

## **The Role of Intellectuals in the Making of American Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Case of Bernard Lewis and the 2003 U.S.A. Invasion of Iraq \***

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper looks into the dynamics of American foreign policy making in the Middle East concentrating on the role played by intellectuals in this process. The most important and most debated role has been that of the famous British American historian and Orientalist, Bernard Lewis, and his ties with and influence on the Bush administration at the time of the U.S.A. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The main argument is that the misconceptions promoted by Bernard Lewis about the Middle East and his Orientalist approach to the region has provided an intellectual rhetorical justification that 'legitimized' the U.S.A. invasion of Iraq in the name of spreading democracy and saving Arabs from tyranny.

**Keywords:** American Foreign Policy, Middle East, Orientalism, Bernard Lewis, Invasion of Iraq 2003.

### **Introduction**

The US invasion of Iraq in March 2003 marked a new era in US foreign policy in the Middle East. The previous era had been characterized by supporting local authoritarian regimes for the sake of maintaining "stability" in an important region for American national interests. This illusion of stability, however, was shattered by the attacks of September 11. The emergence of al-Qaeda and the threat of global terrorism originating from the Arab and Muslim Middle East imposed a new reality which the US had to confront. The Bush administration decided that in order to address the real problems of the Middle East a new policy was required. Political oppression and economic underdevelopment contributing to the instability of the region and the popularity of radical Islam must be dealt with. The solution, as the new administration believed, would be to spread democracy in the Middle East, the fortress of authoritarian regimes. The first phase of this long process was the invasion of Iraq to replace the regime of Saddam Hussein with a democratic one. Other countries, specifically those considered hostile and oppressive such as Syria and Iran would also have to be dealt with (George W. Bush-Whitehouse Archives, 2004; see also Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2004).

This new "trend" in the current US foreign policy was specifically advocated by neoconservative intellectuals and government officials as part of their vision of the role that the US should play in world politics as the sole superpower. While spreading democracy in the world in itself is an idealistic and moral conception, it was proposed by the Bush administration within the context of the far more reaching goal of neutralizing potential threats all over the globe and securing US national interests, especially in the Middle East (Mann, 2004).

What made the option of experimenting with such ideas in the Middle East even more attractive was the way Islam and the region were portrayed by certain scholars close to neoconservatives' circles. Indeed, as some critics argue, some historians, policy analysts and philosophers have had an important role in shaping the Bush administration's ideas on U.S.

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foreign policy, the U.S. “place in the world,” and the invasion of Iraq (Kakutani, 2003). One of these historians was Bernard Lewis, the acclaimed Orientalist and Middle Eastern expert who has been described by some pundits as the “most influential writer on Middle Eastern history and politics” in the U.S (Sabra, 2003).<sup>1</sup> This essay aims at studying the significant influence of Bernard Lewis on the shaping of the Bush administration’s foreign policy in the Middle East by analyzing Lewis’s ideas on the region and how these ideas were transformed into policies in the region.

### **Lewis’s Influence**

Bernard Lewis is considered “one of the intellectual architects” of the invasion of Iraq (Rotella, Gold, Andriani, Scharf & Chenoweth, 2004). It is said that he has the “ear of the Pentagon” since he had predicted a swift victory in the Gulf war of 1991. Some of his admirers among the Bush administration were Vice President Cheney and Richard Perle (Anonymous, 2004). He also had close ties with Paul Wolfowitz, former Deputy Defense Secretary, Elliot Abrams, National Security Council Mideast chief and Harold Rhode, Wolfowitz’s former advisor on Islamic affairs (Waldman, 2004). His opinions on policies toward Islamic terrorism and the Middle East were often sought by President George W. Bush and his administration (Sabra, 2003). His influence greatly increased after the September 11 attacks on the U.S. when the Bush administration was contemplating an appropriate response to the attacks of Bin Laden (Kempe, 2005). Following these attacks, Lewis was regularly invited to meet with President Bush and other senior officials in the administration. He was specifically asked by Vice President Cheney to hold a seminar for the administration’s “key figures” on Islam and the attitudes of Muslims toward Americans (Elliott, 2004). Additionally, his works on the Middle East and Islam were often referred to by Vice President Cheney and then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in their justification and promotion of invading Iraq as a first phase to transform the region into a stable political “entity.” Commenting on Lewis’s “prescription” for Iraq (before the invasion), Wolfowitz said: “Bernard has taught how to understand the complex and important history of the Middle East, and use it to guide us where we will go next to build a better world for generations to come” (Waldman, 2004). Almost 16 years ago Cheney already thought that Lewis offered the “sounder analysis” and better insight” than all Middle Eastern experts. Cheney believed that “we’ll continue to rely on Bernard Lewis’s rigorous thinking, his sound judgment, his realism, and his optimism as well” (2006).

According to some reports Vice-President Cheney often met with Bernard Lewis. In such meetings Lewis promoted the idea that building democracy in Iraq can be achieved (Waldman, 2004; see also Kakutani, 2003). He also advised him that the Arabs “looked down on weakness and respected the exercise of force.” Following such meetings it was reported in the *Time* that Cheney “gradually abandoned his former skepticism about the potential for democracy in the Middle East,” which was a “development that became a tipping point in the tilt toward war” (Kakutani 2003).

Therefore, as Elizabeth Eaves writes, Lewis’s writings “provided the Bush administration with intellectual support for regime change in Iraq and for its policies in the Middle East in general” (2004). He was described by Richard Perle as “the single most important intellectual influence countering the conventional wisdom on managing the conflict between radical Islam and the West” (Waldman, 2004). Indeed, his influence was compared by Peter Waldman to that of George Kennan, the author of “containment.” Moreover, that his “diagnosis of the Muslim world’s malaise and his call for a U.S. military invasion” to spread democracy in the Middle East is often referred to as the “Lewis Doctrine” (Waldman, 2004). He himself referred to his doctrine as “Liberation,” and believed that “the region and the world are better off now than before the war: ‘Despite internal difficulties and external sabotage, the process of democratization has succeeded beyond anyone’s wildest dreams’” (Kempe, 2005). Following the invasion, Lewis wrote articles on the aggravating situation in Iraq that became “articles of faith” to the Bush administration. In these articles, he pointed out that the complex situation emerging in Iraq is but the result of “anti-American fascist or Islamist forces seeking to defeat Western Christendom” (Sabra, 2003). Thus, there appeared the reference to fascist Islam that was repeatedly

<sup>1</sup> On Orientalism in the Arab world see El-Far, G.Y.(2019). Orientalism. *Dirasat:Human and Social Studies*, 46 (3), 21-30 and Al-Anaswa, M. A. (2016). Contribution of orientalists in publishing the Arab-Islamic documentation. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 43 (Supplement 2), 1083-1097.

pointed out in President Bush speeches and statements. Many critics now believe that Lewis's ideas on the problems of the Middle East as "failing Islamic states that had to be transformed" contributed to the shaping of the new U.S. policies that included the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the idea of spreading democracy in the Muslim and Arab world (Kempe, 2005).

In his Doctrine, Lewis portrayed the threat emerging from radical Islam as more dangerous than that of the Nazis as it is "fanatical, violent, enjoys significant support and the terrorists have suicidal tendencies and nuclear potential" (Kempe, 2005). To deal with such a threat, the U.S. should, therefore, address its roots: the chronic problems of the Middle East. This, according to him and to his so called Doctrine, would be done by imposing secular democracy in the region beginning with Iraq and achieving this goal through an impressive act of power that will gain Arabs' respect and obedience (Hirsh, 2004). This Doctrine, as some critics believe, has "helped define the boldest shift in American foreign policy in 50 years," which was previously based on the strategy of "containment" characteristic of the Cold War confrontations between the two super powers (Waldman, 2004). What is more, it helped "coax the White House to shed decades of thinking about Arab regimes and the use of military power" (Waldman, 2004).

#### **Lewis's Middle East**

Bernard Lewis formulated his "Doctrine" based on a central theme that occurs in all of his books, articles and lectures since the 1950s. With this central theme he reads, interprets and proposes solutions to deal with the complex nature of the Middle East problem. In brief, it is a clash of civilizations which is taking place between the land of Islam, the Middle East, and the land of Christendom, the West and its contemporary leader the U.S. In 1990 he wrote an article, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," in which he described the growing tension between the West and the World of Islam as a "clash of civilizations" (Lewis, 1990b).<sup>2</sup> Following the September attacks during an interview on C-SPAN Lewis explained that Americans should not be asking the question "why they hate us?" because according to him Muslims "have been hating us for centuries, and it's very natural that they do. You have this millennial rivalry between two world religions, and now, from their point of view, the wrong one seems to be winning." He further elaborated: "More generally...you can't be rich, strong, successful and loved, particularly by those who are not rich, not strong and not successful. So the hatred is something almost axiomatic. The question which we should be asking is why do they neither fear nor respect us?" (Waldman, 2004). These questions were again often expressed and raised by President Bush and many in his administration to explain the September 11 attacks and to announce the emergence of a new global enemy, radical or fascist Islam. But most important of all it was used as a justification for military action in the region.

In view of that, according to Lewis's analysis of the region, the real motivations responsible for the present turbulent relations between the Middle East and the West lie deep down in the roots of Islamic civilization with its religious, sociopolitical and cultural determinants. Such determinants, in classical times, shaped the Islamic identity of the region and defined its relations with the land of Christendom. Moreover, they played a decisive role in the failure of Western exported modernity to the region at a time when Europe and the West were achieving scientific and technological progress and spreading their influence all over the globe. Above all, these determinants still play a decisive role in contemporary relations between Islam and the West.

The clash of civilizations, therefore, stems from how Muslims view themselves and their civilization and how they view the West. According to this view of Lewis, Muslims regard themselves as superior to their Western counterparts. They believe that it's the Islamic civilization that should universally triumph over its once "barbaric" rival. Consequently, Muslims only feel hatred, contempt and envy toward the Christian West (Lewis 1964; Lewis, 2004). This hatred, moreover, is enhanced by the living conditions of many Muslims in the Middle East that include oppressive regimes some of which are supported by the West (Lewis, 2002). In brief, Middle Eastern countries, have become "failed societies" (Waldman, 2004).

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Huntington followed Lewis's lead in promoting this concept in an article published in 1993 in the *Foreign Affairs* which was later elaborated into a book in 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

The scenarios that Lewis envisions for the Middle East are only two. The first scenario is embodied by the Iranian Islamic Republic, a scenario that would be “attributing all evil to the abandonment of the divine heritage of Islam, and advocates a return to a real or imagined past.” The second scenario is the Turkish Republic, a secular democracy which was established by the great Kemal Ataturk (Lewis, 2002, pp. 158-159). The West led by the U.S., Lewis advocated, should exert genuine efforts so that the second scenario prevails in the land of Islam. The use of military force by invading Iraq was inevitable. The situation, as Lewis promoted following the September attacks, leaves the U.S. with two choices: “Get tough or get out” (Waldman, 2004).

#### **Ideas transformed into policies**

Following the end of the Cold War and the rise of the Iraqi threat to U.S. national interests in the Middle East, such as the free flow of oil and especially the security of Israel, Lewis became politically involved as he called for direct U.S. involvement in the region. After Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, Lewis warned that if Saddam is not punished “the world will belong to the violent and the ruthless and we shall be on the way to a Third World War” (1990a). When the Coalition forces achieved a quick victory and liberated Kuwait, just as Lewis predicted (1991a), he emphasized that war demonstrated the lack of a unified political reaction on the part of the people of the Middle East. Moreover, he pointed out that this war did not disrupt oil flow. Accordingly, U.S. fears about military intervention in the region were not well-founded (1991b). In his books he started to emphasize the autocratic nature of the Arab regimes and the need for change. He also pointed out that already some changes are taking place due to modernization and open societies. He believed that the only democracies in the region are Israel and Turkey; however, more democracies could prevail in the region because of these changes, especially if accelerated by external help (1998). Simultaneously, Lewis complained about the decline of Western, especially the U.S., interest in the region following the end of the Cold War. He also made it very clear that the situation in the Middle East threatens the West and Western interests in the region (1995).

Following the September 11 attacks, Lewis’s calls for intervention increased. On the one hand, he was calling for the necessity of ending the era of autocratic regimes in the region by spreading secular democracy as means to fight the roots of Islamic terrorism against the West and to end the era of the Muslim religious identity. On the other hand, he was encouraging military action against Iraq to change the regime into a democratic one as a first phase in long process of reshaping the region, but most important of all as a demonstration of U.S. firmness and power.

Spreading democracy in the Middle East and transforming its identity and politics became one of the Bush administration’s proclaimed goals in the region. The era of supporting oppressive local regime must end, just as Lewis said. Indeed, after the September attacks Lewis began to write about the “seekers of freedom” in the region. He perpetuated the belief that there is a growing number of Muslims in the region who do not identify their enemy in terms of religion, nationality or land. These Muslims now believe that the “prime enemy is not the outsider, be he defined as foreigner, as infidel, or as imperialist, but their own rulers, regimes that maintain themselves by tyranny at home and terrorism abroad...” (2003, p. 165). Lewis argued that these people should be helped by external powers who have so far supported their ruthless leaders. Furthermore, he warned that if help and intervention do not take place and freedom did not triumph as it had “triumphed over the Nazis and the Communists, “then a gloomy future awaits the West and the World of Islam” (2003, p. 165).

In order to promote this idea farther, Lewis admits, contrary to his persistent argument of the clash of civilizations as the real dilemma of the Middle East, that the lack of freedom “underlies so many of the troubles of the Muslim world” (2003, p. 159). In his lectures and articles, after September 11, he repeatedly explains that tyranny was “foreign to Islam” and that “consensual government” and even elections have “deep roots” in the Middle East (Waldman, 2004). In one of his articles, calling for US military intervention in Iraq, “Time for Toppling,” published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2002 he advocated a regime change in Iraq on the basis that Iraqi people, among other oppressed peoples of the region, “look to us for help.” To make his case even stronger Lewis adds that “an Iranian joke, current during the campaign Afghanistan, related that many Iranians put signs on top of their houses, in English, with the text: ‘This way

please!” (Lewis, 2002). Moreover, he often told another joke within the same context: “‘What is the real slogan in the Middle East?’ he asked, then paused. ‘It’s Yankees go home...and take me with you.’” (Varadarajan, 2003). He even claimed that “one is often told that if we succeed in overthrowing the regimes of what President Bush has rightly called the ‘Axis of Evil,’ the scene of rejoicing in their cities would even exceed those that followed the liberation of Kabul” (Lewis, 2002). This idea of saving the Islamic “failed societies,” by liberating the Muslims from both their oppressive regimes and their “failed” Islamic identity became central in U.S. policymakers’ thinking. Indeed such idea was described by Richard Perle, former advisor to then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, as “very important” and new to the diplomatic establishment (Waldman, 2004).

Osama bin Laden’s attacks were thus seen by the Bush administration through the eyes of Bernard Lewis: a symbol of the “rage and failure” of the Muslim world. The Bush administration, especially the neoconservatives, finally had a reason to argue that “something dramatic was needed to ameliorate the threat to the West.” This dramatic act (or policy) would be the “transformation of the politics of the Islamic nations” (Elliott, 2004). “Liberation” became the denounced new policy of the current administration in the Middle East. The “favorite” line among the neoconservatives in the administration, especially Wolfowitz, became that neoconservatives are “the most forthright champions of Arab progress” (Hirsh, 2004).

Building the case for the invasion of Iraq itself, as the first step to “liberating” the Arab land, immediately began after the September attacks. According to some reports Lewis addressed the U.S. Defense Policy Board and argued for the invasion of Iraq in order to avoid future terrorist attacks on the U.S. In this meeting he also introduced the Iraqi exile leader, Ahmad Chalabi to the U.S. administration as the potential new leader of the secular and democratic Iraq (Waldman, 2004).

Lewis has always been a great admirer of “modern” Turkey and its founder, Kemal Ataturk who imposed secularism on his people and adopted the modern ways of the West (1968; see also Lewis, 1996). Iraq, Lewis believed, was the best place to be the new Turkey of the Arab world. Iraq, he also believed and advocated, was ready for democracy. In addition to the oppressed Iraqis waiting to be liberated, he specified that Iraq with its wealth of oil, “prior British tutelage”, and the long years of oppression by Saddam Hussein, “was the right place to start moving” the Middle East into democracy (Waldman, 2004). According to him, Iraq, before the days of Saddam Hussein, has achieved a development beyond any of the other Arab States. Moreover, that there was a constitution in the country which only needed to be activated (Varadarajan, 2003). The country also “had known millennia of centralized government, run by a sophisticated and ramified bureaucracy.” The Iraqis, as he promoted, have had “high cultural and intellectual standards” before the time of Saddam Hussein. Additionally their women have always enjoyed a high status. Above all is the fact that Iraqis have “gone thorough everything,” therefore will not be “taken by the fanatical groups” in the Middle East (Varadarajan, 2003). Because these prerequisites are present in the Iraqi case, an Iraqi government with an “administration of Iraqi ‘notables’ can be immediately installed and can function well (Varadarajan, 2003). He promoted Ahmad Ghalabi, who had since become the neoconservatives’ “favorite” politician as the potential Ataturk of a modern and democratic Iraq (Elliott, 2004).

Lewis did not even hesitate to make a connection between Saddam Hussein and Bin Laden in order to promote the invasion, a view which was also adopted by the U.S. administration and repeatedly emphasized in U.S. official statements and declarations. Lewis, in this respect, was actually “one of the first to draw a straight line from al-Qaeda to Saddam Hussein.” According to him the fact that Saddam is a secularist and Ben Laden an Islamist does not matter: “Even if there were differences between them, one overcomes these differences against a common enemy” (Eaves, 2004). Convinced of Lewis views regarding the real motivations that stood behind the attacks and armed with their own convictions about U.S. inevitable supremacy, the Bush administration found it unnecessary to provide “operational links” between Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. According to Wolfowitz, such links “were good ‘bureaucratic’ reasons for selling the war to the public.” But, the real links to the Bush administration, as seen by some critics, such as Michael Hirsh, are deeper: “America was taking on a sick civilization, one that it had to beat to

submission.” Therefore, Bin Laden’s popular base and Saddam Hussein’s defiance were part of the same “pathology” (Hirsh, 2004). The new U.S. policy made Saddam Hussein as much responsible for terrorism as Bin Laden. Proof was not needed.

The administration’s “official goal” in Iraq became the vision of Lewis: “a Westernized polity, reconstituted and imposed from above like Kemal’s Turkey, that is to become a bulwark of security for America and a model for the region” (Hirsh, 2004). This postwar vision was often discussed by Wolfowitz. He “repeatedly invoked secular, democratic Turkey as a ‘useful model for others in the Muslim world.’” Moreover, Harold Rhode often spoke about “an accelerated Turkish model” for Iraq. They also believed that Ahmad Chalabi, a “protégé of Lewis” might be the new Atatürk of the Arabs: “strong, secular, pro-Western, and friendly towards Israel (Hirsh, 2004).

Indeed when the U.S. invaded Iraq, the Bush administration believed that “Iraq possessed a civil service and civil society that would keep the country running and transfer loyalties over to a new, more representative Iraqi leader” (Mann, 2004, p. 360). Consequently, basing their postwar vision on what Lewis explained about the readiness of Iraq for democracy and nation building, the Bush administration implemented a “low-cost approach” to nation building (Hirsh, 2004). Moreover, because Lewis told them that Iraqis can’t wait to get rid of Saddam Hussein, the administration believed that once Saddam Hussein and a number of his officials “were removed from power, the rest of the country would rise up in joy at Iraq’s liberation.” Accordingly, the removal of Saddam Hussein from power became the “central element” in the military plans for war as well as in the plans for postwar reconstruction (Mann, 2004, p. 360).

The invasion of Iraq, as part of the new policy, was also meant to be an impressive show of force and a demonstration of U.S. firmness, strength and military superiority. This military “exhibition”, as Lewis believed, was necessary to initiate change in the region. The idea that Arabs only respect power and authority and that it is the only means available to make change has always been promoted by Lewis in his books, articles and lectures. To emphasize this Arab trait, he often elaborated on the different treatment that the Soviets received from the Arabs during the Cold War. He argued that Soviets’ influence and practices were well received by the Arabs because the Arabs understood better authoritarian practices and identified more with Soviets’ mentality and respected their often-used exhibitions of force. Furthermore he explained that the British failed in the Middle East when their “weakness and lack of support were revealed” (1964, pp. 138-139; see also Lewis, 2007b). The U.S., on the other hand, a Western democracy, has always reacted “softly” to aggressions coming from the region such as the reaction to the attack on the Marines in Lebanon- a U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon 1983 (Lewis, 2007b). This perception of the U.S. on the part of many Arabs and Muslims, as Lewis explained, motivated Osama Bin Laden to attack because in his eyes America has become “politically and militarily enfeebled” (2004, p. 54).

Accordingly, an impressive and firm show of force was to be an important part of the process of change to regain the respect of the Arabs and the “presumably” lost American influence. During a meeting with Cheney, Lewis warned about “the dangers of appearing weak in the Muslim world.” Consequently, Cheney, in an interview on NBC, and before the invasion of Iraq declared that: “I firmly believe, along with men like Bernard Lewis, who is one of the great students of that part of the world, that strong, firm U.S. response to terror and threats to the United States would go a long way, frankly, toward calming things in that part of the world” (Waldman, 2004). Indeed this act of force, the invasion of Iraq, also appealed strongly to President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld who were critical of Clinton’s “soft” years that made America target for terrorist attacks and yearned for an opportunity to react strongly and firmly to the September attacks. It was even reported that immediately following the attacks Rumsfeld suggested “bombing Iraq on the basis that there weren’t any good targets in Afghanistan” (Clark, 2004). The idea also found echo among neoconservatives among the Bush administration, such as Paul Wolfowitz, who thought of the Gulf War of 1991 as “unfinished business” and “saw the 9/11 as the ultimate refutation of the ‘realist’ response to the first Gulf War” (Hirsh, 2004). The Arab world was not stable but “seething” and something drastic had to be done in order to change this situation. The proponents of war believed that the Arabs had to change just like Lewis said. A “shock and awe”

military operation was inevitable to make the change (Hirsh, 2004).

For Lewis and U.S. officials strongly influenced by his thinking, the use of force to gain respect or “at least fear” became essential to U.S. security (Waldman, 2004). The Bush administration believed that terrorism originated in the Middle East has become America’s new global enemy. Therefore, in order to ensure America’s security the Middle East had to be reshaped beginning with Iraq (Mann, 2004, p. 363). When President Bush announced the end of the military campaign in May 2003 he affirmed that “the battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terrorism that began on September 11, 2001” (Mann, 2004, p. 360).

### **Misconceptions and failure**

Lewis has promoted the “clash of civilizations” concept since the 1960s; and continued to do so till his last days. In one of his post-invasion lectures given at the AEI Annual Dinner, Irving Kristol Lecture in March 2007, Lewis discussed the same themes that he has been discussing for more than 50 years. He still believes that there are “signs of a return among Muslims to what they perceive as the cosmic struggle for world domination between the two main faiths-Christianity and Islam.” He even defends imperialism and the Crusaders wars against Muslim Lands (March 7, 2007a). In spite of his denial, he still believed that religion and politics in the Middle East should be separated a view that has “become conventional wisdom” in Washington (Hirsh, 2004). Such view, “his version” of the history of the Middle East and the failure of the “reshaped” American foreign policy in the Middle East have raised many questions about Lewis’s true sentiments toward Islam and the Muslim people and consequently his judgments (Hirsh, 2004; Ali, 2006; Said, 1978). Indeed, many of his critics now point out that Lewis “has slept through most of modern Arab history,” and that his views ignore and confuse many facts between the history of the Ottoman Empire and contemporary Arab history. Moreover, he completely ignored the impact of the period in which the Arabs were colonized and the post- colonial era in which oppressive rulers ruled with an iron fist (Hirsh, 2004; see also Waldman, 2004). They even suggest that Lewis “lost his way” when he got involved in politics and specifically in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By adopting a pro-Israeli stand, Lewis, “never developed a feel” for the thinking and aspirations of modern Arabs and Muslims (Hirsh, 2004).

This essay demonstrates that Lewis portrayed the threat that faces the U.S. from Al-Qaueda as the outcome of a confrontation between two civilizations. Consequently, this threat was exaggerated by the Bush administration to permit a decisive confrontation with a new global enemy in order achieve specific political objectives (Fukuyama, 2006 , p.5). Lewis also portrayed the situation in the region, especially in Iraq, as though external help, specifically in the form of military intervention was needed and would even be welcomed. He ignored the majority of Muslims’ real sentiments toward a foreign intruder whose historical credibility has always questioned. By convincing his readers and many of his followers amongst the Bush administration of this interpretation of the affairs of the region, the current administration believed that its intervention to spread “freedom” in the region would be “appreciated.” The administration also believed that force, as Lewis advised, would mobilize change in Iraq and the region as a whole. Moreover, the proponents of the war and the followers of Lewis expected the invasion and post-invasion to be an easy ride. They expected secular democracy to triumph in both Iraq and the region because the religious trend and identity could be easily marginalized and even eliminated. They actually dismissed the “peculiar demands of Arab and Islamic culture” (Hirsh, 2004) and downplayed the role of religion and religious forces and identity in the region, just as Lewis did.

The reality, of course, was far different than what Lewis predicted and the U.S. administration believed. In Iraq we have a “spiral of violence.” We also have a hostile nation rather than a “cheering nation” as Mann argues (2004). The act of force which Lewis predicted would gain respect and obedience backfired. Terrorism and religious radicalism are stronger today in Iraq and elsewhere and are more wide spread than before the invasion. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which Lewis was always keen on marginalizing its importance to the stability of the region (Lewis, 2002; 2003; 2004), is still one of the main grievances of the region, and unsolved. The administration’s rhetoric about liberation and democracy has never been credible to the majority of Arabs and Muslims, especially considering that this change was promoted by force. The invasion of Iraq and the “toppling” of Saddam Hussein were actually seen by

the people of the Middle East as an act to “engineer a balance of power favorable to its own interests,” considering that the U.S. never exerted any genuine efforts even diplomatic to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Clark, 2004). The administration also discovered the popularity and influence of Islamists movements and forces in Iraq and the region and the impact of this on the making and outcome of any potential political liberalization in the Middle East. This fact was not accurately portrayed nor predicted by Lewis. This outcome of the new policy took by surprise the Bush administration and forced it to reverse its plans regarding the importance of spreading democracy in the region. Most important of all, this new policy, climaxing with the invasion of Iraq, has severely damaged U.S. credibility in the world. Lewis, though, remained committed to his predictions about the clash of civilizations and the inevitable outcome that “there is one that prevails, and one that is shattered” (1964, p. 43).

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## دور المفكرين في عملية صنع السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية في الشرق الأوسط: قضية برنارد لويس والإحتلال الأمريكي للعراق في عام 2003

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### ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة عملية صنع القرار ضمن السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه الشرق الأوسط، ويركز بوجه خاص على الدور الذي يلعبه بعض المفكرين والأكاديميين في هذه العملية، ومن أهم الأدوار التي دار حولها الجدل الكثير هو الدور الذي لعبه المؤرخ والمستشرق البريطاني الأمريكي الشهير برنارد لويس من خلال علاقاته بالإدارة الأمريكية وتأثيره عليها بخصوص احتلال العراق أبان حكم الرئيس جورج بوش الابن عام 2003. ويناقش البحث فرضية أن المفاهيم الخاطئة التي روج لها لويس وتبناها لعقود من خلال مقارنته الاستشراقية للشرق الأوسط شكلت الغطاء الفكري والتبرير البلاغي المنمق لإعطاء الشرعية للولايات المتحدة لإحتلال العراق متذرعة بأهداف إنسانية كنشر الديمقراطية وإنقاذ الشعوب العربية من الإستبداد.

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