

A blue-tinted photograph of a crowd of people. In the foreground, a young child is perched on the shoulders of an adult, wearing a patterned blue and white headscarf. The background shows other people, some with their faces partially visible, and a banner with Arabic text.

SEARCHING FOR PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD.

REFLECTIONS ON THE
GLOBAL MILITARY FIXATION
AND SAUDI-UAE IMPOSITION
OF THE “DEAL” ON THE
PALESTINIANS

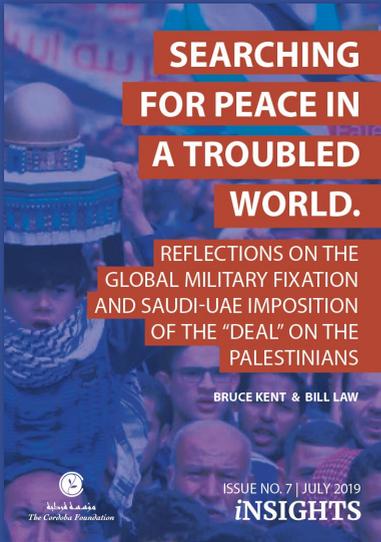
BRUCE KENT & BILL LAW



مؤسسة قرطبة
The Cordoba Foundation

ISSUE NO. 7 | JULY 2019

iINSIGHTS

**SERIES EDITORS:**

Dr Anas Altikriti
Chief Executive

Dr Abdullah Faliq
Editor & Managing Director

H. D. Foreman
Louise Mellor
Sandra Tusin

DESIGN & ART DIRECTION:

Abdullah S. Khan

COPYRIGHT

© The Cordoba Foundation 2019. All rights reserved.

DISCLAIMER

Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of The Cordoba Foundation.

info@thecordobafoundation.com

Published in London

ISSUE NO. 7 | JULY 2019

Available online:
www.thecordobafoundation.com

THE CORDOBA FOUNDATION

Cultures in Dialogue.

The Cordoba Foundation (TCF) is an independent strategic think-tank that works to promote intercultural dialogue and positive coexistence through a range of activities including research and publications, training and capacity building, policy briefings and dialogues. The Foundation takes its name from the city of Cordoba – the European metropolis which was once a symbol of human excellence and intellectual ingenuity, where cultures, civilisations and ideas thrived. Embodying this spirit, TCF today facilitates the meeting of minds to advance understanding and respect for one another.

Our activities include:

- Structured consultation and advisory services
- Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers and figures of authority
- In-house research
- Workshops, seminars and debates on pertinent issues
- Consultancy
- Training and capacity-building
- Publications, Periodicals and Journals
- Resourceful website and knowledge database

www.thecordobafoundation.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 04 **SEARCHING FOR PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD**
REFLECTIONS ON THE GLOBAL MILITARY FIXATION

- 07 **SAUDI AND UAE IMPOSITION OF THE “DEAL” ON THE
PALESTINIANS AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES:**
WHAT ARE THE REAL MOTIVATIONS FOR THIS?



SEARCHING FOR PEACE IN A TROUBLED WORLD.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GLOBAL MILITARY FIXATION

BRUCE KENT

THE MILITARY FIXATION

As a boy in an English boarding school ('public' though very fee-paying) many years ago I had no idea that I was absorbing a very special form of education. I was being formed into the British military mindset. Many years later it became quite clear to me that such was the acculturation we were getting, not only in history classes but in the whole culture and formation process of the school.

Not that I minded in the slightest. It was all normal and attractive to me in my teens. The school culture was both religious and military. Large portraits of Old Boys who had won military honours hung in our dining room. Saints were pictured in our chapel. Our school cadet corps was not, I don't think, compulsory, but it did not need to be. My school years covered the last years of World War Two. Many times, recent Old Boys still in military service came back to the school for a visit and were feted like heroes. I never heard of a conscientious objector coming from our school. Had I done so I would have thought them to be either a coward or pacifist eccentric.

It was of course a very Catholic school but I have no recollection of ever being told about Pope Benedict XV, whom in 1917 had so roundly condemned the butchery of the First World War, and so strongly urged that it be ended. My education was in no way abnormal. I neither resent nor regret it. It was an interesting, enjoyable time and I made many friends. The military perspective was absolutely normal in those days and in most respects it still is today. I was happy in my school and proud to be part of its long history.

Things did not much change for me later on. I did my two years military service in a tank regiment without any idea that I might ever be given orders that I might have to refuse on moral grounds. Fortunately, in the 'peaceful' Northern Ireland of 1948, no such situation ever arose.

My university years, from 1949 to 1952, came only a few years after the United Nations Charter had been signed in 1945. Though Law was my subject, I do not ever remember any serious study of the UN Charter or what it says about war, yet its Preamble starts with that ringing phrase about freeing the world from 'the scourge of war'.

Later, in a seminary for six years training for the Catholic priesthood, we had many lectures about various moral problems – some military, but there was no clear condemnation of nuclear weapons. Situations might arise, we were told, when they might be used morally, on an enemy fleet at sea perhaps. No one seemed to talk about nuclear radiation and fall-out.

As far as the UN Charter goes, I do not think things have greatly changed. I visit secondary schools quite often and have yet to come across a school where the Charter has been made a subject of serious study, and less so, the Declaration of Human Rights. Not that it is even easy now to get hold of a print copy of either.

“There would never be any multilateral reduction in weaponry if there were no confidence-building independent steps taken. As far as Britain and nuclear weapons go, we are especially well-placed to help start the disarmament process.”

No wonder the history of nuclear bomb development is so little known. It was the one and only sure way to end the Second World War we were told. The Dean of St Albans Abbey knew better. He refused to ring the Abbey bells to celebrate the Japanese surrender because of the atomic massacres involved. But his was a lonely stand. The public never heard about such an eccentric. Still less did we know that the Japanese had actually been looking for a way to surrender yet still protect the Emperor well before August 1945. Such overtures were rejected, but protection for the Emperor was exactly what we did

give them once the atom bombs had been dropped.

General Eisenhower was of a different opinion: ‘Japan was at that very moment

(summer 1945) seeking some way to surrender with minimum loss of face. It was not necessary to hit them with that awful thing’. It is very likely that Allied determination to test these new weapons actually prolonged, rather than shorten the war.

Only long years afterwards did I hear about Professor Joseph Rotblat who refused to go on working on the bomb once he was told how it was to be used. It took me some time to appreciate and admire those who in both World Wars, who refused to take part in them on moral grounds.

Our media must take some responsibility for the general ignorance which still prevails about these matters. Propaganda in favour of war has always been very powerful and has made loyalty to the nation state the top priority. In Britain, a division was made endlessly by the pro-nuclear weapon lobby between ‘Unilateralists’ and ‘Multilateralists’, a pointless distinction in reality. The arms race has always moved upwards by unilateral steps. Why could the same process not work in reverse?

I never remember any publicity being given to the United Nations Report of 1984 which said that “There is no either/or choice between unilateral and negotiated measures of disarmament. Both are needed in view of their complementary nature”.

There would never be any multilateral reduction in weaponry if there were no confidence-building independent steps taken. As far as Britain and nuclear weapons go, we are especially well-placed to help start the disarmament process. We may make our nuclear warheads with United States help – but we are wholly dependent on the United States for the missiles on which to put them. Independent? Rather like an ‘independent’ family car for which the wheels have to be borrowed regularly from a neighbour.

Currently, genuine global progress on the way to nuclear weapons elimination is perfectly possible granted more Joseph Rotblat type minds. A perfectly reasonable nuclear weapons elimination treaty has been gathering signatures at the UN for over a year, however with no signatures from the nuclear armed states. They seem to remain under the illusion that nuclear weapons add to security rather than reduce it. If that were true why shouldn't everyone who can afford them have them?

Much more public education is needed. Few people know anything about the long list of nuclear weapon accidents and misunderstandings which have several times brought the world close to disaster. The late Robert McNamara, long time the United States statesman and nuclear weapon expert, said at the end of his life that we have been saved, not by good judgement but by 'good luck'. We all know that good luck does run out.

'Charity' legislation needs close examination. If an organisation becomes a legal charity, various generous financial opportunities open-up which are not available to non-charities.

Hence, charities are very careful about the issues which they adopt. I recently heard a spokesman for one such major organisation appeal for funds for war victims in the Yemen.

But no word was mentioned about the bombs that fell on the Yemen, delivered by the Saudi Arabia. No mention of the fact that Britain is one of the major arms suppliers to the Saudis.

Trade Unions, Churches, and educational centres, from schools to universities, need to make sure that they are not failing to mention militarisation and its consequences. We are now hearing much about the present and oncoming dangers of climate change. It is a major concern and a very real one. Congratulations to all those who have made it a public issue. But I think it is fair to say that there has been too

little mention of the CO2 consequences of global militarisation.

The world now spends nearly two trillion US dollars a year, and much of that spent by one country alone. The links between militarisation and climate change and poverty need to be stressed and not only by designated peace movements. These ought to be public knowledge and a cause of public activity. I end with some words from Michael Gorbachev, one-time Soviet Head of State. His was often a voice of sanity when others seemed to have lost theirs. He said in 1997,

“The world now spends nearly two trillion US dollars a year, and much of that spent by one country alone. The links between militarisation and climate change and poverty need to be stressed and not only by designated peace movements. These ought to be public knowledge and a cause of public activity.”

“If the majority of human beings do not want wars but at the same time believe it is impossible to stop them, then the first change we must bring about is in our heads. We

must change the idea that 'it is not possible' because it is only what we believe about reality that prevents us from transforming it”.

In other words, don't just talk about peace. Take whatever positive practical action you can.



SAUDI AND UAE IMPOSITION OF THE “DEAL” ON THE PALESTINIANS AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES:

WHAT ARE THE REAL MOTIVATIONS FOR THIS?

BILL LAW

In order to answer the question about Emirati and Saudi motives about the deal, let me spend a few moments setting the context. The so-called deal of the century really deserves another name: the steal of the century. You can find my article here, but briefly, Jared Kushner has used his expertise as a wheeler and dealer in Manhattan real estate to attempt to create a place from which there is no escape for the Palestinians. It is a mistake made by many, including the mainstream and anti-Trump media to treat Kushner as a sort of idiot savant wandering through a minefield about which he knows nothing whilst somehow managing not to get himself blown up. This, as I argue here, is a profound mistake. He is no idiot but a very clever, slick and ruthless operator, and those who underestimate him do so at their peril.

From the moment Jared Kushner was assigned the Middle East brief, he has played a subtle and thus far effective hand, on behalf of both the West Bank settler movement and family friend Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister.

Kushner, whose family foundation has given generously to settler projects, has carefully constructed a strategy designed to

win by losing. The ‘deal’ was never intended to work.

Rather, its modus operandi is to force Palestinians into a corner from which there is no escape, and where the only answer to the peace deal is “no”. Kushner learned this trick from his days acquiring rent-controlled properties, forcing sitting tenants out, refurbishing the flats and then putting them back on the market as luxury properties.

It is a squeeze play: a combination of withdrawal of services, together with an offer of some financial compensation, nicely wrapped in veiled and not-so-veiled threats, along the lines of “accept this or it only gets worse”. Kushner has neatly applied the lessons learned in Manhattan to the “deal of the century” in the Middle East, and his henchmen are two men who worked for Donald Trump. One of them is the bankruptcy lawyer David Friedman, now the US ambassador to Israel. The other is Jason Greenblatt, another Trump lawyer, who is serving as Kushner’s advisor. Both are hard right supporters of the settler movement and the annexation of Palestinian land in the West Bank.

In the eyes of Kushner, Netanyahu, et

al, the path to peace lies through the seizure of what is left of most of the West Bank, including its most valuable agricultural asset, the Jordan Valley. It goes without saying, therefore, that Kushner's Peace to Prosperity document has something to say about real estate and the settling of land claims. It is right there on page 19: "Project one, Property Ownership Resolution: Enhance court capacity to quickly and effectively resolve property disputes and contested-ownership claims."

So here's the game: annex as much as possible as quickly as possible under the cover of pursuing a peace deal that the Palestinians can only say no to; declare those lands and buildings already annexed as legally belonging to Israel; and then go to court to decide who gets whatever is left over. And, of course, you can guess whose courts and whose judges. Peace to Prosperity doesn't say anything about it, but I think we know the answer.

The message is clear from Kushner and his cohorts: if you don't take what is on offer, it is going to get a hell of a lot worse. However, we have made it impossible for you to take what is on offer, so guess what? The two-state solution is well and truly dead; the path to a greater Israel is secured; welcome to the new reality of Palestinian Bantustans in the West Bank and Gaza. And, oh yes, we promise to throw cash at you, \$50 billion; that's a lot of dosh, if you do what is commanded of you. If you don't, well that money is off the table. And when

you say no we will paint you as ungrateful hypocrites.

That's the game, and thus far it is playing out well, in part because the Saudis and the Emiratis are playing along with it. So what is their motivation?

Saudi motivation differs somewhat from that of the UAE. The Saudis want to shore up the alliance against Iran, their great regional rival, by gaining the support of Israel thus far the only nuclear armed country

in the region. With Israeli support, MBS will attempt to claim the mantle of leader of the Arab world.

Israel is also a powerful economic ally for MBS as he attempts to power through his makeover of the Saudi economy, Vision 2030.

Finally, support for Kushner translates into continued support from Trump over the Jamal Khashoggi killing.

The UAE on the other hand has less anxiety regarding Iran, particularly given the situation in Dubai which has approximately 500,000 Iranian expats and a thriving business community that has made a lot of money doing business before, during, and after the first sanctions regime, and will no doubt continue to do so, one way or another through the second sanctions regime.

In any event, the UAE already does business with Israel: spyware, tech innovation, where Israel is a global leader and the UAE is moving quickly to join the ranks.

NSO is an Israeli tech firm that sold Pegasus software to the UAE, the Saudis,

"The UAE already does business with Israel: spyware, tech innovation, where Israel is a global leader and the UAE is moving quickly to join the ranks. NSO is an Israeli tech firm that sold Pegasus software to the UAE, the Saudis, and the Bahrainis, among others, to spy on oppositionists and civil rights activists."

and the Bahrainis, among others, to spy on oppositionists and civil rights activists.

You may also have heard of the cyber security company DarkMatter, a UAE company based in Abu Dhabi. Darkmatter is responsible for Project Raven, a massive offensive cyber operation that uses a system called KARMA. As Reuters notes:

“The cyber tool allowed the UAE to monitor hundreds of targets beginning in 2016, from the Emir of Qatar and a senior Turkish official to a Nobel Peace laureate human-rights activist in Yemen, according to five former operatives and program

documents reviewed by Reuters.

Karma was used by an offensive cyber operations unit in Abu Dhabi comprised of Emirati security officials and former American intelligence operatives working as contractors for the UAE’s intelligence services.”

There is big money being made in the high-tech security and surveillance sector and the Israelis and the Emiratis are keen to do business. So both economic and geopolitical motives are behind Emirati and Saudi support for the Kushner deal.

The Palestinian people are set to be sacrificed by the Saudis and the Emiratis for what are purely transactional reasons. All that stands between achieving that outcome are an aged and infirm ruler (King Salman of Saudi Arabia who insists on the

two-state solution) and supine governments like ours who refuse to challenge Trump and Netanyahu.

Time is on their side as time is running out for the realisation of a Palestinian state. Europe, the UK and other governments such as Canada’s must speak up in defense of the rights of Palestinians to a viable state.

And we should not forget that within Israel itself the majority favours a two-state solution and fair and equal treatment for Palestinians. The minority has hijacked the majority (It is happening here too with regards to Brexit).

I met a young woman recently at a seminar on the UK and Middle East relations post-Brexit. She works for an Israeli organisation called Yachad. They are supporters of a viable Palestine state side by side with Israel, “together for peace” is their motto. She spoke about how Netanyahu and the extreme settler movement heavily supported by Americans like the gambling mogul Sheldon Adelson, have exploited the absence of strong leadership to impose their racist vision, not just on Palestinians, but on Israelis as well.

She says people need to speak up “This is not a time for cowards,” she said. So I call on our leaders in the West to stop being cowards, to speak up in support of Palestine and the Palestinians - and let me underline this: in support of the majority of Israelis – to completely reject this cynical manoeuvre and denounce unequivocally the deal for what it really is – the steal of the century.

“The Palestinian people are set to be sacrificed by the Saudis and the Emiratis for what are purely transactional reasons. All that stands between achieving that outcome are an aged and infirm ruler (King Salman of Saudi Arabia who insists on the two-state solution) and supine governments like ours who refuse to challenge Trump and Netanyahu.”

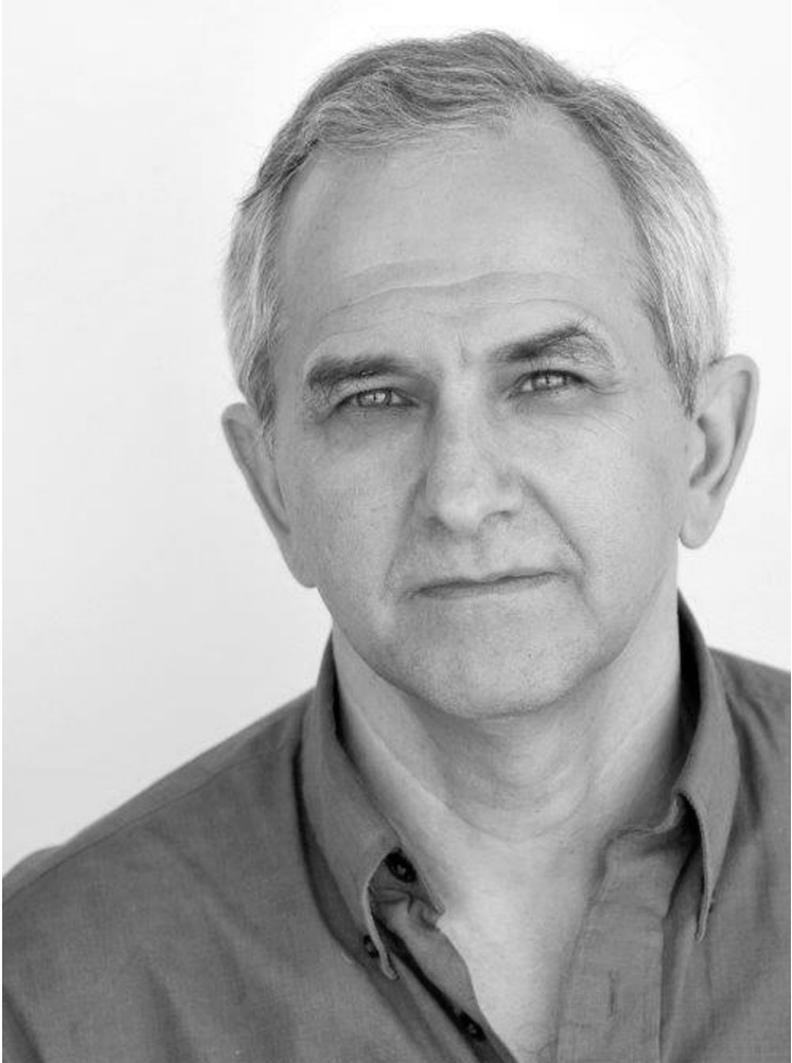
AUTHOR PROFILES

*BRUCE KENT



Born in London, in 1929, Kent is a former active Catholic priest and decades long anti-war campaigner, serving in roles such as General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). During his time of leadership, from 1980, membership to the CND grew from 2,000 to 100,000. Prior to his role at CND, Kent joined the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1960, also working with Conscientious Objectors in Spain and Portugal in the early 1970s. Dedicating much of his life to anti-war campaigns, he was passionate about the rights of conscientious objectors and so he set up Conscientious Objectors' Advisory Team (COAT) to promote recognition of the rights of conscientious objectors in all countries.

Serving as Director of an emergency refugee hospital in Calcutta, sponsored by the British relief charity War on Want, during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war in Calcutta, he became the chairperson of the charity in 1973. Kent has also spent many years campaigning against the arms trade. With other peace organisations, he was instrumental in setting up the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT). He also believes tools should be developed to educate the public on the links between the arms trade and global poverty. Kent received his early education in Canada, and later attended Brasenose College at Oxford University. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Manchester University in 1987 and an Honorary Doctorate from Middlesex University in 2002.

***BILL LAW**

Bill Law is an award-winning journalist who reported extensively from the Middle East and North Africa for the BBC. In addition to numerous radio documentaries, his films have focussed on the Arab Spring and its aftermath. He has also reported from West and Central Africa, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Before leaving the BBC in April

2014, Mr Law was the corporation's Gulf analyst. He now runs his own business, TheGulfMatters.com, providing analysis and journalism focusing on the Gulf states and the wider Middle East. He is a regular contributor to Middle East Eye, Gulf State Analytics, Al Jazeera, Sky News, Al Araby, BBC and Monocle Radio



مؤسسة قرطبة

The Cordoba Foundation

info@thecordobafoundation.com
www.thecordobafoundation.com

Cultures in Dialogue.



Twitter @CordobaFoundati(The Cordoba Foundation)