

Commentary...

The long echo of the Arab Revolt

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

The long echo of the First World War is nowhere heard and felt as acutely as it is in the Middle East. There, one hundred years ago June 10, Sharif Hussein, who governed the holy city of Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula, leaned out of his window and fired a rifle into the air. It was the symbolic first shot of the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire, and its repercussions are with us to this day.

The British instigated and supported Hussein's uprising and national aspirations for their own strategic purposes, and felt no qualms about selling out their Arab allies even as they used those allies' guerrilla campaign to protect the flank of General Edmund Allenby's advance through Palestine into Syria. The 1917 Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain and France carved out European imperial spheres of influence in the region with little regard to earlier promises

of independence and self-rule offered to convince the Arabs to rise against the Ottomans.

British advisor to the leaders of the Revolt, T.E. Lawrence — known to us as "Lawrence of Arabia" — was aware of and party to this betrayal, which tormented him.

The post-war carving up of the carcass of the Ottoman Empire into various artificial kingdoms — notably Iraq — had lasting consequences. As historian David Fromkin notes, the post-war settlement was "a peace to end all peace."

The century-spanning reverberations of the Arab Revolt and the cynical quashing of the Arabs' national aspirations have fueled the ideology and propaganda of Islamic radicalism. Not for nothing did the ISIS horde bulldoze the "Sykes-Picot Line" when they crossed from Syria into Iraq to proclaim their Caliphate.

And the self-radicalized spawn of those demonic fanatics brought

their propensity for slaughter of innocents to America's shores in the horrific mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub just last weekend.

To recognize that the West set the table for the tortured history of the modern Middle East is not to "blame us" for al-Qaeda and ISIS, etc. However, it is wise to understand that the meddling of the West in the Middle East with an eye to bigger strategic considerations — whether it be winning the First World War or maneuvering for influence and position in the Cold War — has created blowback that often manifests itself long after we have forgotten all about our own actions and concerns in the region. The U.S. intervened in Afghanistan through the 1980s to poke the Russian Bear. When the Bear limped off, we dropped the whole business, basically ignored the rise of the Taliban — and choked on the taste of bitter fruit on September 11, 2001.

To use Faulkner's phrase,

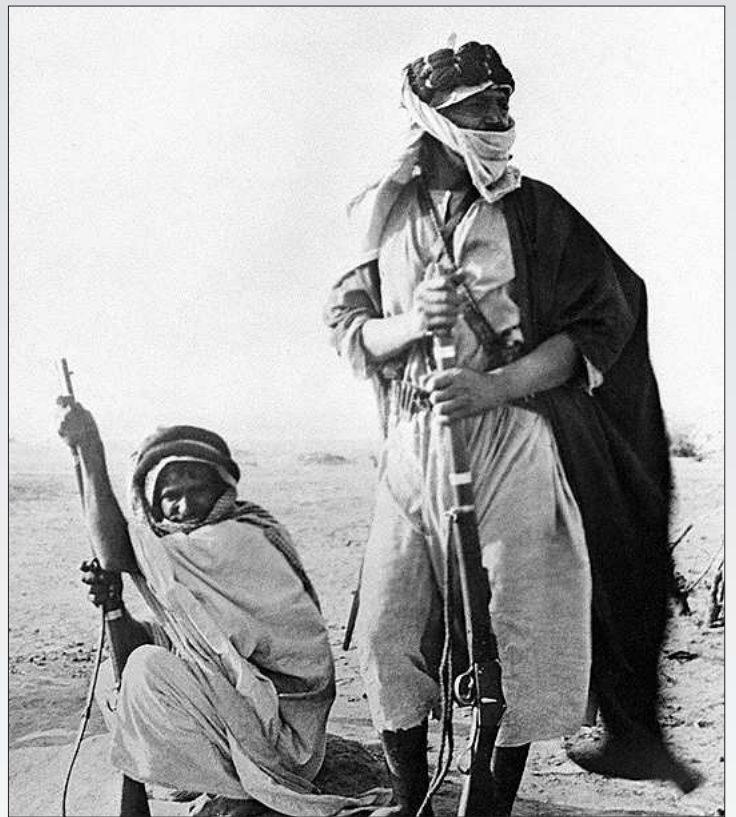


PHOTO PUBLIC DOMAIN

Arab rebels fought against the Ottoman Empire but were betrayed by their British allies.

throughout the Middle East and Central Asia, history is not dead; it is not even past. We forget at our peril.

We all live in the shadow of that long-ago event; Sharif Hussein's rifle shot

still echoes amid the rattle of assault rifles and the explosions of ordnance across the very lands where Lawrence and the Bedouin warrior Auda ibn Tayi rode, blowing up trains and railroad bridges.

Prevent a Litter, Fix Your Critter!



**FURRY FRIENDS
FOUNDATION**

501(c)(3)
www.furryfriendsfoundation.org
541-549-9941

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Spay/Neuter Sponsorships - Easy as 1-2-3

- 1 Stop by The Nugget office to fill out a short form
- 2 Call Bend Spay & Neuter for the appointment
- 3 Take your pet — Furry Friends pays. Done!

