

PART III

THE WHITE MAN'S ARMY

CHAPTER EIGHT

FROM COLONIALISM TO POSTMODERN IMPERIALISM

The curious task of economics is to demonstrate to men

How little they really know

About what they imagine they can design.

F.A. HAYEK, *THE FATAL CONCEIT:
THE ERRORS OF SOCIALISM*, 198.¹

IMPERIALISM IS COMING BACKto fashion in the West. Western journalists report locals harboring nostalgia for colonialism in Sierra Leone or even for white-minority regimes in Zimbabwe. Other prominent Western journalists write about “The Case for American Empire.”²

Prominent political scientists James Fearon and David Laitin of Stanford wrote in the spring of 2004:

The United States is now drawn toward a form of international governance that may be described as neutrusteeship, or more provocatively, postmodern imperialism. The terms refer to the complicated mixes of international and domestic governance structures that are evolving in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and, possibly in the long run, Iraq. Similar to classical imperialism, these efforts involve a remarkable degree of control over domestic political authority and basic economic functions by foreign countries.

Fearon and Laitin conclude that “the current, ad hoc and underrationalized arrangements ought to be reformed in the direction of neutrusteeship.”³

Altogether, five different articles in *Foreign Affairs*, the bible of the policymaking elite, in the past few years have considered some variant of “post-modern imperialism” for ailing states.⁴ In a similar vein, political scientist Stephen Krasner (also of Stanford) writes in the fall of 2004:

Left to their own devices, collapsed and badly governed states will not fix themselves because they have limited administrative capacity, not least with regard to maintaining internal security. Occupying powers cannot escape choices about what new governance structures will be created and sustained. To reduce international threats and improve the prospects for individuals in such polities, alternative institutional arrangements supported by external actors, such as de facto trusteeships and shared sovereignty, should be added to the list of policy options.

He concludes: “De facto trusteeships, and especially shared sovereignty, would offer political leaders a better chance of bringing peace and prosperity to the populations of badly governed states.” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice appointed Stephen Krasner to be head of policy planning at the State Department on February 4, 2005.

As Naomi Klein wrote in *The Nation* on May 2, 2005, the U.S. State Department has an interesting new office:

On August 5, 2004, the White House created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, headed by former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Carlos Pascual. Its mandate is to draw up elaborate “post-conflict” plans for up to twenty-five countries that are not, as of yet, in conflict.... Pascual told an audience...in October, will have “pre-completed” contracts to rebuild countries that are not yet broken.... The plans Pascual’s teams have been drawing up...are about changing “the very social fabric of a nation.”...The office’s mandate is not to rebuild any old states...but to create “democratic and market-oriented” ones.... Some-times rebuilding, he explained, means “tearing apart the old.”

Stephen Krasner and Carlos Pascual wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in July/August 2005 explaining further how all this would work. Like their foreign aid counterparts, Krasner and Pascual are Planners:

During U.S. or other military or peacekeeping operations, the new office will coordinate stabilization and reconstruction activities between civilian agencies and the military. As part of the military’s planning effort, interagency civilian teams will deploy to regional combatant commands to develop strategies for stabilization and reconstruction. This type of involvement will help make certain that assumptions about civilian reconstruction capabilities remain realistic. After the planning stage, advance civilian teams will deploy with the military to help direct stabilization and reconstruction.

Further, they said, there will be coordination with the other kind of foreign aid, the one that involves USAID, the World Bank, and the IMF. Krasner and Pascual offer the hope that “the United States wi

have enabled more people to enjoy the benefits of peace, democracy, and market economies.⁵

It used to be that everybody agreed that colonialism was bad. Frustration with disastrous postcolonial outcomes in Africa has led many to imagine a colonial past of peace and prosperity. More sophisticated scholars have also challenged the conventional wisdom of evil colonialism. Harvard historian Niall Ferguson, whose work on every topic but this one I greatly admire, says that there is “such a thing as liberal imperialism and that on balance it was a good thing...in many cases of economic ‘backwardness,’ a liberal empire can do better than a nation-state.”⁶

Such ambitious claims have provoked this economist to venture outside of normal economics territory, to considering economic development as pursued through military occupation, invasions, and nation-building. Certainly this part of the book is looking at a set of actors different from those in the rest of the book—most of the advocates of foreign aid are horrified at the idea of imperialism and colonialism, new or old, and so this chapter is less relevant for them. Yet the neo-imperialists represent an influential approach to ending world poverty that needs to be addressed.

Following the familiar escalation syndrome, failed intrusions of the West provide the motivation for the West to become even more intrusive. Aid failed in the sixties and seventies because government was bad, and the West used that to justify structural adjustment to induce governments to change in the eighties and nineties. Structural adjustment failed to change governments in the eighties and nineties, so now some in the West entertain replacing national government altogether with “trusteeship” or “shared sovereignty” for the most extreme failures.

This chapter argues that the old conventional wisdom was correct—the previous imperial era did not facilitate economic development. Instead, it created some of the conditions that bred occasions for today’s unsuccessful interventions: failed states and bad government. The West sowed further mayhem with chaotic decolonization, especially the arbitrary way the West drew borders. Although many will deny the relevance of colonial experience to today’s allegedly more humanitarian exercises, I argue that there are many lessons to be gained from the previous wave of Western intervention in the Rest—as many problems were created by colonizers’ incompetence as by their exploitation. It is at least ironic that some offer a new White Man’s Burden to clean up the mess left behind by the old White Man’s Burden.

This is not to say that the West was the only driving force that created bad governments in the Rest—this would exaggerate the West’s negative impact just as the White Man’s Burden exaggerates the West’s positive potential. There was plenty of despotism and vicious politics before the West ever showed up. Nor is the West the only source of imperial conquest—remember, say, the Aztecs, the Muslims, and the Mongols?

The colonialists left behind independent states with arbitrary borders that had little chance to build up popular legitimacy. Sometimes these governments comprised little more than an independence agitator, an army, and a foreign aid budget. Although they had shallow roots, the new states brought benefits to their new leaders. The new rulers could use the inherited colonial army to levy high taxes on natural resources or any other valuable economic activity, and they had a tradition of autocratic colonial rule and economic planning. It was not surprising that most of these new states were unfriendly to both economic and political freedoms.

Sponsoring Native Autocrats

To make things worse, colonial administration had reinforced autocracy. The preferred method of

colonial administration had been “indirect rule,” relying on native rulers or intermediaries. Columbia University professor Mahmood Mamdani labels this system in Africa “decentralized despotism.” Indirect rule was inevitable given that the colonizers were unwilling or unable to put more than a few Europeans in the colonies to administer them. There were enough Europeans with power to mess up the pre-colonial arrangements (which were far from the blank slate Europeans presumed), but not enough to create anything resembling beneficent institutions. Destruction is always easier than construction.

In 1893, the Covenanted Civil Service for India had only 898 positions for Brits to rule a continent of around 300 million. The entire Indian civil service (the rest of which was Indian) was 4,849 officials. After the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the government increased the number of British troops, but it was still only 78,000 by 1885 (to go along with 154,000 Indian troops).⁷

Earlier, regarding the East India Company of the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke described how arrogant Brits messed up India: “a few obscure young men, who having obtained, by ways which they could not comprehend, a power of which they saw neither the purpose nor the limits, tossed about, subverted, and tore to pieces...the most ancient and most revered institutions of ages and nations.”⁸

In Africa, the ratio of Europeans to population was also scant.⁹:

	<i>European officials</i>	<i>Native population in millions</i>
British Nigeria	1,315	20
Belgian Congo	2,384	9.4
French Equatorial Africa	887	3.2
French West Africa	3,660	15

These few whites were not abundantly qualified to create new nations from scratch. They set low standards of performance, mitigated only by their consistent failure to attain them. A Belgian professor described Belgian colonial administrators in the Congo as: “too young and incompetent; they are sent out, without knowing the native language, without serious training, without a probationary period, to a distant place where they are usually alone. Isolated, powerless, able only with difficulty to leave their headquarters, they do not travel enough in their district, they do not get to know the villages.”¹⁰ (Sort of reminds me of myself as a young World Bank official!)

These raw recruits had to be “tax collectors, census takers, policemen, judges, agronomists, road builders, sanitationists, and wise counselors,” all while they were often sick. The Igbo in Nigeria derisively referred to British district officers as “student magistrates,” and performed masquerades in which “Government” was a faceless figure holding a sheet of paper.¹¹

Given these administrative limitations, the colonizers in Africa often relied on the “chiefs” to rule for them. But who were the “chiefs”? The colonizers, displaying a room-temperature IQ about the locals, didn’t know how to deal with the many non-chief societies in Africa. Igboland in Nigeria was a non-state society, with decentralized village self-government. Other examples were the slash-and-burn agriculturalists of northern Uganda and the pastoral communities of the East African Rift Valley. The British appointed chiefs anyway, sometimes choosing one of the village heads to rule over the others. In 1930 in Tanganyika, colonizers adapted the rule that “every African belonged to a tribe, just as every European belonged to a nation.” Officials said, “Each tribe must be considered a distinct unit...each tribe must be under a chief,” although “most administrators knew that many

peoples had no chiefs.” Earlier German practice in Tanganyika had also invented chiefs. Understandably unhappy with outsiders imposing their leaders on them, Africans started two rebellions directly caused by “indirect rule”: the Maji-Maji revolt in Tanganyika and the rebellion against “warrant chiefs” (those “warranted” by the colonial officials) in Igboland.¹² Women, who were among the main victims of the new order, led the latter revolt.¹³

Even when chiefs existed, they had limited powers before colonial times. There were only loose confederations of the Akan peoples of Ghana, the Ashanti and the Fanti. The chiefs of these confederations had limited powers, acting with the concurrence of their counselors. A chief who acted on his own could expect to lose his throne. The colonizers took over the decentralized system of rule in Africa, yet removed the checks and balances on that rule. The restored Ashanti Confederacy of 1935 under the British lacked the counselors who had previously shared power with the chief. The confederacy quickly abolished “youngmen’s associations,” another traditional check on chiefly power.¹⁴

A European observer in Nigeria noted, “The chief is the law, subject to only one higher authority, the white official stationed in his state as advisor. The chief hires his own police...he is often the prosecutor and the judge combined and he employes the jailer to hold his victims in custody at his pleasure. No oriental despot ever had greater power than these black tyrants, thanks to the support which they receive from the white officials who quietly keep in the background.”¹⁵

Thus Europeans may have actually increased despotism in Africa. According to Professor Mamdani, nowhere in Africa had there been “centralized judicial institutions with exclusive jurisdiction over an area,” which colonialism created as “customary.” The British governor of Sudan described his policy of restoring “tribal chiefs” as aimed at “making the Sudan safe for autocracy.”¹⁶

The Europeans delegated to the “chiefs” the collection of taxes and the supervision of forced labor. In the Buganda Agreement of 1900, the British gave the chief the right to assess and collect taxes, and to hand out justice. The chief was to draft one laborer for every three households for a month each year to maintain the roads. In French colonies, the chief’s duties included “collection of taxes, requisitioning labor, compulsory crop cultivation and provision of military recruits.” In the Belgian Congo, chiefs were to enforce “forced labor, compulsory cultivation, conscription, labor recruitment, and other state requirements.”¹⁷ The chiefs often took advantage of their unchecked powers to collect extra taxes and labor for themselves. A missionary in German Tanganyika estimated the ratio of taxes the chiefs collected to taxes turned over to the colony as seven to one. In northern Nigeria, Lord Frederick Lugard, the British architect of indirect rule, tried to end abuses by paying the emirs a salary.¹⁸ Like later aid agency recommendations to end corruption by raising civil servant pay, the salaries did not stop the abuses. There was no reason to expect them to—in either case—without effective checks on the ability to extract loot. The Europeans kept their despots accountable, not to their subjects but to Europeans. In Buganda, the struggle with the Europeans over the Kabaka’s right to appoint chiefs forced the prime minister of Buganda to resign in 1926.

When the French conquered the kingdom of Segu in what is now Mali in 1890, they deported the Tukolor rulers to Senegal, put in a chief from the friendly Bambara dynasty, subsequently questioned his loyalty and executed him, and then appointed a rival Bambara, before finally abolishing the chieftdom altogether—all within three years. Both the British and French indulged the urge to appoint “the right native” to colonial positions.

University of Cambridge professor John Iliffe notes in his magnificent history of Africa that even the French and Belgian system labeled “direct rule” in Africa was really indirect rule. While the

French and Belgians were at the top of the pyramid, they appointed *chefs de canton* drawn from the local population (chosen as usual for their loyalty to the colonizers), who in turn relied upon village chiefs.¹⁹

Despite the pretensions of the colonizers to control things, opportunistic locals easily bamboozled them. In Igboland, the elderly collaborators with the British rewrote “customary law” to their own advantage, often at the expense of women and the young. It was no accident that women led the revolt against chiefs in Igboland. Even European district chiefs who took direct decisions had to rely on native clerks and interpreters. One of the latter in Dahomey established his own court, in which he took bribes to reach a decision before presenting it to the colonial administrator, claiming “the white man will believe anything he says.” In Buganda, the chiefly allies of the British exploited the 1900 agreement to distribute the kingdom’s land among themselves.²⁰ Like today’s donors and postmodern imperialists, the colonizers were outside Planners who could never know the reality on the ground. Like their modern-day counterparts, colonizers often unwittingly destabilized the balance of internal power.

Before the scramble for Africa, there had been educated Africans who had some power in colonial regimes. Missionaries founded a university in Sierra Leone, the Fourah Bay College, in 1827. West Africans sent their children there, as well as to London law schools. Many of these graduates held positions in the colonial administrations, including legislative posts in the Gold Coast and Lagos as early as the 1850s. Educated Africans made up nearly half of the senior posts in the 1890s in these two colonies. After the scramble added interior territory to what had previously been coastal enclave colonies, the British and French betrayed their educated African allies. The colonizers decided they needed traditional rulers to hold the interior, and removed from power the educated Africans on the coast. Sir George Goldie of the Royal Niger Company in 1898 said power must be shifted from “the educated strata to traditional chiefs.” The educated turned in frustration to Pan-Africanist ideologies and later played an important role in independence movements. As if they had not created enough divisions already, the colonialists left behind a legacy of mistrust between the educated class and the traditional rulers. (A rare exception to this mismanagement of traditional rulers was Botswana, where the British left largely intact the traditional structures of the ethnically homogeneous Tswana tribes. The first president, Seretse Khama, had earned a law degree in Britain and was a traditional ruler.)

Another consequence of favoring elderly traditional rulers under colonialism was the exacerbation of Africa’s long-standing generational conflict between young and old males. Professor Iliffe emphasizes that a persistent theme in Africa’s history was the scarcity of labor relative to abundant land, which led societies to maximize fertility. One institution to increase fertility was polygamy, which left older men and younger men competing for the same women. Indirect rule shifted power in favor of elderly autocrats by removing some of the checks and balances on them. In independent Africa, some part of the political conflict would turn out to be the revolt of younger males, who sometimes triumphed over their elders by their advantage at using political violence.²¹

Some colonies outside of Africa also used indirect rule. The Dutch compelled native rulers in Indonesia to maintain coffee plantations and pay coffee tribute to them around the beginning of the nineteenth century, using forced labor.²² In Bengal, the British retained the landed aristocracy, the zamindars, to collect taxes for them, paying a fixed sum for a given area. They even appointed zamindars where there was no landed aristocracy to begin with, creating an elite from scratch. Today the formerly zamindar-controlled regions do worse on many development outcomes than other parts

of India.²³

Elsewhere in India, the British had more direct rule, although they still delegated tax collection to Indian “collectors.” A system more akin to indirect rule operated in the more than six hundred princely states in India, where the British claimed “paramountcy” but were content to just leave a resident to advise the prince.²⁴

Beneficent but Crazy

It is common to attribute the defects of colonialism purely to Western exploitation. Today’s nation builders would claim that they are more altruistic than the colonizers. However, there were humanitarian instincts at work during colonialism similar to those in today’s nation-building (just as there are some self-interested objectives today). Moreover, the specific problems created by colonialism seem to reflect more Europeans’ incompetence than their avarice.

Certainly there was change over time from the era of annihilation of indigenous people and African slavery in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries to the more beneficent empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, just as nation-building today is more beneficent than colonial rule. Kipling wrote “The White Man’s Burden” at the height of the imperial era in 1898. Before that, the British government ban on the slave trade in 1807 inaugurated a more humanitarian imperial era. The British agreed to take over Sierra Leone in 1808 from a chartered company, which had failed to make the country a haven for freed slaves (most of whom had died). The British acted out of humanitarian concern, including the desire for a base to prevent the slave trade. In Freetown, the British resettled slaves their warships had intercepted in transit. Christians back in Britain gave donations to support the Sierra Leone settlements. Like Save the Children later, the charity stressed the person-to-person link. For a gift of five pounds, the missionaries would baptize the freed slave on the receiving end with the name of the donor.²⁵

White imperial benevolence was a strong staple of propaganda back home to justify the colonies. Thomas Macaulay told the House of Commons during the debate on the India Bill of 1833 “[India will be] the imperishable empire of our arts and morals, our literature, and laws.... I see bloody and degrading superstitions gradually losing their power.... I see the public mind of India, that public mind which we found debased and contracted by the worst forms of political and religious tyranny, expanding itself to just and noble views of the ends of government.”

The imperialists early on had ideas that would later become “development economics.” The governor-general of India from 1828 to 1835 spoke of the “improvement” of India, “founding British greatness on Indian happiness.²⁶ A British commentator on India concurred in 1854: “when the contrast between the influence of a Christian and a Heathen government is considered; when the knowledge of the wretchedness of the people forces us to reflect on the unspeakable blessings to millions that would follow the extension of British rule, it is not ambition but benevolence that dictates the desire for the whole country.²⁷

The nineteenth-century economist John Stuart Mill saw the British empire as furnishing what sounds like a colonial combination of the Big Push and structural adjustment: “a better government: more complete security of property; moderate taxes; a more permanent...tenure of land...the introduction of foreign arts...and the introduction of foreign capital, which renders the increase of production no longer exclusively dependent on the thrift or providence of the inhabitants themselves.²⁸ Refuting criticism that Manchester capitalists dictated imperial policy, Lord Palmerston

said in 1863, "India was governed for India and...not for the Manchester people."²⁹

In India, the British doubled the area under irrigation from 1891 to 1938, introduced a postal and telegraph system, and built forty thousand miles of railroad track.³⁰ Railways had been part of India's "development plan" since the 1820s, the key to "opening up" the country to commerce.³¹ The Indian civil servant Charles Trevelyan in 1853 had told a Commons committee that railways would be "the greatest missionary of all."³² The development efforts were not any more successful than today's foreign aid or nation-building, however: Indian income per capita failed to rise from 1820 to 1870, grew at only 0.5 percent per annum from 1870 to 1913, then failed to grow again from 1913 to independence in 1947.³³

In the American empire in the Philippines, American teachers and their Filipino successors imparted at least a rough education, raising literacy and making English the lingua franca in the ethnically fragmented islands. Americans also contributed dams and irrigation facilities, mines and timber concessions, roads, railways, and ports, legal reforms, a tax system, and currency reform. They nearly wiped out cholera by teaching Filipinos to boil water, reduced malaria by controlling mosquitoes, and controlled smallpox by compulsory vaccination. They advocated increased production of rubber, hemp, sugar, tobacco, and lumber.

The imperialists also built railways throughout Africa, using public money because of the lack of private interest (except in the Belgian Congo). The French built the first railway in Senegal in 1883. Later railways in French West Africa connected plantations in the interior to ports on the coast. The copper mines of the Belgian Congo shipped ore south after 1910, putting out a spur to meet the railways emanating from South Africa. The British empire planner Cecil Rhodes called railways and the telegraph "the keys to the continent."³⁴ Railways reduced Africa's ancient curse of high transport costs by as much as 90 percent.³⁵ The advent of roads in the twentieth century reduced the transport cost from farms to railheads by a similar amount.³⁶

Among other benevolent actions, the French colonial minister Albert Sarraut launched a program in 1923 to improve general hygiene and medical care in the African colonies, including clinics, training centers, maternity homes, and ambulances. He aimed to enable the most deprived segment of the population in the remote bush to gain access to medical care. Other programs about the same time included "pilot farms" to disseminate agricultural knowledge.

European medicine made a lot of progress against smallpox and sleeping sickness in the first half of the twentieth century. Colonial maternity clinics also contributed to a fall in infant mortality. The end result was that death rates fell and population rose in the twentieth century in colonial Africa.

Colonizers had much more uneven performance on providing public education, for which there was a lot of demand by Africans eager to get ahead. In 1949–1950, 33 percent of children were in primary school in the Belgian Congo, 26 percent in Kenya, 16 percent in Nigeria, and only 6 percent in French West Africa. Secondary education was far worse, enrolling only 1 to 2 percent of young Africans in 1950.³⁷

Cocoa and coffee farms took hold under the British and French colonizers in Africa, bringing benefits to the locals. The colonizers' railways (and later roads) facilitated the access of African cocoa and coffee farmers to the world market.³⁸ Cocoa in Ghana fueled per capita growth somewhat more rapidly than in British India: 1.3 percent per annum from 1870 to 1913.³⁹

However, even with the best of motives, colonial officials suffered from all the same problems that characterize today's White Man's Burden: excessive self-confidence of bureaucrats, coercive top-down planning, desultory knowledge of local conditions, and little feedback from the locals on

what worked. Under the theory that “whites know best,” colonialists forced development schemes on the locals rather than respecting their economic choices. A British colonial directive on Uganda in 1925 went: “Natives to be informed that three courses are open: cotton, labor for Government, labor for planters....[T]hey cannot be permitted to do nothing.” There were also forced cotton-growing schemes in Congo, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, and Upper Volta.

Perhaps force was necessary because the natives were choosing to grow high-yield food crops such as millet while they were “doing nothing.” The obsession with cotton often displaced these high-return food crops.⁴⁰

The British pursued a similar policy in Sierra Leone, where they imposed a tax on huts to try to spur production of cash crops such as oil palm. One district commissioner said that the tax was necessary for the natives to “rouse them from their apathy and indolence and to bring them more in touch with civilizing influences.” When the natives resisted being taxed for their own good, British soldiers and native auxiliaries killed the resisters.⁴¹

British colonial officials’ next bright idea in Sierra Leone was to introduce long-staple cotton to replace the short-staple cotton already grown by local farmers. The results were disastrous: heavy rain eroded long-staple fields. The peasants had not chosen their methods by accident: intercropping short-staple cotton with food crops controlled erosion, kept down plant pests, and preserved food security. The short-staple cotton was suitable for locally produced cloths.

The local British officials also introduced irrigated rice in Sierra Leone, whose yields rapidly declined due to irrigation’s by-products of acidity and salinity. Local farmers were already getting high yields from rice grown in mangrove swamps. Not yet convinced of their own fallibility, the Brits introduced tractors into Sierra Leone in the 1950s. The tractors never paid for themselves, which was not surprising given the missing imperative to economize on abundant labor. Tractor farms produced 4 percent of Sierra Leone’s rice output, but took 80 percent of the colonial Department of Agriculture’s spending.

In Malawi’s Shire Valley from 1940 to 1960, British officials tried to teach the peasants how to farm. They offered the standard solution of ridging to combat soil erosion, and were at a loss to understand why Malawian farmers resisted the tried-and-true technique of British farmers. Unfortunately, ridging in the sandy soils of the Shire Valley led to *more* erosion during the rainy season, while exposing the roots of the plants to attacks by white ants during the dry season.⁴²

A famous colonial project was the Tanganyika Groundnuts Scheme of the 1940s. A subsidiary of Unilever, which manufactured soap from vegetable oils, suggested growing groundnuts (peanuts) in Tanzania during British shortages of cooking oil and other foods. However, the Unilever subsidiary didn’t think a private project could handle the ambitious scheme. The socialist food minister in postwar Britain, John Strachey, embraced the project. The government created a public corporation and appointed Major General Desmond Harrison to what they saw as a military operation. Major General Harrison set up headquarters at Kongwa, an area of marginal rainfall. Henry Stanley had described the area as “an interminable jungle of thornbushes.” Clearing the jungle required teams of two bulldozers linked by naval anchor chains (which were late in arriving because a British official back home thought the order for ship anchors for the middle of Tanzania was a joke). This Fitzcarraldo territory was home to bees so vicious that they put some bulldozer operators in the hospital. The bulldozers’ work still left the roots, which ate up the root-cutting equipment. Out of the original proposal of 3.25 million acres, the project cleared ten thousand acres.

Still, the project continued. Plantable when moist, the ground turned into concrete by harvesting time in the dry season. Since groundnuts grow underground, this was a problem. The project had

bought four thousand tons of peanuts for seed. After two seasons, the project produced two thousand tons of peanuts. Faced with a state enterprise that had turned four thousand tons of peanuts into two thousand tons, the British government finally cancelled the project.⁴³

Despite (or because of) these heroic efforts, African growth under the imperialists was modest: 0.6 percent per annum from 1870 to 1913 and then 0.9 percent per annum from 1913 to 1950.⁴⁴ Looking at Africa, India, and other Asian colonies besides India together, we see that the gap between Europe and its colonies grew during the colonial period (figure 27). After independence, Africa continued to fall further behind Europe, while India and other Asian colonies kept up with European growth. It is hard to see any positive overall effect of colonial rule compared to independent states.⁴⁵

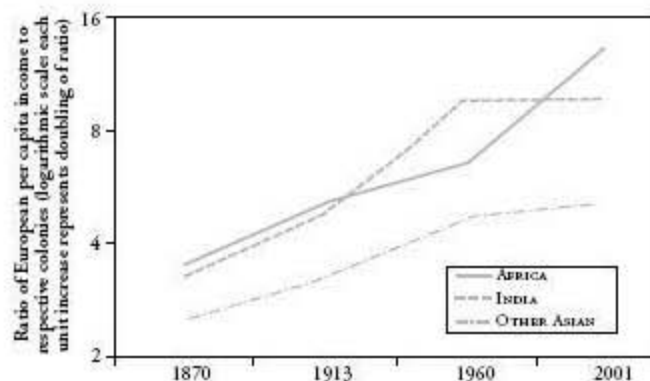


Fig. 27. Ratio of Europe's Income to Colonies

Benefits of Not Being Colonized

It is also interesting that the notable East Asian success stories—China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand—were never completely colonized by Europeans. In contrast, East Asia's main disappointment, the Philippines, was colonized by Spain and the United States.

The few areas of the world that were not formally colonized by Europeans provide an interesting, although imperfect, counterfactual to what would have happened in the absence of the White Man's Burden. They are imperfect as a test of colonialism because these areas were not chosen randomly—they wound up that way because of factors that influenced their social evolution. There was also some degree of European control in some of these territories, like the infamous European enclaves in China. Korea and Taiwan did spend some part of the twentieth century as colonies of Japan.

I compare the non-colonies to European colonies that were not settled by Europeans. The colonies settled by Europeans are a special case, discussed in an earlier chapter. The non-settlement colonies are a more natural experiment of European intervention from afar. The non-colonies had more rapid increases in secondary education from 1960 to 2001. Growth per capita from 1950 to 2001 was 1.7 percentage points higher in the non-colonies than the non-settlement colonies, a huge difference for a fifty-one-year period. By 2001, income was 2.4 times higher in the non-colonies than in the former non-settlement colonies.

Brown University economist Louis Putterman argues that having a long history of statehood (which was one thing that prevented colonization in many cases) was favorable for seizing economic

opportunities in the postwar era, and that may be the reason for the different outcomes in the non-colonies compared with the colonies. Naturally formed states outperformed artificial colonial creations.

The difference in per capita income in 2001 conceals very high variance of outcomes among the non-colonies. China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan had spectacular growth in income, Thailand and Turkey only slightly less impressive growth, and Iran and Saudi Arabia had a windfall gain in oil income. On the negative side, North Korea's Stalinist development strategy gave a very different outcome than the development path of its former countrymen in South Korea. Afghanistan was a disaster of tribal strife, communism, and foreign intervention. Bhutan, Ethiopia, and Nepal were hardly poster children for the benefits of escaping European control, either. We will never know what would have happened to Tibet if China had not swallowed it in 1951. So absence of the White Man's Burden did not ensure paradise. It just gave a better result on average than colonialism (and the better result is statistically distinguishable from colonies, despite the high variance of non-colonial outcomes).

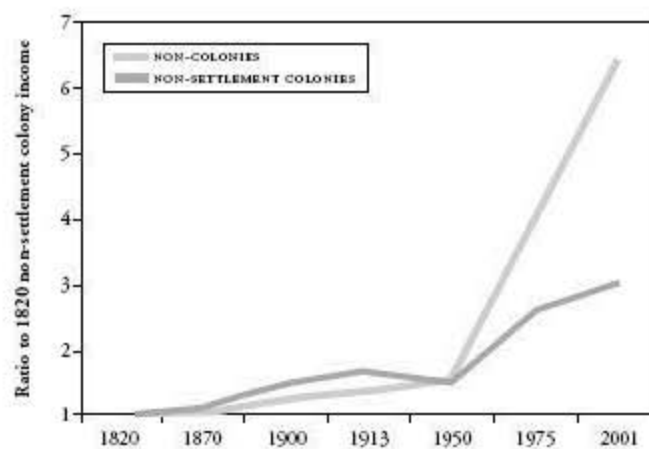


Fig. 28. Per Capita Income in Non-settlement Colonies Versus Non-colonies

National self-help doesn't always work—disasters can be homegrown as easily as miracles. Economic miracles are uncommon under any circumstances, but they seem to be more likely among non-colonies than colonies. Hence, the big success stories of the last four decades include a preponderance of places never colonized by Europeans, which tells us a little something about the benefits of escaping the White Man's Burden.

To illustrate some of the problems left behind by the colonialists and nation-builders, as well as how they meshed with later Western interventions, consider one case study.

Abused the Most and the Longest

In 1483, Diogo Cão, a Portuguese ship captain sailing off Central Africa, came upon a river. Asking the locals the name, they told him Nzere, the river that swallows all others. He Europeanized the name as Zaire, which Mobutu would later take as the "authentic" name of the unlucky country the Portuguese had found.

Cão was more interested in profits than nomenclature. He established relations with the local king, Nzinga Mbemba, whom he dubbed Alfonso I, of the powerful Kongo kingdom. The Kongo

people (also known as Bakongo) practiced ironworking, copperworking, weaving, pottery, and carving of wood and ivory. The Kongo also had slavery, which didn't bother the Portuguese priests, although the Kongo polygamy did. Soon the Portuguese were trading guns and luxury manufactures for Bakongo slaves and ivory. The Portuguese demand for slaves was so insatiable that the Kongo raided neighboring peoples, who retaliated in kind. The warfare of slave raiding weakened the kingdom, but it managed to survive until the late nineteenth century, when the Belgians arrived.⁴⁶ The Portuguese (later joined by Dutch, French, and British slavers) established slave-exporting ports at Boma, on the Zaire (aka Congo) River, and at Luanda, sending slaves (including many Bakongo) by the boatload to the sugar plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.

Belgian King Leopold's abuses of the Congo from 1877 to 1908 are well known (see the great book *King Leopold's Ghost*, by Adam Hochschild). Belgian king Leopold said that his aim for the Congo Free State was "to bring civilization to the only part of this globe where it has not penetrated to pierce the darkness that envelops entire populations...a crusade worthy of this age of progress."⁴⁷ Impressed by his ideals, European powers awarded him the Congo at the Berlin Conference. The borders they established showed their usual arbitrariness. For example, they divided Tutsis between the Belgian Congo and German East Africa, an area that included what would become Rwanda and Burundi. This would have deadly consequences a century later.

The Belgians exacerbated ethnic tensions. Every individual was given a tribal label that was written on his pass, hardening tribal identities that were previously fluid.⁴⁸ Some ethnic groups resisted those perceived as Belgian favorites. The Kongo in Leopoldville formed an Alliance of the Bakongo People (ABAKO) to protect their interests against the Lingala-speaking migrants to Leopoldville from upriver.⁴⁹

The Belgians were not so good at preparing Congo for independence. They didn't even consider independence until 1956, when Belgian law professor A.A.J. Van Bilsen published a "thirty-year plan" to turn Congo over to the Congolese.⁵⁰ Not wanting to have the Belgians in town that long, ABAKO and its leader, Joseph Kasavubu, called for immediate independence in the same year. The Belgians finally allowed elections in 1957, but only at the local level—which meant that most political parties formed along ethnic and regional lines. ABAKO took 133 out of the 170 council seats in Leopoldville, while other ethnic parties won elsewhere.⁵¹

On January 4, 1959, Belgian troops forcibly dispersed an ABAKO political rally. Riots broke out, with thousands of people breaking into European stores and looting. The Belgians panicked, hastily turning the Thirty-Year Plan into the Six-Month Plan. The Congo became independent on June 30, 1960.

At independence, qualified leaders were in short supply. Only seventeen Congolese in 1960 had a university degree. Joseph Kasavubu had a strong base in Leopoldville and the lower Congo River. The other main contender, Patrice Lumumba, was a high school dropout, former beer salesman and postal clerk, whose main qualification was his oratory.⁵²

Chaos ensued. Within days the Force Publique mutinied against their Belgian officers, who quickly headed for the next flight out. So did many Belgian civilians after mutineers beat and raped whites. The new government was an awkward coalition, with Kasavubu as president and Lumumba as prime minister. Seeking someone to fill the empty slots at the Force Publique, Lumumba reached far down the ranks to an obscure noncommissioned officer named Joseph Désirée Mobutu (who, like Lumumba, had not finished secondary school).⁵³

Desperate to keep the country together when the provinces of Kasai and Katanga announced

secession, Lumumba cast about for global allies. Soviet and American agents in Leopoldville schemed to get the Congo in their camp.

UN troops arrived, but had no brief to intervene in intra-Congolese conflicts. Not satisfied with what the United States and the UN were offering, Lumumba solicited Soviet support to fight the Katanga secession. Kasavubu and Mobutu were not happy, nor was the paranoid CIA. Kasavubu announced on the radio that he was firing Lumumba in September 1960, while Lumumba announced on another station that he was firing Kasavubu. Mobutu staged a brief coup and later flew Lumumba off to Katanga, with state agents beating him up on the plane and eventually assassinating him. CIA machinations allegedly had some role in these events.

Further bizarre twists occupied Congolese politics from 1961 to 1965. A Marxist revolt broke out in eastern Congo, the former home of Lumumba, intriguing the Marxist Internationale enough to earn a visit from Che Guevara. Che was disgusted at the poor military skills, womanizing, and drinking of one of the young Marxist leaders, named Laurent Kabila.⁵⁴ By 1965, Congolese politics were deadlocked along ethnic and regional lines. Mobutu staged another coup, this time for keeps. Kabila retreated into a tiny Marxist mini-state west of Lake Tanganyika, financed by gold mining and ivory, and kidnapped for ransom four Western students from naturalist Jane Goodall's primate research center in Tanzania.⁵⁵

Compensating for economic mismanagement, Mobutu came up with a name change for the country, Zaire, the old Portuguese mispronunciation of the Nzere (Congo) River. A lonely democratic opposition emerged, led by the courageous Étienne Tshisekedi, who endured at Mobutu's hands multiple arrests, torture, and banishments over the next few decades.

Little more needs to be said about Mobutu's notorious looting of the Congo's natural resources, and his ability to attract aid from Western donors, which enabled him to buy off potential opponents and finance villas on the Riviera. In the end, it took an armed rebellion instigated by Uganda and Rwanda to oust Mobutu in 1997. Rwanda sought to defeat the Interhamwe—the Hutu militia that carried out the genocide of eight hundred thousand Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994—who had taken refuge in the Congo. The Rwandans had local allies because there was a substantial population of Congolese Tutsis in eastern Congo.⁵⁶

Unfortunately for the Congolese, Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni had gone to the University of Dar es Salaam with Laurent Kabila, the dissolute rebel who had last been active three decades earlier.⁵⁷ Museveni and Rwandan president Paul Kagame (another friend of the glad-handing Kabila) decided to install Kabila as the new president, although he had little or no role in the rebellion that ousted Mobutu. Kabila turned out to be something less than the Congolese George Washington. His autocratic ways (he quickly banned the party of Étienne Tshisekedi) and his failure to control the Interhamwe alienated even his foreign backers. Uganda and Rwanda started a second rebellion that was eventually to involve six neighboring states backing and opposing the Kabila government. The foreign forces, as well as a medley of local military bands, further looted the Congo (now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]) of minerals. From August 1998 to November 2002, an estimated 3.3 million Congolese died as a result of the war, making it the world's deadliest conflict since World War II.⁵⁸

Unknown parties assassinated Laurent Kabila in 2001. His hastily installed successor was thirty-two-year-old Joseph Kabila, the son of the incompetent autocrat. Joseph didn't prove to be any more democratic than his father (he also banned the party of Étienne Tshisekedi).⁵⁹ but he was a lot better at relations with the international donors and foreign invaders. A peace deal brought together

assorted rebels and warlords into a coalition government under Joseph Kabila, which the ever-hopeful international community deemed a Government of National Unity. The foreign aid spigot reopened, and UN troops arrived, starting a new quasi-colonial experience for the DRC. The World Bank strategy since 2001 was “to promote ‘early wins’ to build a track record for the then new Government.”⁶⁰ It didn’t explain why it wished on the Congolese people a government made up of political actors who had demonstrated only an exceptional ability to use violence.

The income of the average Congolese today is the equivalent of twenty-nine cents a day. The World Bank has lent \$1.5 billion to the Congolese “government” since 2001. It’s not clear what benefits the money brought to the Congolese people when channeled through the warlords and autocrats. As many as 3.4 million Congolese are still refugees.⁶¹ After five centuries of European intervention, the DRC is still today contesting the record for worst and longest misgovernment.

Many of the problems since independence are admittedly homegrown. I am not sure that the DRC would be a prosperous place if the Europeans had never come. But after five centuries of European violence, slavery, paternalism, colonialism, exploitation, and aid to prop up bad rulers after independence, the DRC is an extreme example of why the West’s successive interventions of exploitation, colonization, foreign aid, and nation-building have not worked out well.

White Mischief

If you thought European colonization was bad, decolonization was not much better. Planners did decolonization as a crash utopian program to create whole new nations overnight. The decolonizers decided the boundaries of the decolonized from on high. The Europeans did this with little consideration for the wishes of the locals, usually just keeping the colonial borders, even when they were of very recent invention, or having European officials make up a partition line. One thing today’s nation-builders could learn from their colonial predecessors: once you get in, it’s very hard to constructively get out.

The West decided what *a nation was*, determining the boundaries of the new nations. It decided which peoples got their own nation and which did not. The results are as bad as with other Western top-down schemes in the Rest. The West imposed its map of the world on a quilt of thousands of linguistic groups, religious creeds, tribes, and racial mixtures. The West’s drunken parallelograms did not give nations to some existing ethnic nationalities (e.g., the Kurds) while creating other nationalities (e.g., the Iraqis) where none existed before.

The resulting “nations” started their ill-starred journey with ethnic and nationalist grievances. Nations whose territory is disputed by different groups are like landowners whose property rights are insecure. The insecure landowner will divert effort away from investing in the fertility of the soil or constructing a lovely house and toward litigation and shotgun defense of his property. Nations with insecure borders will have more civil and international wars. They will devote more effort to defense and less effort to investing in the productive potential of the nation. Gangsters will exploit ethnic hatreds to promote their own self-serving agendas.

As George Bernard Shaw said: “A healthy nation is as unconscious of its nationality as a healthy man of his bones. But if you break a nation’s nationality it will think of nothing else but getting it set again. It will listen to no reformer, to no philosopher, to no preacher, until the demand of the Nationalist is granted. It will attend to no business, however vital, except the business of unification and liberation.”⁶²

This is not to say that all of the nationalist and ethnic conflicts are the West's fault. No matter how the West drew the map, there would have been some conflict. No scheme of Western mapmaking would have led to utopia.

However, the West has plenty to answer for. As David Fromkin's wonderful history of the Middle East after World War I, *A Peace to End All Peace*, puts it, Woodrow Wilson's speeches about what *would not* happen during Western drawing of borders of the Rest was an excellent prediction of what *would* happen. Wilson said "that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels or pawns in a game," and definitely "not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people...for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery." Then the West bartered about peoples as if they were pawns in a game, for the sake of its exterior influence or mastery. It partitioned territory for the sake of short-term gain with little thought of the long-run consequences for the people living there. Even after decolonization, the West played with peoples as chess pieces in pursuit of the West's own security aims, frustrating the right of peoples to choose their own destiny.

The political crises that make the headlines today, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war in Iraq, the Kashmir dispute, the war on terror, and brutal civil wars in Africa, have some roots in past Western treatment of peoples as "pawns in a game." Look behind a modern-day headline and often you will find the machinations of some long-forgotten colonial planner.

There are three different ways that Western mischief contributed to present-day grief in the Rest. First, the West gave territory to one group that a different group already believed it possessed. Second, the West drew boundary lines splitting an ethnic group into two or more parts across nations, frustrating nationalist ambitions of that group and creating ethnic minority problems in two or more resulting nations. Third, the West combined into a single nation two or more groups that were historical enemies.

Alberto Alesina and Janina Matuszeski of Harvard and I have analyzed statistically whether countries with artificial borders do worse on economic development.⁶³ We have two measures of colonial mischief in forming countries. The first is the percentage of the population that belongs to ethnic groups that the borders split between adjacent countries. The percentage partitioned is strongly correlated with the ethnic heterogeneity of the population, which previous studies have identified as another determinant of under-development. This is plausible, since the more heterogeneous the population, the more likely it is that arbitrary borders will split more ethnic groups. To make sure that the share of partitioned peoples is not just proxying for ethnic heterogeneity, we control separately for heterogeneity. Former colonies with a high share of partitioned peoples do worse today on democracy (see figure 29 for illustration), government service delivery, rule of law, and corruption. Highly partitioned countries do worse on infant mortality, illiteracy, and specific public services such as immunization against measles, immunization for DPT (diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus), and supply of clean water.

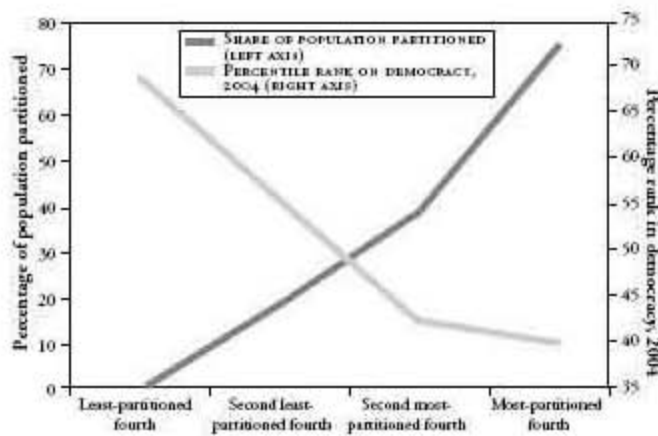


Fig. 29. Democracy and Partition in Former Colonies

Our second measure of artificial borders is more exotic, if not crazy. We reasoned that “natural” nations would determine their borders by some complex organic process, again depending on factors such as the spread of a unifying culture or the location of ethnic groups. Colonial bureaucrats on the other hand, are more likely to just draw straight lines on a map, without regard to realities on the ground. So we devised a mathematical measure of how wiggly or straight are the borders of every country in the world. We found that artificially straight borders were statistically associated with less democracy, higher infant mortality, more illiteracy, less childhood immunization, and less access to clean water—all measured today. The straight hand of the colonial mapmaker is discernible in development outcomes many decades later.

From Sir Mark Sykes to the War on Terror

When today many around the world are blaming the Americans for everything that goes wrong, it’s kind of refreshing to go back to an era when everything was the Brits’ fault. If only the British had not promised the same piece of land—Palestine, where else?—to three different parties.

The story begins with an Arab sheikh and a British diplomat. The Arab was Emir Hussein ibn Ali al-Hashimi, the sharif of Mecca and Medina. The Hashemite dynasty of Hussein traced its ancestry to the Prophet himself, but hardly attracted allegiance in the Arab world as a whole. During World War I, in which Britain and the Ottoman Empire (which included the Arabs) were on opposite sides, Sharif Hussein was afraid that the Ottomans were about to depose him. He contacted the British in Cairo in 1915 and offered to switch sides. The British war against the Ottomans in the Middle East was not faring well, so they were tempted. Hussein offered a revolt of the Arabs against the Ottomans, mentioning his contacts with rebel secret societies in Damascus. However, there was a catch—the Arab didn’t want to exchange one imperial master for another. Hence, Hussein said that the British must promise independence for the Arabs after the war (implicitly assuming he would be their new leader).

Hussein’s message caused bewilderment in Cairo. The British commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, contacted London for instructions. The British sent a neophyte diplomat, Sir Mark Sykes to supervise the negotiations. Sir Mark decided to accept Hussein’s terms, with an exception. With Sykes’s guidance, McMahon sent a letter to Hussein on October 24, 1915, promising “to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the sheriff

[namely, the Arab rectangle including Syria, Arabia, and Mesopotamia], with the exception of those portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo.⁶⁴ The French thought of western Syria—what is today Lebanon—as within their sphere of influence, given their longstanding ties to the Maronite Christians of Lebanon. The British could not afford to offend their French allies. Nobody knew whether McMahon meant also to exclude Palestine. Jews and Arabs later debated what exactly McMahon had meant by “districts,” which was not an Ottoman administrative term. Twenty years later, McMahon would say that he did mean to exclude Palestine from Arab control, but that assertion may have been colored by subsequent events. Most historians brave enough to venture an opinion think that at the time, McMahon only meant to exclude Lebanon.⁶⁵ McMahon’s language was (intentionally?) vague enough to accommodate the Arabs’ desire to possess Jerusalem as part of an independent Arab kingdom. Hussein objected even to the exclusion of Lebanon, but agreed to postpone that question until after the war.

But before the end of the war, the British promised parts of Palestine to two other parties. In 1916, Sykes met with French diplomat Charles François Georges-Picot to negotiate the postwar division of the Middle East between the Allies. On February 4, 1916, they secretly reached agreement in Paris. Some of those straight borderlines that Alesina, Matuszeski, and I found to have had bad consequences were drawn by Sykes and Picot in Paris in 1916.

Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, northern Palestine would go to the French sphere, southern Palestine would go to the British, and central Palestine (including Jerusalem) would be an Allied condominium shared by the British and French (and even Tsarist Russia, but she was kicked out after the Bolsheviks took over).

The British weren’t done giving away Palestine. Sir Mark Sykes and others talked to Zionist leaders about their support for the Allied war effort. The British offered a quid pro quo—Palestine. On November 2, 1917, the British foreign secretary issued the famous Balfour Declaration: “His Majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

Why did Sir Mark Sykes and the Brits promise the same piece of land within two years to three different parties, the Arabs, the French, and the Jews? The British felt desperate about their fortunes in the war, and were eager to have all three peoples on their side. Ironically, in view of all the trouble it would later cause, Mark Sykes got little out of selling Palestine to three different customers. The French had their own life-and-death struggle in the war and hardly needed any inducement to fight with the British. The Arab revolt amounted to deployment of Hussein’s son Faisal and a few Bedouin tribesman in the British invading army in Palestine and Syria, far short of the fictional book and movie version of the Arab revolt by T. E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”). A small sign of the artificiality of the Arab revolt is that Mark Sykes himself designed the flag of the Arabs as a combination of green, red, black, and white. Variations on this design are today the official flags of Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and the Palestinians. As to the value of the Jews on the Allied side, Mark Sykes had apparently read a few too many of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about the Jews’ influence on world affairs.

The British Palestinian triple-cross still causes the blood to flow today. Despite Woodrow Wilson’s and the League of Nations Charter’s idealistic call for national self-determination, the British and the French cared only for their imperial interests.

After the war, the French agreed to give up any claims to Palestine in return for the British recognizing their control over Syria. The British abandoned their protégé Faisal, who had already formed a shaky Arab government in Damascus, but offered Iraq to him as a consolation prize. Faisal

and his heirs were to continue in power in an independent Iraq until 1958. However, the imposition of an alien monarch on Iraq, which had been cobbled together from three different Ottoman provinces—containing Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis—hardly set the stage for stable nationhood. The stage was set for Saddam Hussein, who emerged from a series of military coups after the fall of the monarchy.

To complicate matters further, the British had already promised Faisal's brother Abdullah the Iraqi throne. Abdullah was the only member of the Hashemite family left without a kingdom after the war (the paterfamilias Hussein continued to rule back home in Mecca and Medina, with his son Ali as heir apparent, although *they* were conquered by the rival Saudi family shortly thereafter). After Abdullah threatened to make trouble, Winston Churchill decided to split off the lightly populated part of Palestine east of the Jordan River (called Transjordan and then, simply Jordan) and give it to Abdullah. After Abdullah's assassination in 1951, his grandson King Hussein was to later play a large role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Hashemite family is still in power today, under King Hussein's son Abdullah II, with the country known formally as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

In Syria and Lebanon, the French were supposed to carry out League of Nations mandates that would result in eventual independence. In Lebanon, the French added Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon to the traditional Maronite area around Mount Lebanon, giving their Maronite Christian allies control of what were majority Muslim areas. This later caused a Christian-Muslim civil war that destroyed the independent state of Lebanon.

The French treated Syria with a heavy hand, more like a colony assimilated to the metropole than a mandate moving toward independence. Arab bitterness at the French betrayal contributed to the emergence of nationalist radicals in Syria after independence.

Back in Palestine, the British took it over as a mandate, inheriting their own problem of how to reconcile the irreconcilable promises they had already made to the Arab and Jewish inhabitants. They were not very successful. At the time, the British were content that they indirectly controlled Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq through the League of Nations mandate system. Combined with some influence in Persia, this gave them a land bridge (and later air routes) from their possession of Egypt all the way to India. Egypt was also the apex of their Cairo-to-Cape Town area of control in Africa. It worked out nicely in the head of some British imperial Planner, but at a price we are still paying today.

Of course, the *mélange* of peoples in the Middle East didn't need British help to hate one another. Much more was to happen to bring the Middle East to its present unhappy state. But the British duplicity about Palestine and Arab independence did not help set the region on a path toward peaceful development. Table 7 summarizes some of the salient events in the region divided up by Sir Mark Sykes.

TABLE 7. THE CHILDREN OF SIR MARK SYKES		
<i>Entity</i>	<i>Some major violent events</i>	<i>Notable political features</i>
Iraq	Kurdish genocide, two border wars with Kuwait and Iran, lots of military coups, then Butcher Saddam for three decades	Model for new version of White Man's Burden in 2005
Israel	Five Arab-Israeli wars	Democracy for citizens, but not so nice for the Palestinians
Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza	Occupation by Israel after 1967, two intifadas, terrorist murders of Israeli civilians	Palestinian Authority receives a lot of American finance to rebuild areas destroyed by American-financed Israeli army
Lebanon	1975–1976 civil war, Syrian occupation, 1982 Israeli invasion	Home of terrorist movements
Jordan	Civil war with Palestinians 1970–1971, wars with Israel	Hathemite dictators still in power
Syria	Invaded Lebanon after its civil war, occupied it, wars with Israel	Good refuge for Nazi war criminals after World War II
Kurdistan	There isn't one, yet	

Partition of India

The British also applied their genius for remaking other people's maps to the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Lord Mountbatten, the viceroy of India who supervised partition and independence, hired a public relations expert to burnish his image for folks back home. After the massacres at partition, four international wars, two genocides, six secessionist movements, and umpteen communal massacres later, it looks like his lordship needed all the PR help he could get.

The burning issue in the partition, of course, was whether and how to award separate rights of national self-determination to Hindus and Muslims (the British ignored the national aspirations of smaller groups such as the Sikhs, which would bring its own bitter consequences). The Congress Party of Gandhi and Nehru campaigned for independence for one unitary Indian state, including Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs from Peshawar to Dhaka. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was initially a member of the Congress Party, but he left—fearing domination of the Muslim minority by Hindus in the Congress Party. He founded the Muslim League, which called for a separate state for Muslims: Pakistan, or “the land of the pure.” But since Hindus and Muslims were mixed together all over the subcontinent, how could you come up with a plan to carve a Muslim nation out of India?

This intermixing was the result of a complex history that included the Muslim Mughal dynasty that the British raj replaced. Until the last days of the raj, there were Muslim princes ruling over majority Hindu princedoms and Hindu princes ruling over majority Muslim princedoms. The only areas with a Muslim majority were in the extreme northwest and the extreme northeast, separated by a thousand miles, and still containing large minority Sikh and Hindu communities. The most populous states of India with a Muslim majority were Punjab and Bengal, both of which Jinnah wanted to include in his Muslim state. But Muslims made up barely more than 50 percent in each state.

To add to the complexity, Muslim areas in the subcontinent had little in common. Bengali Muslims were virtually indistinguishable from Bengali Hindus in every aspect of culture (language, food, clothing, music, etc.) except religion. Muslims within what is now northern India spoke Urdu. Bengali speakers in what became East Pakistan were affronted when Urdu later became the national language of all of Pakistan.

In the Muslim North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), ethnic Pathans (also known as Pakhtuns, Pashtuns, Pushtuns, or Pukhtoos) were separated from their fellow Pathans in Afghanistan by the

Durand Line, an arbitrary boundary between Afghanistan and British India laid down by a previous British bureaucrat. Peshawar, the capital of NWFP, was the traditional winter home of the Afghar kings. The Pathans preferred either an independent Pukhtoonwa, uniting all Pathans, or a Pathan-led Greater Afghanistan. At the time of partition, NWFP had a Congress-allied government led by a charismatic advocate of nonviolence, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (the “Frontier Gandhi”).

Back in British India, two other provinces of the future Pakistan were Sindh and Balochistan. Sindh feudal landowners initially opposed the Pakistan idea and only later gave their grudging support under the naïve hope that Sindh would be largely autonomous. Balochi tribesmen (also divided from ethnic compatriots by a colonial boundary with Iran) preferred an independent Balochistan, which would lead to a secessionist attempt in the 1970s, met with murderous repression by the Pakistani state.

As far as Punjab and Bengal were concerned, Congress leaders would not consent to hand them over to the Muslims. This meant the Brits would partition the mosaic of Hindus and Muslims in each state (and Sikhs in the Punjab, which had been a Sikh state at one point). The Unionist government in Punjab prior to partition backed neither the Muslim League nor the Congress Party.

Into this snake pit of conflicting nationalist aspirations came Viscount “Dickie” Mountbatten, a grandson of Queen Victoria (a credential he would cite frequently). Under the theory that his royal brio could smooth over all differences among gentlemen, he put forward an accelerated deadline for independence—on August 15, 1947, just five months after his arrival in India. Nehru recognized a fellow charmer and hit it off with Dickie right away. But the charm offensive did not work on Jinnah, who preferred to argue points with his formidable legal skills. The offended Mountbatten referred to Jinnah as the “evil genius,” a “psychopathic case,” a “lunatic,” and a “bastard,” characterizations spread by eavesdroppers to both sides. Mountbatten also referred to Pakistan as a flimsy structure that would fall apart. Mountbatten’s wife, Edwina, didn’t help the cause of impartiality either, indulging a schoolgirl crush (possibly more) on Nehru.⁶⁶

Pakistan: The Unhappy Family

The unhappiest heir of the Brit Quit of 1947 is Pakistan. Jinnah complained that he got a “moth-eaten” Pakistan, with missing halves of Bengal and Punjab, little of Kashmir, some frontier territory, and two disjointed areas of West and East Pakistan.

The Muslim migrants from India to Pakistan, known as the *mohajir*, later became disillusioned. One of their political leaders, Altaf Hussain, said bitterly in 2000, “My description of the partition as the greatest blunder in the history of mankind is an objective assessment based on the bitter experience of the masses.... Had the subcontinent not been divided, the 180 million Muslims of Bangladesh, 150 million of Pakistan and about 200 million in India would together have made 530 million people and, as such, they would have been a very powerful force in undivided India.”⁶⁷

As late as 1981, only 7 percent of the Pakistani population were primary speakers of the supposed national language, Urdu (Jinnah himself spoke poor Urdu). So, to sum up, Pakistan wound up as a collection of Balochistan, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh (all of whom entertained secession at various times), East Bengal (which successfully seceded in 1971 to become Bangladesh, although only after a genocidal repression by West Pakistani troops), *mohajir* migrants from India (many of whom regretted the whole thing), and West Punjab (which had its own micro-secessionist movement by the Seraiki linguistic minority).

Democracy never took hold in this rocky soil—the military mounted coups, and no elected civilian ever completed his term of office. Military leaders exploited the unfriendly relations with India to justify military rule and to demand a huge defense budget.

Islam proved imperfect national cement, as many different varieties of Islam competed for the allegiance of Pakistanis. As the Pakistani central bank governor Ishaq Dar put it, “Every conceivable cleavage or difference: Sindhi vs. Punjabi, Mohajirs vs. Pathans, Islam vs. Secularism, Shias vs. Sunnis, Deobandis vs. Barelvis, literates vs. illiterates, Woman vs. Man, Urban vs. Rural—has been exploited to magnify dissensions, giving rise to heinous blood baths, accentuated hatred, and intolerance.”⁶⁸

The American support of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the eighties left behind a huge supply of weapons, including Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, and extremist groups and terrorists disposed to use them. The Americans didn’t bother to clean up after themselves when they lost interest in Pakistan and Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. Today, on the border with Afghanistan, former Pathan scouts for the CIA use the CIA trails from twenty years ago to help Al Qaeda fugitives escape from the Americans.⁶⁹ Terrorists move freely from battlefields in Kashmir and Afghanistan to promote Islamic radicalism within Pakistan.

Nevertheless, the American government enthusiastically backs the Pakistani government again today as a reward for the alliance in the war on terror, showering it with World Bank and IMF loans and U.S. foreign aid. Pakistan was the world’s largest recipient of foreign aid in 2002: some \$2.1 billion. The Americans tactfully overlook unpleasant things such as suppression of democracy, intelligence agencies linked to terrorists, and nuclear proliferation.

Recently it was said in Pakistan: “Fifty-two years ago we started with a beacon of hope and today that beacon is no more and we stand in darkness. There is despondency and hopelessness surrounding us with no light visible anywhere around. The slide down has been gradual but has rapidly accelerated in the last many years.... Violence and terrorism have been going on for years and we are weary and sick of this Kalashnikov culture.”⁷⁰ These are not statements by an anti-government radical, but those of Pervez Musharraf, the current military leader of Pakistan.

One should not go too far and demonize Pakistan, or dismiss it as a completely artificial state. People of every nation are more complex than what makes national statistics or international headlines. Most Pakistanis are proud of their nationality, with much of which to be proud. The economy has grown despite all obstacles, and a world-class professional elite and talented diaspora achieve a lot. Still, one wishes that their transition from British rule to independence had been a little more constructive, and the American back-and-forth support of military action from Pakistani soil not quite so shortsighted. Pakistan survives in spite of Western bungling.

Capital of the Apocalypse

Sudan was engulfed virtually from the moment of its birth in a civil war between the Arab/Muslim North and the African/Christian/animist South. The British who went to all that grief to partition Muslims and Hindus in India—who were intermixed throughout the subcontinent in one colony—for some reason combined Arab Muslims and African Christians from more defined separate colonies into a single state in Sudan. The British gave in to pressure from educated northerners, who traditionally subjugated southerners. Another version is that the fateful unification of Sudan was determined by a British bureaucratic spat—the British Arabists who managed the North overcame the

British Africanists who managed the South. The Brits barely consulted the southerners, who later made their feelings known through civil war.

The British were not ignorant about the North-South difference. A British special commissioner reported in 1956 that “for historical reasons the Southerners regard the Northern Sudanese as their traditional enemies.”⁷¹ For centuries, the Arabs in the North raided the South for slaves. Northern slave raiding peaked in the 1870s, when domestic slavery of southerners in the North became widespread. British colonial rule abolished slavery on paper, but northern slavery continued under other guises: the “slaves” were renamed “servants.”⁷² The inspector-general of the Sudan for the British in 1898 gave his view on the Africans in the South: “These god-forsaken swine do not deserve to be treated like free and independent men.”⁷³

Sharing these enlightened views, Arab northerners used to call African southerners “slave” (*abid*) to their faces. The northerners are more discreet now but still use the word in private or jokingly in public. As Sudanese scholar Francis Deng explains, “The term *abid*...is the exact equivalent of ‘nigger’ in American popular usage.”⁷⁴

The British treated the South as separate for decades before independence, even banning migration between the North and the South. Without consulting southerners, they reversed this policy less than a decade before independence. A British bureaucrat, civil secretary Sir James Robertson decreed the unity of Sudan in a memo of December 16, 1946.⁷⁵ Out of that memo came a half century of civil war.

The British gave the South promises of constitutional protection in the new Sudan, through autonomy in a federal system, but didn’t keep the promises. The Sudanese replaced eight hundred British colonial officers in the run-up to independence. Only eight of the eight hundred new officials were southerners. Northern military officers moved into the South.⁷⁶ On January 1, 1956, Sudan became independent. The National Assembly appointed a constitutional commission to design the structure of the new state; only three of its forty-six members were southerners.⁷⁷ A historian later summed up the “the shambles of independence, when international intervention circumvented the self-determination process, the general populace was denied a final vote on their own future, and a decision on the form of government under which the Sudanese were to live as one people was deferred to a never-realized future.”⁷⁸ A civil war lasted until a settlement in 1972, killing five hundred thousand Sudanese.⁷⁹

After a decade of peace, civil war began again in 1983. Sudanese president Jafar Numeiry imposed the Islamic penal code, the Shari’a, on the whole country in a bid to get Islamist support for his faltering regime. Just as the British let down the South at independence, now it was the turn of the Americans to coddle the North and shun the South. In 1983, Numeiry was Washington’s man. The Americans saw him as a strategic ally against Qaddafi in Libya and the Soviet-backed Marxists in Ethiopia. The friendship with Numeiry started under Jimmy Carter, whom Numeiry made grateful with his support of the Camp David Peace Accords. Reagan continued the policy of friendship with northern Sudan, which he lucidly explained at a press conference: “We do know that Colonel Qaddafi has been and will continue to be a destabilizing force in the region, so nothing would surprise us, and we do know that Sudan is...Sudan is...Sudan is...one of those countries in that region of Africa.”⁸⁰

Numeiry got nearly \$1.5 billion in U.S. aid before his fellow officers kicked him out in 1985.⁸¹ U.S. friendship continued with the northern Islamists who succeeded Numeiry. The World Bank did its part, lending eight hundred million dollars to the northern regimes in the period 1983–1993. Only after the first Gulf War did the Islamist regime finally outlive its usefulness and become a pariah on

the list of terrorist states.

The southern rebels in Civil War II were led by John Garang. Garang further strengthened Washington's resolve to cozy up to the North when he accepted arms and refuge wherever he could get them, which included Libya and Soviet-backed Ethiopia. Moreover, Garang was far from a saint with his own human rights abuses and massacres. The people of the South were the pawns in a game played by others, caught between the ruthless rebels and Western-supported northern governments perpetrating atrocities against the South.

Sudan Today

Yet history keeps repeating itself. In the new millennium, with the war on terror and to some extent before, the northern Sudanese government and the U.S. government decided to make amends. President George W. Bush certified Sudan as making progress toward peace and humanitarian assistance, although he noted the government's poor cooperation with humanitarian relief. Bush's certification enabled Sudan to restart a relationship with the IMF and the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund praised five years of economic reforms by the government in its 2002 report, and commends the government because "the authorities have given a high priority to poverty reduction."⁸² The World Bank's chief economist for Africa praised Sudan as one of Africa's economic success stories.

Meanwhile, back in the real Sudan, there was still an Islamist dictatorship, the civil war went on despite perpetual peace negotiations, and the old horrors kept recurring. A 2002 Médecins sans Frontières report notes in the Western Upper Nile region "that repeated displacement and continued fighting, coupled with lack of access to health care and humanitarian aid, are slowly killing off the region's people."⁸³ A peace deal between North and South was finally announced in 2004, and signed in 2005. John Garang joined a national unity government, but died soon after in a helicopter crash.

However, just as Sudan settled one civil war, another burst of violence made headlines in 2004–2005, in the province of Darfur. The Janjaweed (Arab militias) attacked Africans, some of whom had rebelled against discrimination and maltreatment. African villagers fled into Chad. Counting those displaced within Darfur, 2.5 million people have lost their homes and 400,000 have died, either at the hands of the Janjaweed or indirectly from starvation and ill health in the horrendous refugee camps.⁸⁴ The Janjaweed terrorized civilians with arsons, rapes, and massacres.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, there wasn't energy left over from civil war for any economic development. Per capita income stayed stagnant for decades. In 1994 it was below what it was at independence in 1956. Ten percent of Sudanese children will not live to see their fifth birthday. Only one out of every seventy-one Sudanese has a phone. Twenty-eight percent of Sudanese children attend secondary school. While much of the world achieved universal primary enrollment, only a little over half of Sudanese kids go to elementary school.⁸⁶ Sudan has four million internal refugees.⁸⁷ The expansion of oil exports from Sudan has led to an upturn in per capita income since 1994, but oil is often a curse in the long run, as we have seen. Through all the horrors, aid kept flowing to Sudan, with a total of twenty-three billion dollars in today's dollars over 1960–2002.

Conclusions

Western intervention in the government of the Rest, whether during colonization or decolonization, has been on the far side of unhelpful. The West should learn from its colonial history when it indulges neo-imperialist fantasies. They didn't work before and they won't work now.

SNAPSHOT: GHANA FINDS ITS SWARTHMORE*

PATRICK AWUAH WAS BORN in Ghana in 1965. He came of age just as Ghana was going through its worst times. When he was seventeen, the long economic decline was reaching its nadir. The military government was destroying the economy with draconian price controls on consumer goods. Patrick's mother was a wholesaler offering essential consumer goods such as soap. The price controls put the consumer price of soap below what Patrick's mother paid her suppliers for the soap.

Patrick was lucky to find an escape route. Although his family could afford to put up only a hundred dollars for his college education, he got a scholarship to study at Swarthmore, and left Ghana. He pursued a double major of engineering and economics. A fledgling software company hired Patrick fresh out of Swarthmore. The name of the company was Microsoft.

Seven years later, Patrick was a Microsoft millionaire and looking for ways to help his native country. He decided first to get an MBA at Berkeley. Then he moved back to Ghana to start a private university in Accra, called Ashesi University. "Ashesi" means "beginning" in the local Fanti dialect. Patrick put up his own funds, raised money from old colleagues at Microsoft and gave free tuition to half of the entering class, smart kids from poor families. Twenty percent of the students are from the most extreme poverty. The other half, from richer families, paid four thousand dollars a year in tuition. Patrick built an impressive facility with good computers, Internet connections, and classrooms.

I have visited Ashesi three times, and I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and talent of the students. The curriculum marries liberal arts to computer science and business. Patrick Awuah's goal is to teach the students to solve problems, not just engage in rote memorization. He wanted to build the "Swarthmore of Ghana." "We want to train people as critical thinkers," he says. One of his most satisfying moments came when a student sent him an e-mail, "Mr. Awuah, I am thinking now."

Patrick's main surprise has been the lack of interest of the official aid agencies in his university. It is a mystery why a Ghanaian Swarthmore, started and run by a Ghanaian, that offers scholarships to young West Africans eager to improve their talents, would not attract support from Western donors. Despite donors' ideals of "local ownership" and "participation," I have come across several other incidents of the aid community rejecting worthy projects initiated and led by Africans, including a homegrown university in Burundi (meanwhile financing 88 percent of government spending for the gangsters who ran Burundi), and a master's scholarship program for Africans run by two leading African professors in American higher education.

Still, Patrick doesn't let lack of aid funds stand in his way. Morale is high among his staff. "Ashesi people are proud because it's going to have a place in Ghana's history," Patrick Awuah says.

SNAPSHOT: PROFESSOR KINGSFIELD GOES TO INDIA

JAYANTH KRISHNAN, A PROFESSOR at William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota tells the story of Indian legal education in his paper “Professor Kingsfield Goes to India.”⁸⁸ In the 1950s, the Ford Foundation began spending millions of dollars to promote legal education in India. India’s democratic constitution impressed Ford, and the Foundation decided to train Indians in Western legal doctrine to spread respect for democratic institutions and rule of law. Ford sent a number of distinguished American law professors to India to try to set up American-style law schools in the 1950s and 1960s.

Perhaps because the American professors were not professional development consultants, they told Ford that its idea was crazy. The American law school model did not translate well to India, and it was unlikely to have much effect if it did. Caste divisions, patronage politics at both the national and university level, and low respect for law professors and students plagued Indian legal education at the time. Law professors and students did little to earn respect, with frequent absenteeism and low academic standards, as noted by both American and Indian commentators. Practicing lawyers took and paid bribes and tied up cases in court for long periods to maximize fees. Harvard Law professor Arthur von Mehren suggested that the majority of the population failed to embrace the legal system because the laws on the books were of Western rather than indigenous origin. But Ford forged ahead, with a large grant to the Banaras Hindu University law faculty in 1964.

Another American law professor evaluated the program at Banaras in 1971. He concluded that it had failed; most of its graduates did not even go into law practice. The Ford Foundation, to its credit, drastically cut back its legal education efforts in India after the 1971 report.

One of those who observed the failure of the Ford experiment was N. R. Madhava Menon, a little-known Indian law professor at Delhi University who had met some of the American consultants in the 1960s. After a year’s sabbatical spent at Columbia, Professor Menon started a legal aid clinic at Delhi in 1971 as a way both to provide law students with real-world experience and to raise the prestige of law schools among the population. After several years of educational experiments of mixed success, Menon proposed a new type of law school in 1982. He suggested a grueling five-year program that would yield students both a B.A. and a law degree, emulating the demanding and highly regarded engineering and medical schools in India. He proposed mixing in experience at legal aid clinics. He tried to sell his idea to universities all over India, but they universally turned him down. The Ford Foundation considered his proposal but having been burnt once already, it declined to get involved again.

Fortunately for Menon, others within the Indian legal profession were disenchanted with the state of legal education in India, and began to advocate a new independent law school. Menon’s dream finally came to pass when, on September 1, 1986, the Bar Council of India and the state government of Karnataka appointed him to a new National Law School of India, in Bangalore Karnataka. The new school drew on some American ideas, such as the use of the case study method, but Menon made sure the school was mostly Indian. The first class to enroll was a big success, and Menon now sought funding to build new facilities to replace the school’s ramshackle buildings in Bangalore. He later got a large grant—from the Ford Foundation.

Today the National Law School is the leading law school in India, with huge numbers of applications for every slot in its entering class. As India has embraced globalization, National Law School graduates are in high demand in the private sector. The school has steadily expanded to keep up with demand. Menon reached the mandatory retirement age in 1998, but the school has continued to thrive since.

The leaders of other Indian states soon came calling to have Menon set up law schools in their states. Menon started a similar school in Calcutta, West Bengal. Besides West Bengal, four other Indian states imitated the Menon model with new law schools. Today Professor Menon is heading up a National Judicial Academy in Bhopal to train judges beginning their careers.