred to the Biblical Hittites (חִתִּי, Chitti). This should not have happened. The "Hittites" were best known as one of several minor tribes located in Israel (or Canaan). The "Kheta" lived in Eastern and Central Turkey. Common sense should have suggested another reading e.g., "Kheda".

The archaeologists' and Egyptologists' first dilemma was that their overall chronological framework for Egyptian history was not synchronised with the histories of other peoples. Second, and they could not have predicted this in the early days of scientific Egyptology, they were dealing with a people not only temporarily relocated (by -700 years) but also physically relocated (by 1000 miles?); to a different region from their nativity.

The Kurds are the Chaldeans. Their original habitation was southern Iraq. In ancient times it was called "Sumer-Chaldea". It was famous for the ancient cities of Babel and Ur. It is only in relatively recent times, and due to the work of Daniel Hillel, that we have been able to understand what happened to the environment in this region in ancient times. The problem has been complicated by the linguists, amongst the Egyptologists, failing to connect *Kheta* or *Kheda* with *Chadean* or Chaldean where 'l' acts as a silent consonant (modifying the vowel) as in "salmon", "farm/calm", "Holborn" (in London, pronounced *Ho-b'n*) or even "walk/talk/fork". Also, the 'l' is often substituted in English and in ancient Egyptian with 'r' and *vice versa*. Thus "Chaldean" might also be "Chardean". Or, as we see in the name (or title):

"Nebuchadrezzar ( ↔ נְבוּכַדְרֶצְצַר the Chaldean");

often used in the Jewish Bible, where an inversion between 'r' (Hebrew ר) and 'd' (Hebrew ד) also occurs (a quite common event in translations, transliterations or transcriptions), we can also read;

"Nebo-Churd-ezzar ( ↔ נְבוֹ - כְּרֹד - אֶצְצַר the Chaldean");

which means; "Nebo's (i.e., the planet Mercury or Hermes) Tsar of the Kurds".

These awful relocations in ancient history: one physical; the other temporary; have blighted our modern understanding of ancient Middle Eastern history. As Daniel Hillel surmises, by approximately 800 BC, the Euphrates and Tigris had spilled a lot of sediment into the Persian Gulf. The waters began flowing less swiftly. Water tables changed. Brackish water from the Gulf seeped back into irrigation systems. In turn, the irrigation systems began leaving salts in the soil from evaporation. The fertility declined slowly at first. Then, like the 1920's dust-bowls in the USA, suddenly aridity (desertification) descended upon the great agricultural systems. Ancient Chaldea (southern Iraq) became a desert almost overnight. Predictably this created a massive exodus. That exodus migrated, or probably cascaded, toward Assyria (in central-, or now Sunni-Iraq). The ancient Assyrian kings, once leaders of the now tiny and mostly Christian Assyrian people in Iraq, set about repopulating the lands to the further north (East 'Turkey'), that they had "conquered". They filled these lands with the Chaldean (Kurdish) refugees. Abraham the Chaldean had migrated to Canaan about 1100 years before this disaster. For a while he also lived near that region. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC most of the Chaldean nation had moved, or was forcibly removed, into Eastern Turkey where Boghazkoi seems to have been their main centre for a while.

In a library excavated in ancient Boghazkoi, archaeologists found a treaty, written in Akkadian, signed by the "Hittite" king and Ramesses II of Egypt. The translation turned out to be the same as the treaty found in the Ramesseum in Egypt between Ramesses

II and the Kheta-sar (Chadnezzar). Conventionally, Ramesses II is dated at *circa* 1250 BC by the erroneous Egyptian chronology. So this treaty, the northern nation concerned, i.e., the “Kheta” (or Kheda), and its kings, was also relocated to the wrong time in history. Historians placed it in the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC rather than the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. This is how the history of the ancient Kurds has been destroyed. A tragic and disastrous thing to happen to them. Now we have recovered their history, only the archaeologists of the universities stand in the way of restoring their true account. Thus the biggest problem in the Middle East lies not in matters concerning oil, religion or type of government but in the chronological and historical distortions created by the professors in the universities of the West. There is now a new way out of the logjam in the Middle East. Call the professors to account, and the western bureaucrats and policy makers they have trained, restore the history and start all over again.

### **Why Kurds inspire hatred in the Middle East.**

The problems of having to relocate such a lot of ancient Kurds had other ramifications. We read of the Assyrians such as Esarhaddon (or Haddon-zzar, Chaddon-zzar) relocating ‘settlers’ in Israel in *circa* 680 BC. “Esarhaddon”, son of Sennacherib the Assyrian, was a title like “Prince of Wales”. The Assyrians, trying to placate the Chaldeans who probably preferred to live in civilised Assyria with their cousins rather than in the outback of Eastern Turkey, named the Royal Heir Apparent with a title that incorporated Assyrians and Chaldeans in one nation. England’s Edward I did this with the Welsh in creating the title “Prince of Wales”. “Esarhaddon”, also a title, the actual person being an Assyrian in *circa* 690 BC, means simply “Tsar (*sar* or *shah*) or Chief of the Chaddon or Chaldeans”. He tried to repopulate Israel with landless people from other regions. Tiglath Pulesar or Tsar Pul of Tiglath (Takrit = Tigris) also attacked ancient Israel, probably as part-measure to deal with the overwhelming Kurdish-Chaldean repopulation crisis. Obviously, all this did not endear the Assyrians to their neighbours, but why are the Kurds so feared or hated by the same neighbours today?

Between 626 and 607 BC the Scythians, Medes and Chaldeans participated in the Fall of Assyria. Chaldeans (Kurds) took their revenge, moved in and took control of ancient Iraq. That was the former Assyria and Babylon-Sumer-Chaldea. Sometimes all these places were jointly referred to as Mesopotamia. If the Assyrians were not going to let their kith and kin (Kurds) live with them, the Kurds would force the issue. So far, the other nations probably did not mind the Kurds moving back closer to their ancient homeland. They may even have sympathised because the Assyrians seemed to have been regarded as very cruel. And the Assyrians may have been perceived as being partly responsible for the deserts of southern Iraq because of excessive water use upstream.

What other nations in the area may not have expected was that suddenly the Kurds (Chaldeans) would begin to establish a ‘world empire’ from their Iraqi (Mesopotamian) base. Actually, they stopped short of that objective. Nevertheless, they effectively conquered Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Turkey and parts of Iran. That was bad enough. However, at the height of the Chaldean Empire, as the Jewish Book of Daniel indicates, their king Nebuchadnezzar established a new imperial religion (*circa* 590 BC). He forced people to abandon their religions. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar believed this

might solve various religious, economic, social and ethnic problems like those we are experiencing in the UK today or the Iraqis are. This act of religious imperialism, and the Chaldeans' militaristic tendencies, have never been forgotten. The Jewish Bible calls them a "bitter and hasty nation" (Habakkuk chapter 1). After the Chaldeans were defeated in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, by the Persians and Medes (Iran), the other nations vowed that they would never let the Kurds unite, or have an independent state again, like the failed policy of the Europeans against the Germans throughout most of the last millennium.

Hence today's crisis in Iraq and surrounding nations.

### **Religion: The Yezidis - A Marker Tribe**

The information needed to pull this together is hard to find and often even harder to verify because all this took place so long ago. However, the memories are probably ever-present in the minds of the scholars of the key antagonists in the Middle East. The Western Approach is to say, "forget about all that and get on with the future". Even if that were appropriate advice, most people will not accept it in the Middle East.

Like a "marker gene", the Yezidis, a Kurdish sub-sect, still follow some of the ancient religious ideas of the Chaldeans. They are persecuted by other groups, even by fellow Kurds. But the Yezidis have a lot to tell us about the origins of the Kurdish Question (Crisis). "Yezidi" is normally thought to derive from "yazad" meaning "angel". But it could be a corruption of a name for the Chaldeans (*Kasday*, כשדי) used by the Jews. The Jewish or Semitic root word implies followers (Chassidim) of a mystical faith. Although modern historians clothe this group within an Islamic framework, much wider tenets of its belief structure seep through. Many Kurds profess Islam but only very nominally in most cases. As often happens with persecuted, or any religious minorities, people will readily pretend to adopt aspects of the predominant religion (Islam) but hide their real beliefs (Yezidi) either in texts, rituals or private beliefs. For example, at an evangelical Anglican church in central London, a few weeks ago, I sat next to a woman who believed in reincarnation. She also studied Rosicrucianism yet she came to an evangelical Christian service.

Probably, the Hebrew word for Chaldean (plural כשדימה, *Kasdîymâh*) is related to the Chassidim sects in the Jewish religion. The Jews spent some time in ancient Babylon so the equation does not seem surprising. It could even be possible that Jewish Chassidim or Hasidic sects were subsequently and unfortunately confused with the Chaldean mystics (or *vice versa*). Nebuchadnezzar appointed the Jewish prophet Daniel 'President' of the Council of Chaldean Seers, Astrologers and Magicians. This appointment (later confirmed by the conquering Medes and Persians) could also explain why modern Jewish Hasidic sects are terrified of being associated with evangelism of non-Jews for fear of being associated with Nebuchadnezzar's cruel attempt to enforce a new world-wide religion. The Yezidis certainly are likely to remain under suspicion amongst the Middle East peoples for this reason. Muslims are publicly committed, by force if necessary if the Koran is to be interpreted literally, to 'evangelising' the world for *Allah*. Religious intentions aside, it is error in history and chronology that is mainly compounding the situation. If the "West", with its erroneous models of history and

religion in the Middle East, thinks it is going to be able to impose 'civilization' there, it is quite wrong.

The Yezidis are like a Mitochondrial Eve Gene. Their influence on things is small but they link the modern generations of Kurds (Chaldeans) in the Middle East with important ancient events that can explain the origins of a very real crisis in the Middle East.

As Muslims, however, Kurds in Iraq are perceived as having colluded with the Shias thus winning independence and getting rights to oil in the north in a deal giving the Shias control of the oil in the south. The Sunni Arabs approached the Kurds as "Sunni Brothers" to collude with them against the Shias. The Kurds, however, are not as fanatically "Sunni" as the Arab Sunnis and rebuffed them. The Sunni and Shia Arabs are therefore now at war with each other (late 2006 - ?). The Sunni Arabs in Iraq fear that the Iranians will get control of southern Iraq's resources (oil) although, complicating matters even more, that oil could be said to belong - **historically** - to the Kurds. The Kurds, in the meantime, seem to be happy with the prospect of control over the northern Iraqi oil wells as their share of the spoils of Iraq divided between themselves and the Shia Arabs.

### **Summarizing the Crises**

Set against the historical background thrown up by a reconstruction of Egypt's ancient history we can do the jigsaw properly. The Kurdish-Chaldean Crisis is a much more intractable problem than the Arab-Israeli dispute. It must be resolved before anything else. Most people in the Middle East are very happy to see the Jews returning to their ancient homeland (Israel) in the former "Palestine Mandate". In the context of current proposals on the table, there are just some relatively trivial border issues still to be resolved for the Arab-Israeli dispute though I suggest something more radical below. One could compare the territories under dispute. The Arabs have North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and parts of Iraq and a sliver of Iran. The Jews have a sliver of land on the Mediterranean Coast in comparison. The Kurds occupy large parts of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey but control no parts of those lands. One conflict pits Jews against Arabs. The Kurds face Turks, Iranians, Arabs and Armenians. The Jews were always associated with their strip of territory, though the Muslim religion takes a view that it can never again be under Jewish statehood. The Kurds live near the general region of the land of their nativity but not in it. Today, long-time and very experienced desert-dwellers, the Arab Shias live in the Kurds' original homelands (c.f., Isaiah 13:20). Whether the Kurds aspire to return to South Iraq is a moot point. They may not see this as being as important whereas, for example, the Jews do of their ancestral home (especially Jerusalem).

As the speakers at the NZIIA Seminar led us to realise very clearly, the Kurdish problem is horribly complex even before or without the dimension I introduce - chronological chaos. However, most discussions and reports about the Middle East never refer to the *Kurdish Question*. The Kurdish problem, as the NZIIA Conference considered it, proved to be so intractable that the participants actually seemed to be relieved to get back to the relative safety and familiarity of discussing the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. The Kurdish Question is indisputably the more serious problem of the two

and the most serious of any problem in the Middle East. It is a far bigger problem on many counts such as population, resources and religion (Islam versus: Yesidism; Catholicism; and secularism or materialism which are really the main religions today of most Kurds - and of most westerners as well).

The problems of historical reconstruction are a major dilemma for the West because it appears its educational and academic systems, as well as its peer review processes, have broken down. The Western Academy is now creating many more problems than solutions (e.g., in genetics, medicine, auditing and even theology). The Middle Eastern Crises, with all the Western thinkers' and policy analysts' meddling, get worse with every new 'Road Map' or initiative for peace. The West keeps on blaming the breakdowns on the two participants - Israelis or Palestinians - but they are not the primary problem. In my analysis, they are a tertiary issue, associated with at least two worse problems I have identified exacerbated by imperial interests including the Americans, League of Nations and United Nations along with the British, Turks (Ottomans) and French. Now Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan need western soldiers in Iraq and Arabia to protect the oil production and reticulation systems so necessary to their economies.

### **The Problem of the Saudi Succession and Related Matters**

The old men who rule Saudi Arabia must soon die. Who is to replace them? Nobody seems to know. Certainly the Arabians do not know. Arabia's recent history over the last hundred years and the interventions by the British and Americans in the early Twentieth Century set the background for a very destabilising crisis.

The Al Saud controlled Eastern Arabia (Nedj) in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They lost control of it in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Abdul Azziz ibn Abdul Rahman ibn Saud began a programme to establish a Saudi hegemony of Arabia. The capture of Riyadh was a crucial component of that plan. Abdul Azziz's troops stormed the place and captured it with the blood of Wahabi 'suicide' fighters. Wahabis literally lay down their lives to capture the city. Today the Wahabi, or some of them, are known as the Taleban. When Abdul Azziz dumped them in favour of American protection in exchange for guaranteeing oil exploration and drilling franchises, the Wahabi-Taleban were understandably extremely angry. The Wahabis fought for a pure Islamic state not a secular or American puppet state.

Abdul Azziz also wanted control of the religious cities of Mecca and Medina on the western side of the peninsula. Originally, and conveniently for long-term plans regarding the reticulation of oil, the Americans wanted one governing authority across Arabia from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea to supply oil to Europe. Abdul Azziz and the American oil companies wanted control from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. ('Edom' or 'Adam' in Semitic languages = red, hence "Red" Sea or the "Sea of Edom"). Unfortunately, that necessitated removing the Hashemite regime from the Hejaz (western Arabia). Abdul Azziz got his way and merged the Hejaz-Nedj into Saudi Arabia. The British, indebted to American loans after World War I, obligingly withdrew their support for Sharif Hussein's control of the Hejaz (ancient Edom) including Mecca and Medina (the ancient Yathrub or Jethro of the Midianites of Biblical fame, the man who was the father-in-law of Moses). The British compensated Sharif Hussein's sons,

two heroes of the First World War, the princes Faisal and Abdullah who fought alongside Lawrence of Arabia. Britain put Faisal in control of Baghdad (Iraq or Mesopotamia) and Abdullah in control of Amman (Jordan or Transjordan, the ancient Ammon, Moab and northern Edom, c.f., Petra-Bozrah). The Hashemites remain in Jordan to this day, occupying a land originally ear-marked as the Arab-Palestinian state. The Iraqis expelled their Hashemite king who had no right to be there. Nor do the Hashemites have a right to rule Jordan. They belong in the Hejaz. The Saudis have no right to the Hejaz. They belong in the Nedj.

Nearly a century ago, British and French Foreign Ministers, Messrs., Sykes and Picot, drew the present 'boundary' lines and planned oil pipelines in the Middle East sand. The former were euphemistically referred to as borders. There is, of course, no such thing as *Iraq*. As seminar participants realised, these borders may have to be reviewed. Unless the affected people prefer to retain them. It seems that Saddam Hussein believed a review was in the air when he made a grab for Kuwait and the "Neutral Zone", the rhombus in the sand to the west of Kuwait. If it was all right to have an international conference to draw boundaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, why not again in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century? This time we can do a much better job because for the first time in over two thousand years we are at last close to a proper understanding of the ancient history of the region. The looming Saudi Crisis and the rapidly deteriorating Iraqi crisis give everyone another window of opportunity to at least 'review' the boundaries in the Middle East.

### **Toward Peace for the Middle East**

Unless the local nations themselves decide otherwise, present boundaries in the Middle East are a mess and irrelevant. They were designed to divide ethnic groups and they had more relevance to oil pipelines than anything historical, cultural, ethnic or religious. In addition to Iraq (Assyria and Babylon in 800 BC), Jordan (formerly Moab, Ammon, Edom) and Arabia (formerly Ishmael-Nejd and Edom-Hejaz) were never single nations as they are today. The stupidity about the current situation is that the 'world' is trying to separate the "West Bank" from Israel, to create a hopelessly uneconomic mini-state for 'Palestinians' on a series of rocky outcrops separated from its other half, the Gaza Strip, when boundaries need to be redrawn elsewhere. That is as stupid as the divisions on the island of Timor where Muslim and Catholic are separated into three cantons. The most recent plans (or maps) are ridiculous propositions aimed at creating a Palestinian state. They are so absurd, with their ring-fenced cantons, a dozen or more East Timorise-like enclaves scattered over the once-Jordanian declared "West Bank", that one might dare to wonder aloud if they are merely a diversion from the far more important Kurdish issue. The world, and any sensible person living in it, knows there will be trouble if microscopic minorities like the East Timorese or small minorities like the "Palestinians" can get an independent state while very big minorities like the Kurds are expected to languish without one. I suggest the following issues need consideration:

- (1) Solve the Kurdish-Chaldean state issue;
- (2) Sort out the looming problem of the Saudi Succession assisted by (3);

(3) Divide Arabia back into its traditional components - the Hejaz (including Mecca and Medina) and the Nedj. This could help solve the problem of the secular-religious divide in Arabia because government of the holy places can be in the hands of an administration separate to the entity which has to manage the commercial environment of a major modern oil producer and modern 'industrial' state. It might even become a novel experiment in separating 'State' from 'Church'.

(4) Return the Hashemite regime in Jordan to the Hejaz. This would reverse the illegal expulsion of the Hashemite regime from the Hejaz early last century.

(5) Re-divide 'Jordan' into two states. Return one to each of the two main Palestinian factions - Fatah (mainly secular) and Hamas (mainly religious). Then these organisations could realistically concentrate on nation-building in accordance with their differing philosophies rather than on internal squabbling, sharing outcrops, enclaves or cantons and embarking on terrorist activities or civil war.

(6) Institute an economic programme to develop the 'Middle East' by using a levy on Arabian, Emirate, Iranian, Iraqi, Kurdish and Kuwaiti oil. In the special case of Iraq, if Shias are to retain south Iraq, and Kurds the north, then revenues from oil could be re-allocated to Sunnis in the middle via a levy of some sort. The levies could also finance agricultural development. These matters would be sorted out by the parties in the Middle East although the world could pay its share towards a levy to help restore things because outside powers are responsible for a lot of the mess anyway and ought to compensate the Middle East to some extent. Or, since all nations benefit from Middle Eastern oil, a world levy, for example on oil, would be appropriate until the region got back on its feet.

Once these issues have been resolved, it is debatable whether there will be any issue to resolve between the Arabs and Jews. In many respects, the Arab-Israeli dispute, really the Israeli-Palestinian issue, takes the focus off the more pressing problems. The Arabs, Assyrians and Kurds in Iraq (not forgetting other minorities there) have to decide how they will live together in a confederation or some other arrangement in the region or entity we presently call Iraq. Israel, Iran, Turkey, Syria and Arabia and probably Egypt will have to support whatever arrangement emerges. What the Americans, British and United Nations have done in Gulf Wars I and II, is to open up a festering problem especially now that the dictator Saddam Hussein has been removed. (Although this may not in itself have been a bad thing. Now there is a responsibility on someone to do something about the horrible problems that have ensued). Saddam Hussein, like many predecessors over the centuries, controlled these divisions in his particular manner. The problems are ancient. Saddam tried to identify himself with Nebuchadnezzar at one point. Whether he realised Nebuchadnezzar was a Chaldean or Kurd is a moot point. Saddam came from the region of Takrit which was the home of Tiglath Pulesar the ancient Assyrian conqueror. Though Saddam is probably an Arab. There is a certain irony in an Arab pretending to be both Assyrian and Kurd or trying to be their leader. Why not let these peoples rule themselves?

Saddam is out of the way. The Saudi kings will have to hand over to the next generation. (Will it be modern-secular or Islamic fundamentalist?). Paradoxically, with so much chaos, now is the best opportunity everyone has had for a long time to help the Middle

East out of its crises. A chastened West, admitting its wrongs, should participate at a distance, only in the corridors, invited to come in to the main conference room and help when the main negotiators are stuck over a security, financial or technological issue. The West must admit that it allowed itself to be misled by Egyptologists who completely confused the region's history in the minds of its citizens, politicians, diplomats and bureaucrats. The West should admit that it then ignorantly meddled in the region with the power it once had. The West can help. It can make amends but not dictate. There is a lot of oil in the region. That oil is vital to the economic and social development of more than six billion people around the whole world. The Arab, Assyrian, Kurdish and Persian owners of that oil want to trade with it to everyone's benefit but the three crises I referred to at the beginning of this paper, threaten to stop the oil flows altogether. That would be a disaster for the whole world and could lead to many more social crises - especially for the motoring public!

Environmentalists might say that would be a good outcome because of **their** religious beliefs concerning the formation of the ice caps, the rate at which these are now melting and the impact of oil consumption on the environment. However, that's another issue outside this brief except to say that the same process failures that have allowed the professors in the universities to blind the world about the problems of the Middle East are relevant to the current problem of melting ice caps which in fact have nothing to do with human activity but everything to do with the historical facts regarding the formation of the ice caps as well as basic facts about the physics of solar radiation through the atmosphere combined with geologic and volcanic dynamics all around the earth's crust, on land and below the surface of the ocean. Although, and this is a technical point in meteorology and climate change, there are powerful reasons for expecting much of the water released from the melting ice-caps to precipitate over the land masses. If we can get peace in the Middle East and begin fertilising the soils, re-foresting etc., as Israel is doing so well, the region's skies will attract a lot of that polar moisture. Then agriculture, forestry, horticulture and tourism will compete with oil as a supplier of economy and employment to people in the region - and beyond.

### **Finding a Resting Place for two Ancient Nations**

Both Jews and Kurds have sought refuge from enemies by seeking a homeland and rightly so! The Jews have nearly succeeded with theirs. They now only need peace with the Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Iraqis. The Kurds, until recently, were a long way from **their** goal. Although it has often seemed tantalisingly close. It seems both the Kurds and the Jews raise fears of a religious nature amongst the other peoples in the region. Aggressive intentions in the past have marred the Kurdish history. (The Jews, on the other hand, have either been absent from the region, driven out by conquerors such as ancient Assyrians, Nebuchadnezzar's Kurdo-Chaldeans, Greeks or Romans, or have been subjugated Middle Eastern minorities themselves over the period between 600 BC and 1900 AD when the Kurds periodically held sway over the region, holding responsibility for the region). As Dr Alley suggested at the NZIIA Seminar, perhaps a sort of Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be established to sort out grievances and long-standing hatreds. In December 2006, Mr Al Maliki suggested a similar idea to assuage Sunni-Shia tempers. Dr Alley told me he also noted the extreme hatred the Turks had for Kurds when he visited Turkey a few years ago, although some

reconciliation has since occurred according to some newspaper reports discussing Turkey's intractable European Union negotiations. However, if a commission perhaps like the one used in South Africa, post Apartheid, is appropriate, it would need to discuss the last twenty-eight hundred years not just the last century. The West would have to be involved in it too because it has been a clumsy meddler and, either partly or mainly, responsible for several comparatively more recent problems. Giving wider consideration to its involvement, the West might also have to revisit its role, or inaction, regarding the Holocaust and realise how close it came to cultural suicide since so much of its culture and heritage was learned, borrowed or came from the Jews. But both the West and the East (China, India, Korea, Japan and others), need to learn more about their roots in the Middle East. I cannot comment on Eastern attitudes to the Middle East (their Middle West) but I can suggest that while it is proper to castigate an Iranian President's denial of the Holocaust, the West might reconsider its sometime uncaring apathy, and that might be putting it mildly, towards the Jewish people (nation).

## **Conclusion**

The capital, technology and power of the West have inevitably taken it into peace initiatives, boundary setting, power-broking, nation building, regime changing etc., in the Middle East for nearly two hundred years now. The West's treatment of the Jews, culminating in the Holocaust, also drew it into the politics of the Middle East. Oil is the other great factor bringing the West back to the Middle East. Of course this region is the Middle West to the Eastern World. The East, perhaps more so than the West, now also depends on the oil out of Arabia and Iraq, either directly as an energy source or indirectly through the flow-on effects of international economic development. In a sense, oil draws both Easterners and Westerners back to the region their ancestors originally departed from (despite what neo-Darwinists think). The West owes its mathematics, business law and alphabet to the Middle East. In the Middle East, the Assyrians say they are "the second nation". They would be the first to acknowledge the Kurds (Chaldeans) are refugees from the "first nation" or Sumer-Chaldea, the land of Ur and Babel. Unfortunately, the secular, evolutionist and materialist West finds these aspects of ancient history quite mystifying. That is why it is in deep, deep trouble there. The Western secularists, evolutionists and materialists need to consider the ideas of other thinkers for a change. The West's archaeologists and Egyptologists have messed up the history of the region, substituting strange models for reality. Those models clearly are not working. It is time for the West to consider some new models and this paper, it is hoped, is a beginning toward that end.

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