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## A Peace to End all Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914-1922

Thomas Seal

David Fromkin

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appropriate, but this outcome is far from clear now.

MICHAEL BYRNES  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Naval War College

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Delgado, James P. *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1990. 304pp. \$24.95

In his 5 December 1848 State of the Union Address, the president of the United States announced the truth of the rumoured riches of the California gold rush, and within a year over one thousand ships crammed with eager fortune-seekers sailed for San Francisco Bay.

James Delgado's book is a fine history of this unique marine enterprise, for it is the first comprehensive history of the importance of ships and shipping in the gold rush since Jack Kemble's 1949 book. The gold rush not only gave rise to the state of California, but it had a great impact on national and world maritime trade. Voyages round Cape Horn, passages through the jungles of Panama and Nicaragua, and transcontinental expeditions are all part of the story. Delgado addresses such vital themes as the rise of the port of San Francisco, the rough and ready seafaring law and order of San Francisco Bay, and the role of the United States Navy and the U.S. Revenue Marine (now the U.S. Coast Guard).

Not only is this work based on an exhaustive reading of manuscript

sources, but it is grounded in the most recent secondary sources, which are virtually innumerable. An extensive bibliography and footnotes give added value to this book. This is a well-illustrated and beautifully written text that holds a special niche as the standard work on the subject. It confers upon James Delgado the honoured place as the premier historian of the California gold rush, especially its long-neglected maritime aspects. In a larger sense this book is a significant contribution to maritime history as well.

Delgado is the Maritime Historian of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., and a native of the San Francisco Bay area; his subsequent historical contributions are eagerly anticipated. He brings a local knowledge and love of subject to his work that is enviable and necessary for writing the excellent maritime history of which this book is an example.

BARRY M. GOUGH  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo, Ontario

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Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East, 1914-1922*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1989. 567pp. \$39.95

David Fromkin states in his introduction that he set out to tell how the European powers, large and small, were responsible for profound change in the Middle East. One can hardly argue that point, yet, as with everything else in the Middle East, his task

was not quite so simple. Ten years and a wealth of research later, the story Fromkin tells is very different from that which he first envisioned. It is the story of how Great Britain emerged as the dominant regional power during the First World War, and how a victorious Britain reversed herself on wartime policy goals and thus won a peace in which she no longer believed. The story which finally emerged contains three concurrent and intertwining subplots: how Europe changed the Middle East; how Europe changed itself; and how these two processes interacted in the critical years between 1914 and 1922.

Fromkin believes that the creation of the modern Middle East is a culmination of the nineteenth century "Great Game" played out between Great Britain and Russia for domination in west and central Asia and the routes to India. He contends that fear of Russian expansion southward was the catalyst for Britain's approach to the Arabs for alliance, for the joint British-French decision to undo the Ottoman Empire and occupy the Middle East, for the Balfour Declaration, and for the postwar anti-Bolshevism which pervaded British policy. This focus on Anglo-Russian rivalry leads logically to a view of the Middle East that is somewhat broader than the norm. Fromkin regards the true bounds defining the Middle East as including the area from Egypt to Afghanistan, and from Arabia to Turkey and Soviet Central Asia. The role of British India is also an integral part of the story, with the

oftentimes contradictory policies of Whitehall, the Arab Bureau in Cairo, and Simla complicating the bureaucratic scene.

For all the attention paid to Russia and the European powers, Fromkin's emphasis is on Great Britain. Much of the book centers on four key personalities. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, war minister, and finally as colonial secretary, was the principal architect of Britain's Middle Eastern policy. Lord Kitchener, as consul general in Egypt and later as war minister, guided Britain's early moves in the Middle East. Kitchener's reputation as the Empire's leading soldier and Middle Eastern expert was such that he was seldom questioned on matters pertaining to the area—with unfortunate results. Sir Mark Sykes, a protégé of Lord Kitchener and founder of the Arab Bureau, defined much of the modern Middle East in his now infamous negotiations with the French envoy Francois Georges Picot. David Lloyd George, an early believer in the importance of the Middle East for British wartime strategy, presided over the postwar expansion of the Empire only to be toppled once "success" was achieved.

Extending the list of key players, Fromkin credits T.E. Lawrence with having a great deal of influence over Churchill. Unfortunately, Churchill's uncritical acceptance of Lawrence's largely fanciful accounts led to missed opportunities in Arabia. Woodrow Wilson is portrayed as a principled but

inept leader in the peacemaking process, a view widely shared by historians of the era. The Sherif Hussein Ibn Ali and his sons Feisal and Abdullah, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, Enver Pasha, Mustafa Kemal, David Ben Gurion, and a host of other Middle Eastern personalities also figure in the story, but not as central characters. Fromkin is concerned with decision making and, as he aptly points out, the decisions which defined the future of the region were made by Europeans and Americans, not by Arabs, Turks, or Zionists.

The author necessarily deals with military issues when discussing the years 1914 to 1922. The major campaigns (the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia, Palestine) and the Arab Revolt are ably covered, though not in great detail. So too with Britain's postwar mechanism for providing stability on the cheap through a combination of air power, armored cars, and native levies. Fromkin's main contribution in the military arena is the perspective he offers for the military effort in the Middle East, which he does very well. Fromkin illustrates that far from being a sideshow of guerrilla raids on isolated outposts by desert nomads, the British, Russian, and Ottoman military efforts were often broad in strategic scope, involved large formations, and included coordinated naval, land, and air action.

Military issues aside, *A Peace to End All Peace* is a study of the politics and diplomacy that determined how

the Middle East developed into what it is today. After destroying the old order, Britain (and to a lesser degree France) introduced there a new and completely foreign system of government. They attempted to impose the Western nation-state system—a system which took 1,500 years to evolve in Europe—on a fractious and diverse area which they viewed as homogeneous. Once this system had been emplaced, through invention of countries, designation of rulers, and drawing of boundaries, both powers failed to follow through with all that would be required to make it work. As a result, no sense of legitimacy exists in the Middle East today, either for the boundaries of the states of the region or for the elites who rule within them. Thus, the Middle East is the last region of the world in which wars of national survival are still endemic.

While attempting to recover from yet another Middle Eastern war, it is worthwhile to reflect on this last point. Looking to the future and seeking solutions to the closely related Arab-Israeli and Palestinian problems are very much in vogue. But speculation about future solutions without understanding the present problem is pointless. Fromkin offers no solutions, but he does define the roots of the problem. This is no easy task, yet he accomplishes it in a fair, dispassionate, and very readable manner. *A Peace to End All Peace* is an important

and timely work which is well worth the reading.

THOMAS SEAL  
Major, U.S. Marine Corps  
Quantico, Virginia

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Friedman, Thomas. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989. 525pp. \$19.95

This book makes sense of the maelstrom of forces and vacuums that hurled and dragged us into the Gulf War.

It sheds light on how a coalition of dissimilar partners became "logical." It explains the effect of the Levant upon American defense, the significance of unenforced U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, the unarguable imperative of the Lebanese question, and the reasons for Israel's acts and policies.

Probably more timely at this writing than when it was published in 1989, *New York Times* reporter Thomas L. Friedman's book identifies four unique attributes of Yasser Arafat that give him legitimacy throughout the Arab world, however much we may wish to deny him that leadership role. It suggests how a view of Israel as a "strategic asset" permitted President Reagan to "tolerate behavior by Israel that no other American administration would have countenanced." He offers us the "two out of three" formula that will necessarily guide President Bush in getting Israel to accept any political

compromise. He also provides an on-site observer's analysis of the mechanics of the 1983 suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, and the foolishness of the U.S. rules of engagement there, that is better than anything this reviewer has seen.

Mr. Friedman asks prescient questions: "Are you sure that God would not prefer that you give some land back in return for peace with the Palestinians?" he asks a key player. The reader begins to see how the diametrically opposed responses of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish peoples in a present reality defined by the past appear rational to the actors. This makes the book pragmatic and militarily useful.

The author leaves us embarrassed not by U.S. military superiority but by our ignorance of how it will be used by our friends and foes. He contrasts the two forms of governance practiced in the region: "benign authoritarianism" and "bloodspilling authoritarianism." Does Western-style democracy have Middle Eastern precedents?

*From Beirut to Jerusalem*, a National Book Award winner that reads as easily as a novel, will impress warrior-statesmen and scholars. Now that it is available in paperback there is no excuse not to have read this essential book.

CAROL FORD BENSON  
San Francisco, California