Afkar أفكار

THE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL
OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

المجلة الجامعية لدراسات الشرق الأوسط

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About

Afkar: The Undergraduate Journal of Middle East Studies is an academic journal focusing on the study of politics, history, culture and society in the Middle East and North Africa.* The journal offers undergraduate students an interdisciplinary platform to publish original research articles and shorter essays, and welcomes submissions from wide range of fields within the humanities and social sciences, including history, political science, anthropology, sociology, literature, art history, religious studies and geography. *Afkar* was created to encourage undergraduates to undertake primary research on the Middle East and North Africa and to contribute to the growing body of literature in Middle East studies. It aims to connect undergraduate students from around the world, and to facilitate critical scholarly debate, discussion, and exchange between different universities and centers of study. *Afkar* is typically published biannually, with one summer and one winter issue.

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Cover Image

"Laila and Majnun at School," Page from a Timurid manuscript, dated 1432 C.E. (Herat, Afghanistan), Artist unknown. The image is in the public domain in the United States and available from Wikimedia Common.

*Afkar relies on a broad definition of "the Middle East and North Africa" that includes Iran, Turkey, the Caucasus, Sudan and Mauritania. It also welcomes manuscripts related to Muslim Central and South Asia, as well as those discussing communities, politics and histories that are closely interrelated with the aforementioned region(s)

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Letter from the Editors

Now a year since the publication of the inaugural issue of *Afkar* in 2019, we are proud to present the second volume. This issue contains four articles that are all based on undergraduate research, chosen for the coherency of their argument, the quality of writing, and the originality of their research. Covering topics such as American intelligence operations in Iran, the treatment of Palestinian partition in the UN Security Council, othering in First Crusade literature, and green landscaping in the Gulf, we hope to deliver a compelling reading experience, filled with new insights and engaging arguments on topics related to the Middle East and North Africa

This year has been an unusual one in many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted our interconnectedness while enforcing a new form of disconnectedness by sealing borders and limiting movement. For researchers, the pandemic has often meant significant obstacles. Field work has in most cases become impossible, and much research has had to be reoriented to virtual forms of data collection, when possible. Moreover, the pandemic has had a significant impact on students at all levels of education; in addition to affecting the mental and physical health of students or their loved ones, many have had limited access to the necessary facilities and services.

Afkar has not been shielded from the challenges posed by the pandemic. In the making of this volume, we have had to meet changing needs and capacities both amongst the editorial board and the undergraduate students we work with. While we had originally planned to publish two issues for this volume, we decided to move forward with one only, and extend deadlines for both contributing authors and editors. Although this decision meant that *Afkar* was only been able to offer support to a limited number of students this year, we hope that those involved in the making of this issue instead found the process more accommodating.

Pandemic aside, this issue has been highly enjoyable to oversee as Editors-in-Chief. We have had the opportunity to work with undergraduate students from a wide range of disciplines and geographic locations, and learn about new topics of research. During the course of the past year, we have added four new staff to our editorial board: Henry Petrillo from Columbia University, Salma Yassine from Lebanese American University, Ayah Kutmah from University of Michigan, and Farah Taha from Saint Joseph University of Beirut. We have also had the privilege of adding Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi to our advisory board. We wish them a very warm welcome to the *Afkar* team and applaud the skill and aptitude with which they have handled their work in such an unusual (first) year at the journal.

Looking forward to our next volume, we hope that *Afkar* will continue to build networks for undergraduate research and offer support and opportunities for academic publishing. We also hope for the journal to further increase its efforts at connecting with universities and students based in the Middle East and North Africa in particular. Since both of us will step down as Editors-in-Chief this upcoming year, the future of *Afkar* will be in the hands of our successors. We are excited to see how they take forward the journal by adding their own touch and priorities *Afkar*.

As a final note, we want to thank all those who have been involved in the making of this issue, from editors, to advisors, to contributing authors, but also all those who submitted their work for review. You are the reason why *Afkar* has been able to keep such a high standard of publication. Thank you!

Alexander C. Burlin
Jessica Molina

The Hawks Win the Day: Allen Dulles, Kermit Roosevelt, and the 1953 Iran Coup

NICOLAS SETH REEVES, *The American University in Cairo*

Abstract

The 1953 overthrow of the democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh is an event that continues to carry far-reaching lessons and implications for U.S. engagement in the Middle East today. Using primary and secondary source documents from the U.S. Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, this paper demonstrates that two anti-communist hawks in the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles and CIA Middle East operative Kermit Roosevelt, played a pivotal role in influencing the president to approve the 1953 coup. By showing that Dulles and Roosevelt began advocating for Mossadegh's ouster immediately after he came to power in 1951, this essay describes the degree to which these men and their rigid, Cold-War worldview influenced this fateful decision.

As demonstrations against the government of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh—the democratically-elected prime minister of Iran—entered their fifth hour on August 19, 1953, a voice on Iran's national radio station suddenly exclaimed, "Long live the Shah! The Shah's instruction that Mossadegh be dismissed has been carried out. The new Prime Minister, Fazlollah Zahedi, is now in office."[1] Hours later, Mossadegh's fall from power became official when a throng of protestors ransacked his home in Tehran.[2] Unbeknownst to most Americans at the time, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) helped engineer this seemingly-organic uprising of the Iranian people against Dr. Mossadegh, whose once-dominant domestic popularity rested on his desire to rid Iran of imperialist foreign influence that had crippled the country economically for decades.

Using primary and secondary source documents from the U.S. Department of State's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, I demonstrate that two anti-communist hawks in the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Allen Dulles and CIA Middle East operative Kermit Roosevelt, played a pivotal role in influencing the U.S. president to approve the Mossadegh coup. In doing so, this article builds on the work of scholars such as Stephen Kinzer (2008), who described how the British government, which wished to remove Mossadegh due to his nationalization of the majority-British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, used the threat of Iran falling under communist control to convince Eisenhower to carry out the coup.[3] By showing that Dulles and Roosevelt began advocating for Mossadegh's ouster immediately after he came to power in 1951, I argue that these two men and their rigid, Cold-War worldview influenced this fateful decision to the same degree. In fact, it was the conviction of Dulles in particular that finally made ousting Mossadegh a viable policy option in 1953; despite multiple British attempts throughout 1952 to convince then-President Harry Truman to topple the prime minister, Dulles's promotion to DCI with President Eisenhower's inauguration on January 20, 1953 gave coup supporters the power and influence necessary to convince the new president to approve the plan.

Background

The oil dispute that set the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), the U.S. government, and the United Kingdom on a collision course with Mohammad Mossadegh emerged as a product of popular discontent in Iran towards the vast inequality that dominated the country, both among Iranians and between Iranians and foreign entities that benefited from Iran's wealth of natural resources.[4] Years of mismanagement of state funds by the Shahs of the Qajar dynasty had left almost all of Iran's lucrative industries, including the oil sector, in foreign hands by 1925, when Ahmed Shah Qajar abdicated and Pahlavi rule began.[5] Moreover, Iran's economic situation improved only marginally after the Pahlavi takeover. Although Reza, the first Pahlavi Shah, renegotiated the country's oil concession in 1933 to ensure that AIOC would pay at least £975,000 annually to Iran's treasury, the firm's dubious accounting methods often prevented the Iranian government from receiving its full 16% share of the company's profits.[6]

Popular dissatisfaction with Iran's lack of sovereignty over its own oil resources became a central issue of debate in the country's Majlis in the 1940s. Created in the midst of the 1905–1911 Constitutional Revolution, the Majlis enjoyed significant authority in matters related to the oil issue because the Persian Constitution of 1906 gave the body the power to ratify international agreements negotiated by the

Shah.[7] As a result, Majlis deputies placed considerable pressure on Reza's successor, Mohammad Reza, to negotiate a new deal with AIOC whereby the company would share its profits with the Iranian government on a fifty-fifty basis, a division that conformed to agreements that a number of American oil companies operating in foreign countries had reached at the time.[8] However, the British government, which owned a majority stake in AIOC, refused to acquiesce to this demand; at the time, Downing Street conducted its foreign policy according to the ideology of empire, a worldview that stipulated that overseas assets like AIOC were non-negotiable colonial possessions. Instead of agreeing to divide AIOC's profits evenly, the British thus offered only to guarantee that annual royalty payments to the Iranians would always exceed £4,000,000.[9]

Although Mohammad Reza Shah agreed to the terms of the British, the oil deal was very unpopular in Iran, a reality that made the task of convincing Majlis Deputies to ratify it nearly impossible. This responsibility fell on the shoulders of General Haj Ali Razmara, a proponent of the accord who Mohammad Reza had appointed prime minister at the behest of the British.[10] Razmara's 1950–1951 attempts to pass the British renegotiation deal succeeded only in fueling the popularity of the National Front, the pro-nationalization political bloc that Mohammad Mossadegh led.[11] Razmara's efforts also caused many Iranians to revile him; on March 7, 1951, a fanatic named Khalil Thamassebi assassinated the prime minister. Thamassebi said afterwards that he did so to "deliver the deprived Muslim people of Iran from foreign serfdom."[12]

In the United States, Razmara's assassination heightened worries among policymakers in the Truman administration that the Soviet Union, which bordered Iran to the north, might take advantage of a possible power vacuum and bring the country into its sphere of influence. Following the Soviets' first nuclear test in August 1949 and the debacle in Korea in 1950, the Cold War ideology of containment had officially taken hold of the Washington foreign policy establishment. Kermit Roosevelt and Allen Dulles, two ivy-league graduates who joined the CIA's forerunner, the Office of Strategic Services, during World War II, became the U.S. government's most prominent Cold War hawks on the Iran issue as they gained positions of influence in the CIA while the oil dispute escalated in 1951, 1952, and 1953. The following sections detail how fear of a communist takeover by the Soviet-backed Tudeh Party influenced these two men to lobby Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and prominent members of the CIA and Department of State to intervene in Iran from the moment it became clear that Mossadegh's rise to power had become a reality.

Razmara's Assassination: **To Intervene or Not?**

Eight days after Razmara's death, Roosevelt sent a memorandum to Dulles expressing his belief that the prime minister's assassination endangered Iran's stability, to the point of requiring U.S. intervention. Commenting on a draft of a CIA Special Estimate that was released on March 16, 1951, Roosevelt wrote that the document did not accurately convey the degree of instability in Iran, disagreeing with the Estimate's assertion that "there is no immediate danger of the government's losing control."[13] Roosevelt elaborated, "Frankly, we fear that this estimate may encourage a wait-and-see policy rather than the kind of vigorous action which we feel is required."[14]

Roosevelt's apprehension centered around the possibility that the National Front would fill the power vacuum left by Razmara's assassination. Reacting to the Iranian Majlis's March 15 decision to

nationalize AIOC, Roosevelt pointed out that "the extreme nationalists obviously have a considerable following as the recent vote on the oil issue has indicated."[15] Although Roosevelt recognized the threat a British backlash against Iran over the nationalization vote would pose to U.S. national security, he feared infiltration of the National Front by the communist Tudeh Party more. Tudeh, he asserted, was "the best organized and only secure group in Iran," adding that "even if it is admitted that the Tudeh cannot obtain control of the government, the statement that they can 'seriously…disrupt the government's control' is open to serious question." Roosevelt thus interpreted the National Front's danger through the binary, geopolitical lens of the Cold War. Tellingly, he concluded the memorandum by observing that "under these circumstances we can see no reason why the USSR would consider armed intervention when the situation is playing so directly into their hands."[16]

Dulles's writings in the weeks following Razmara's assassination mirrored Roosevelt's concerns. Like Roosevelt, Dulles believed that Razmara's death facilitated heightened communist influence over Iran. On March 28, Dulles confessed to DCI Walter Smith, the head of the CIA at the time, that "I feel that Iran may be lost to the West in the coming 12 months and believe that it is urgent to plan and carry out the steps which might change the trend and protect this vital position in the Middle East."[17] To do so, Dulles argued that CIA action in Iran, which at that time included only clandestine propaganda efforts to influence the press, "should be combined with an over-all program in the economic, financial, and military fields."[18] The idea that Iran could "be lost to the West," barring immediate U.S. action, displayed the degree to which rising tensions between the Western and Eastern Blocs influenced the urgency with which Dulles viewed the situation.

Dulles's fear of a communist takeover fueled his immediate opposition to Mossadegh, who replaced Razmara's successor, Hossein Ala, on April 28, 1951, after the Majlis nominated him by an overwhelming vote of 79–12. At a meeting with Smith on May 9, 1951, "Mr. Dulles stated that in his opinion only one thing could save the situation in Iran, namely to have the Shah throw out Mossadegh, close the Majlis, and temporarily rule by decree."[19] Given that Mossadegh's electoral victory occurred only 11 days before, Dulles's hawkish attitude towards the new prime minister's government revealed that he never intended to cooperate with him.

At the time, however, other key actors at the center of U.S. foreign policymaking did not echo Dulles's and Roosevelt's calls for immediate intervention to halt the National Front's rise. For one, field operatives at the CIA Station in Iran had reported just three days earlier that "we seriously doubt [the] feasibility and wisdom [of] our attempt [to] replace this [Mossadegh's] government."[20] Dulles's and Roosevelt's aggressive stance also contradicted the National Security Council's (NSC's) preference to pursue a "wait and see" policy with Mossadegh. At its May 16 meeting, the NSC agreed that "the United States Government should eschew the use of force against the present Iranian Government."[21] This preference for diplomacy came in spite of British pressure on Secretary of State Dean Acheson to send in troops if Downing Street decided to overthrow Mossadegh.[22]

In addition to finding opposition in the NSC and among CIA field operatives, CIA officers in Washington also resisted Roosevelt's and Dulles's aggressive stance. The oil dispute between the British and Mossadegh's government escalated over the summer of 1951. On May 1, the Shah signed into law the Majlis's March 15 resolution to revoke AIOC's concession and form a new

company, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), in its place.[23] When Mossadegh named Iranian engineer Mehdi Bazargan as managing director of NIOC on June 20, effectively replacing AIOC's general manager, Eric Drake, the British responded by informing the U.S. government that they planned to occupy Iran's oil fields. In a June 20 Memorandum to Smith, Assistant Director of the CIA Office of National Estimates William Langer argued that executing this plan would likely "lead to the virtual collapse of the central government… In such a situation the Tudeh Party might be able to seize control of the central government."[24] In his opposition to the British proposal, Langer demonstrated his belief that an armed intervention would only fuel Tudeh's momentum, echoing the more cautious approach of the CIA as a whole.

Mossadegh's Popularity Increases

Two months after Dulles called for Mossadegh's overthrow, the CIA decided to intervene in Iran, though it adopted a much subtler approach. The Agency established alliances with the Qashqai tribe of Southwestern Iran to facilitate the establishment of "drop zones, landing strips, sabotage targets, safe houses, and supply routes to and from the Persian Gulf."[25] The second initiative entailed efforts to mold the Qashqai into "an effective force in Iranian politics with which to oppose the Tudeh/Communists."[26] At least temporarily, the gradual intervention championed by the NSC, Langer, and the CIA Station in Iran took precedence over Roosevelt's and Dulles's calls for Mossadegh's forced removal.

Despite the CIA's tribal mobilization efforts, Tudeh influence in Iran continued to rise. A telegram sent to Washington from the CIA's Iran Station reported that over ten thousand Iranians had attended a communist demonstration in Tehran in July 1951.[27] Moreover, the country slid into economic turmoil as oil production ground to a halt following the British government's decision to recall all but 300 British nationals working at AIOC's Abadan refinery in response to Mossadegh's summer efforts to replace the company's leadership.[28] In spite of the financial hardship the British withdrawal wrought on Iranians, Mossadegh's domestic popularity only increased. In particular, moderates—who believed that renegotiating AIOC's concession represented a more viable policy option than revoking it altogether—came to support Mossadegh's desire to wrestle AIOC out of British hands completely due to the steadfast refusal of Prime Minister Clement Atlee and Foreign Minister Herbert Morrison to even entertain proposals to divide the company's profits more evenly.[29]

By October, the oil dispute had reached its climax. An October 12 telegram from the Iran Station to Washington stated that "Majlis opposition to Mosadeq collapsed on 30 September 1951," confirming the prime minister's surging popularity.[30] Furthermore, the telegram noted that, due to the continued intractability of the oil dispute, "the economic situation stands to deteriorate further, which paves the way for further increase[s] in the power of the Tudeh Party."[31] Despite this news, the U.S. government continued its policy of hoping for stability through Mossadegh's government. On November 28, Ambassador Loy Henderson wrote that he told George Middleton, the British Chargé d'Affaires, that he was "by no (rpt no) means sure it would be in our joint interest for [the] US at this juncture [to] join [the] UK in pressing [the] Shah to take steps to effect [a] change of govt."[32] Even in the midst of Iran's economic deterioration, the continued rise of Tudeh, and sustained British pressure to

support Mossadegh's deposition, the U.S. maintained its policy of eschewing direct intervention in the country.

In an act that represented the U.S. Administration's most aggressive overt action towards Iran since Mossadegh came to power, President Truman cut military and economic aid to the country in 1952.[33] Truman justified this move by claiming that Mossadegh had refused to comply with the 1951 Mutual Security Act, a law that prohibited providing military, economic, or technical assistance to any nation unless the President decided that such aid would strengthen U.S. national security and the recipient country accepted certain security obligations. Truman's decision to drastically reduce U.S. aid to Iran was risky; a February 4, 1952 National Intelligence Estimate revealed that the popularity Mossadegh enjoyed in late 1951 had eroded as the financial costs of the British abandonment of Abadan truly set in, providing Tudeh with ample opportunities to bolster its influence in the Iranian political sphere.[34]

Kermit Roosevelt revealed the political implications of Iran's economic deterioration in a memorandum written on April 5, a few days after the National Front's victory in the 1952 majlis elections. Roosevelt observed that "in spite of its poor showing in the recent elections, which were rigged throughout the country, the Tudeh Party has been gaining strength."[35] Furthermore, "xenophobia in Iran is now being directed against the US since Washington's statement that no significant US economic aid would be granted [to] Iran prior to an oil settlement."[36] Roosevelt also warned that if the negative fallout of Truman's decision to back Britain by cutting aid to Iran continued, the U.S. government would have to prepare for previously-unthinkable consequences. Chief among these, for Roosevelt, was that the "CIA [may have] to undertake large-scale stay-behind

planning to meet contingencies such as a Tudeh coup or political fragmentation of Iran."[37] Roosevelt's mention of a "Tudeh coup" indicated the seriousness with which he took the rising communist threat and demonstrated his belief that the policy of mobilizing the Qashqai and ending aid to Iran had not paid dividends.

In contrast to Roosevelt, others at the CIA continued advocating for patience. Assistant Director of the Office of National Estimates Sherman Kent, for instance, viewed Iran's worsening economic and political situation positively. In a memorandum to Smith on June 24, he stated that "recent developments in Iran suggest that a financial crisis is imminent and may lead to the fall of Mosadeq… Opposition elements in the new Majlis blocked government efforts to dominate that body and are in a position to prevent the passage of emergency fiscal legislation that would enable the government to meet its obligation for a few more months."[38] For Kent, a weakened Mossadegh did not represent a cause for concern. Instead, fiscal developments in Iran represented evidence that Truman's decision to cut aid to Iran was paying dividends. This policy, combined with Iran's inability to export oil due to the British embargo, appeared to have hindered Mossadegh's nationalization agenda. This optimism was confirmed on July 14, 1952, when Mossadegh resigned after the Shah refused to approve his proposed cabinet for the 17th Majlis.[39] For people like Kent, the fact that Mossadegh's replacement, Ahmad Qavam, was pro-West and anti-nationalization further confirmed that waiting out Mossadegh had paid dividends.

Just as Truman, Kent, Henderson, Langer, and Smith felt vindicated by their patience, the unexpected happened. On July 21, Henderson reported that thousands of pro-nationalist rioters in Tehran "were milling thru [*sic*] the city streets, shouting

'death to Brit [*sic*] and Amer [*sic*] imperialists, down with the Shah.'"[40] The next day, Qavam resigned and Mossadegh became prime minister again, his popularity restored.[41] Following Mossadegh's resurgence, Dulles criticized the U.S. policy that he believed had enabled his return to power. In a July 29 meeting with Smith, he "cited a memorandum prepared by Mr. Kermit Roosevelt on our efforts to operate in the Qashqai region of Southern Iran, and noted that we were encountering difficulties in getting under way in this area."[42] Smith added that "the Communist threat was considerably enhanced by Mosadeq's present attitude and by the likelihood of a dramatic anti-western move."[43] Despite recognizing the "Communist threat," however, Smith still opposed overthrowing Mossadegh. The next day, he argued that "given the lack of a strong military figure around whom a coup might be engineered, the only real chance for forestalling Communist moves lay in a change in *dynasty* [emphasis added]."[44] Smith believed that removing the Shah himself was more likely to prevent communism's spread in Iran than deposing Mossadegh, revealing the degree to which he disagreed with Dulles's and Roosevelt's repeated calls to overthrow the prime minister.

Notwithstanding the idea of removing the Shah, the CIA once again opted for a more cautious approach. On August 20, 1952, Deputy Director for Plans Frank Wisner informed Smith that "pursuant to your instructions of two weeks ago, the attached plan for arming Iranian tribal groups has been developed by the Near East Division."[45] Although this newest iteration of the tribal mobilization plan represented a significant escalation from the CIA's propaganda and political influence efforts of 1951, Wisner clarified that the policy was "an emergency plan which is for implementation only in case of the collapse or Communist take-over of the Iranian central government."[46] Thus, even this policy was precautionary in nature and lacked the aggressive intent that Dulles and Roosevelt had championed since March 1951.

An American Coup

Despite Smith's reservations over an offensive policy, which echoed those of Truman and the NSC, he authorized Roosevelt's Near East and Africa Division to begin developing a plan to change the Iranian government by force in September 1952. According to John Leavitt, the Chief of the Iran Branch of the CIA's Directorate of Plans, the plan, called the Thornburg Program, involved a "direct approach to the Shah for the purpose of inducing him to lead and carry out what in effect would be a military coup."[47]

However, the Thornburg Program—whose strategy of convincing the Shah to dismiss Mossadegh became a central feature of the 1953 Coup—never progressed beyond the planning stage during Truman's presidency. As the Truman Administration entered the lame duck period after Eisenhower won the 1952 presidential election, the British approached the Americans with another coup proposal.[48] Deputy Under Secretary of State H. Freeman Matthews rejected it, telling the British that the U.S. "would not want to dismiss the idea of a coup, but we did feel at least one more effort should be made to arrive at an oil settlement with Mosadeq."[49] As a result, overthrowing Mossadegh only emerged as a palatable policy option after Eisenhower took office and Dulles became DCI. On March 1, 1953, newly-appointed DCI Dulles sent a memorandum to President Eisenhower about "The Iranian Situation." He asserted:

> Ever since the assassination of General Razmara in March 1951, and the

subsequent impasse and diplomatic break with Britain over the oil negotiations, the Iranian situation has been slowly disintegrating. The result has been a steady decrease in the power and influence of the Western democracies and the building up of a situation where a Communist takeover is becoming more and more of a possibility.[50]

In linking the possibility of "a Communist takeover" to "the assassination of General Razmara," Dulles conveyed to Eisenhower his belief that Razmara's death had left Iran devoid of a leader who could prevent the country from falling out of the West's sphere of influence.

For Dulles, the only piece missing from a successful overthrow of Mossadegh was a suitable successor. On March 4, Dulles argued that if Mossadegh "were to be assassinated or otherwise to disappear from power, a political vacuum would occur in Iran and the Communists might easily take over."[51] By the end of March, however, Dulles and Roosevelt had found the ideal candidates to prevent this "political vacuum" from occurring. On that day, a CIA Information Report stated that

anti-Mosadeq Majlis deputies and retired Army officers are planning a coup d'état … those prominent in planning the coup are: Majlis Deputy Seyyed Abul Hasan Haerizadeh, General Nadr Batmangelitch, and retired Generals Abbas Garzan, Bahadori, and Fazollah Zahedi.[52]

In an April 4 memorandum, Roosevelt requested funds for "Special Operation TP AJAX," revealing that the group of "anti-Mosadeq Majlis deputies and retired Army officers" were actually part of the CIA coup plan that would put Zahedi in power that August. Roosevelt wrote that the funds would be used "for the specific purpose agreed to," and that the operation required "special security measures, and will be handled on 'Eyes Alone' basis."[53]

Three months into his tenure as DCI, Dulles, in coordination with Roosevelt, thus set the wheels of Operation TP AJAX in motion. Roosevelt travelled to Iran to begin on-site preparations for the coup in July. By July 16, he had identified General Zahedi as the best candidate to succeed Mossadegh.[54] Twenty-five days later, Roosevelt convinced Mohammad Reza Shah to sign a royal decree dismissing Mossadegh from his post, lending the coup a veneer of legitimacy. By August 19, weeks of relentless CIA propaganda efforts to paint Mossadegh as a communist agent—combined with daily street protests instigated by Iranian mobsters on the Agency's payroll that attracted citizens for whom the economic costs of the oil dispute had become unbearable—had plunged Tehran into a state of turmoil.[55] On the morning of August 19, thousands of protesters, many of whom had received 500 Iranian rials from Roosevelt and his co-conspirators to join the crowd for the day, gathered in the streets of Tehran shouting "death to Mosadeq! Long live the Shah!"[56]

Just before two o'clock, Iranian army officers dispatched by Roosevelt stormed the local radio station and announced that Zahedi would replace Mossadegh, according to the instructions laid out in the Shah's decree. Following the broadcast, Roosevelt drove to retrieve General Zahedi from his safehouse. Perched on a tank, Zahedi followed the mob to Mossadegh's home. There, a bloody street battle commenced between the rioters and the Mossadegh's supporters, who tried, in vain, to defend the entrance of the prime minister's home. Although Mossadegh managed to escape before his supporters' resistance broke, he turned himself in to Zahedi a few days later. On August 20, CIA headquarters sent a telegram to Tehran "extending commendation and congratulations to all Tehran Station personnel. Kermit Roosevelt both in HQS and on scene of action has

distinguished himself and served US Govt and CIA well."[57]

Conclusion

This article examined the influential role that the unrelenting advocacy of DCI Allen Dulles and CIA Middle East Operative Kermit Roosevelt played in convincing President Dwight Eisenhower to approve Operation TP AJAX, the covert plot to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. As DCI, Dulles finally enjoyed the influence to act on his and Roosevelt's belief, held since Prime Minister Haj Ali Razmara's 1951 assassination, that only direct action would bring about a stable outcome in Iran. The result, the 1953 Iran coup, reflected a turning point in American-Iranian relations and contributed to their permanent destabilization following the overthrow of Mohammad Reza Shah in 1979. In overthrowing Mossadegh and restoring the power of the Pahlavi monarchy, the CIA ousted a popular leader who believed passionately in a democratic future for his country, establishing a legacy of American support for authoritarian regimes in the Middle East that continues to this day.

More fundamentally, the rigid, Cold-War mindset that drove Roosevelt and Dulles to push for Mossadegh's ouster from the day he took office precluded them from entertaining the possibility that the communist threat to Iran was overblown, and

that working with the prime minister might have strengthened U.S. national security interests. Indeed, a diplomat and two CIA agents who monitored Tudeh activity in the 1950s stated decades after the coup "that the Tudeh was really not very powerful, and that higher-level U.S. officials routinely exaggerated its strength and Mosadeq's reliance on it."[58] In this light, one of the lessons of the 1953 Iran Coup centers around the dangerous consequences associated with allowing a single frame of reference to dominate decision-making in international relations.

Despite the cautionary tale of the 1979 Revolution in Iran, during which demonstrators calling for Mohammad Reza Shah's ouster bore portraits of Mossadegh as they marched through the streets of Tehran, it appears that the United States has not taken this lesson to heart with respect to its Middle East foreign policy. From Cairo to Riyadh, hegemonic justifications of security cooperation, countering terrorism, and maintaining political stability have replaced Roosevelt's and Dulles's single-dimensional, anti-communist motivation for bolstering despotic regimes across the region. Nevertheless, the tragic consequences of the 1953 Iran Coup live on today as policymakers in Washington continue to dictate that U.S. interests lie not in strengthening the will of the people, but rather in maintaining an authoritarian status quo.

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[1] Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 191.

[2] Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008), 184–185.

[3] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 184-185.

[4] Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 50–53, 55, 69–71.

[5] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 50–53, 55, 69–71.

[6] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 50, 68.

[7] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 88.

[8] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 69.

[9] Ibid., 68.

[10] Ibid., 72.

[11] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 265–266.

[12] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 78.

[13] "Special Estimate," March 16, 1951, in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952–1954, Retrospective Volume, Iran, 1951–1954 (Washington:

United States Government Publishing Office, 2017) (hereafter *FRUS*), 42.

[14] "Memorandum from the Chief of the Near East and Africa Division, Directorate of Plans (Roosevelt) to the Deputy Director for Plans, Central Intelligence Agency (Dulles)," March 15, 1951, in *FRUS,* 36.

[15] Ibid., 37.

[16] Ibid., 37.

[17] "Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans, Central Intelligence Agency (Dulles) to Director of Central Intelligence Smith," March 28, 1951, in *FRUS,* 47.

[18] Ibid., 46.

[19] "Minutes of Director of Central Intelligence Smith's Meeting," May 9, 1951, in *FRUS,* 87.

[20] "Telegram From the Station in Iran to the Central Intelligence Agency," May 6, 1951, in *FRUS,* 85.

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[27] "Telegram From the Station in Iran to the Central Intelligence Agency," October 12, 1951, in *FRUS,* 145, 147.

[28] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 97, 108, 116.

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[35] "Memorandum From the Chief of the Near East and Africa Division, Directorate of Plans (Roosevelt) to the Chief of the Operations Division, Directorate of Plans, Central Intelligence Agency ([*name not declassified*])," April 5, 1952, in *FRUS,* 227.

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[39] "Editorial Note," in *FRUS,* 261.

[40] "Telegram From the Embassy in Iran to the Department of State," July 21, 1952, in *FRUS,* 282.

[41] "Editorial Note," in *FRUS,* 298.

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[45] "Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Plans (Wisner) to Director of Central Intelligence Smith," August 20, 1952, in *FRUS,* 326.

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[47] "Memorandum from the Chief of the Iran Branch, Near East and Africa Division (Leavitt) to the Chief of the Near East and Africa Division, Directorate of Plans, Central Intelligence Agency (Roosevelt)," September 22, 1952, in *FRUS,* 351.

[48] "Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Byroade) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State (Matthews)," November 26, 1952, in *FRUS,* 426.

[49] "Memorandum of Conversation," December 3, 1952, in *FRUS,* 431.

[50] "Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Dulles to President Eisenhower," March 1, 1953, in *FRUS*, 472.

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[54] "Memorandum from the Chief of the Near East and Africa Division, Directorate of Plans, Central Intelligence Agency (Roosevelt) to Mitchell," July 16, 1953, in *FRUS,* 632.

[55] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 6, 172–173.

[56] Ibid., 178–180, 187.

[57] "Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to the Station in Iran," August 20, 1953, in *FRUS,* 709.

[58] Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 206.

UNSC (In-)Action in a Time of Crisis: An Analysis of American and British Interests in the Partition of Palestine (1947-1948)

HEATHER CURRIE, *University of Victoria*

Abstract

Utilizing extensive primary and secondary resources, this manuscript examines the failure of the United Nations (UN) to implement the Partition Plan in Palestine. When the British announced in September 1947 that they would withdraw from Mandate Palestine by May 1948, the issue of who would control the territory was turned over to the UN. The result was *A/RES/181(II) on the Future government of Palestine* ("Resolution 181"). This manuscript argues that decisions regarding the implementation of Resolution 181 were often guided by the self-interests of UN Member States, rather than their desire to support the mandate of the UN as a whole. In particular, it looks at how the United States and Britain tried to prevent the establishment of an international force to implement Res. 181 due to two main geopolitical factors: firstly, a strong desire to contain Soviet Union Communist expansion and secondly, a desire to maintain relations with the Arab state leaders to support their military strategies in the Middle East and protect military interests. The United States in particular sought to push the discourse away from an international force by proposing an alternative Trusteeship Plan which would serve to divert attention away from the original Partition Plan.

keywords: Palestine; Great Britain; United States; Partition of Palestine; Resolution 181, United Nations Security Council

When Britain announced in September 1947 that it would withdraw from Mandate Palestine by May 1948, the issue of who would control Palestine was turned over to the United Nations (UN), the newly founded international institution created to prevent conflict and ensure world peace.[59] The result was *A/RES/181(II) on the Future government of Palestine* ("Resolution 181"), a resolution adopted on November 29, 1947 to form the basis of the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. As part of the Partition Plan, unequal portions of land were to be divided between two new Arab and Jewish states,[60] whereas Jerusalem was to remain under the protection of a UN Trusteeship Council.[61] Partition was not favored by Jewish nor Arab communities. It escalated existing intercommunal tensions and threatened to turn the situation on the ground into an all-out war between neighboring Arab states (Jordan, Syria and Egypt) and the Jewish people of Palestine.[62] Although the UN recommended that the international community investigate the feasibility of sending a joint military force to implement the Partition Plan, the notion of an international force was never fully supported by Member States of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Drawing on an extensive list of primary sources, including government archives, UN documentation, and media articles, this manuscript argues that decisions regarding the implementation of Resolution 181 were often guided by the self-interests of UNSC Member States, rather than their desire to support the mandate of the UN. It builds on previous scholarship on the partition of Palestine—and in particular that of William Lewis, Benny Morris, and Avi Shlaim.[63] It shows how the United States and Britain tried to prevent the establishment of an international force to implement Resolution 181 due to two main geopolitical factors: first, to contain Soviet Union communist expansion, and second, to protect their own relationships with Arab states, thereby ensuring access to military bases and oil supplies. Britain responded to the implementation of the Partition Plan by maintaining neutrality—this meant abstaining from the partition vote and simply refusing to participate in an international force. The United States, however, took a more active role in hindering the coalescing of an international force, pushing UNSC discussions away from the topic by proposing an alternative last-minute Trusteeship Plan. As violence on the ground escalated in the months leading up to partition, the UNSC at large also became increasingly preoccupied with crafting a resolution for a truce rather than concentrating efforts on organizing a UN security force.

Background: From Mandate to Partition

At the end of WWI, the Allied States granted Britain mandatory powers in Palestine. The preamble of the Mandate for Palestine, adopted by the League of Nations in the summer of 1922, stipulated that "nothing be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."[64] Further, it also stated that "recognition be given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country."[65] This notion of 'homeland' was exacerbated by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, drafted by then Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, who wrote that the British government favored the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.[66] Under the Mandate, the British had full powers of legislation and administration with a responsibility to support the Jewish vision to create a national home and protect non-Jewish communities.

The Mandate Period was mired with intercommunal conflict, marked by riots, general strikes, and civil war. To maintain their authority, Britain implemented divisive policies which exacerbated rivalries in a "divide-and-conquer" strategy.[67] Intercommunal tensions were fueled by an increasing rate of Jewish immigration, initially of primarily Azhkenazi communities from Europe.[68] By the end of 1946, there was a two-to-one ratio of Arabs to Jewish peoples in Palestine, at an estimated 1,269,000 Arabs in Palestine and 608,000 Jews.[69] Following World War II, the rate of immigration grew with an international campaign to provide a homeland for the survivors of the Holocaust. While the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was championed by Zionist groups, Arab leaders and Arab Palestinian residents, fearful of being driven out of their land, were adamant that further immigration to Palestine should be prohibited.

After WWII, Britain's coffers were drained, and it could no longer afford the financial cost to maintain security in the event of an outbreak of war in Palestine.[70] Moreover, the security situation was steadily worsening for British Military personnel, who had been subject to a series of Zionist militia attacks, such as in July 1946 when the King David Hotel was bombed.[71] The hotel housed the British Mandate Secretariat and military headquarters. In September 1947, the British announced that they would withdraw from Mandate Palestine by May 1948. The question of who had the right to claim the land was contested among Arab leaders and the Jewish Palestinian community. At this point, Jews in Palestine were still a minority.[72] Thus, Britain turned the matter of governance over to the UN, who formed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to identify the best schema for dividing the land among Palestinian Arabs and steadily-growing Jewish population.[73]

In August 1947, the UNSCOP voted in favor of submitting a report, *United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine* to the UN, recommending the creation of an independent Jewish State and an independent Arab State, with the City of Jerusalem placed under the international protection of a UN Trusteeship Council.[74] The boundaries were established with the intent to separate political divisions and create economic unity. The plan was supported by the Jewish Agency (the political representative for the Palestinian Jewish community) but opposed by the Arab leaders both due to the nature of statehood and division of land.[75] The debate in the UN General Assembly lasted from September to November 1947. As the assembly came closer to voting on the Plan, it was still uncertain whether the resolution would be approved; many believe that non-European countries would side with the Arabs, as would the Soviet Union and its allies.[76] President Truman, influenced by Jewish lobbying groups in the United States, was adamant in ensuring that the Partition Plan would pass by the General Assembly. As such, he leveraged the US economic support to several UN Member States, and made it clear that this support would only be continued if these states voted "yes" on the resolution.[77] The Partition Plan from the UNSCOP resolution was eventually brought forth for a vote, and in November 29, 1947, 33 Member States, including the Soviet Union, voted in favor of Resolution 181, officially A/RES/181(II), thereby approving the Partition Plan.[78]

As soon as the UN adopted Resolution 181, Arab states and Jewish militia groups opposing the Partition Plan escalated their strategies to occupy Palestinian territory. Zionist militia groups, including the Haganah, the Stern Gang, and the Leigh, were starting to organize for war, a war they had planned years earlier.[79] David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency

ordered the Haganah to design a military plan to overtake Mandate Palestine when Britain withdrew.[80] Palestinian Arab leaders were also planning for war supported by neighboring states; military recruitment centers were established from Egypt to Iraq.[81] Large swaths of the Arab population believed that Palestinian land rightfully belonged to Arabs and were suspicious that the British would expel Palestinian Arabs from their land. Their mistrust was due to a broken agreement between British Official McMahon and Sharif Husayn of Mecca in October 1915, when Britain had failed to recognize Arab areas of independence, the latter Ottoman Lands, after WWI.[82] Nevertheless, there was division among the Arab states over who should govern Palestine. On one side was the Hashemite block, consisting of Jordan and Iraq, while on the other side was Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In addition, other Arab leaders had their own schemes: the Syrian President Quwatli had a desire to become the region's hegemon, whereas Jordan's King Abdullah had his own grand designs for the territory.[83] For many, however, the Arab right to self-determination in Palestine was viewed as a larger Pan-Arab battle, in which the territory belonged to Arab communities transcending national and religious boundaries.[84]

In anticipation of a greater conflict following Britain's withdrawal, the UN and Member States were searching for ways to maintain security in the territory under Partition. One of the main solutions proposed was that of an international force. Initially, the idea had been passed by several Member States prior to the Resolution 181 vote on November 29, 1947. In October 1947, United States President Harry S. Truman had proposed the idea of forming an international volunteer police force to oversee Partition, but it was shut down by Congress.[85] Similarly, in early November 1947, Canada's Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson proposed a security plan to the UN General Assembly that would involve a military drawn from smaller powers. [86] In February 1948, however, the idea was launched on a UN level, when the Palestine Commission—a new body created under Resolution 181 to ensure the implementation of the Partition Plan and act as the Provisional Government of Palestine—declared that escalating Arab and Jewish tensions meant that it was critical for an international force to be established to oversee the Partition.[87] In response to this statement, the *New York Times* reported that UN members from headquarters viewed the warning as an ultimatum—either expedite an international force or abandon the Partition Plan.[88]

Anglo-American Geopolitical Interests

Although the Palestine Commission was created by the General Assembly to oversee partition, the decision whether to heed the commission's recommendation to implement a force fell under the mandate of the UNSC. Under the UN Charter, the UNSC was required to assess whether they had the jurisdiction to implement such a force, and if failing to do so would result in a threat to world peace.[89] Despite the growing momentum among the global community towards an international security force, UNSC Member States were reluctant to take measures ensuring that an international force would be on the ground by the partition date. This was in part due to an unsettled debate on whether or not they had the authority to do so, given that both Jewish and Arab Palestinians had a claim to self-determination over the land, and in part because the question of an international force in Palestine was also a logistical issue. When the idea was introduced by the Palestine Commission in February 1948, an over-arching UN security force had yet to be created. The UN Military

Staff Committee was still deliberating on the scope and allocation of military resources that each Member State was willing to contribute.[90] In the absence of an overarching UN security force, UNSC members were permitted to use their own militaries for the Palestine force under Article 106 of the UN Charter.[91] However, UNSC Members were hesitant to commit UNSC militaries to an international force. Although this was partly due to domestic interests in limiting spending on additional military personnel, it was first and foremost due to geopolitical concerns.

Fears of Soviet Expansionism
In the eyes of the United States and Britain, UNSC participation in an international force in Palestine posed a critical liability to both states because of burgeoning Cold War tensions. In the immediate post-war period, Western governments viewed the Soviet Union as belligerent in its expansionist campaign to spread communism across the world, and therefore sought to contain any Soviet attempts at gaining influence in the Middle East. A Central Intelligence Agency report from February 1948 considered the various models a police force in Palestine could assume, including a "Great Powers Police Force" comprised of the five great powers (China, US, Soviet Union, France and Britain) or a "Medium Powers Police Force" made up of medium powers.[92] In both of these configurations, state officials were concerned that a force would enable the Soviet Union to access Palestinian territory.[93]

Should the Soviet Union gain free access to the Palestinian territory by way of a UN Security Force in Palestine, US officials believed that they would gain the foothold they needed to establish communist rule in the region, forcing western states to respond.[94] For instance, the United States Director of Office of European Affairs wrote on April 12, 1948 that

wherever soviet military occupation has occurred, it has consistently been accompanied by political reorganization along Communist lines of the Soviet occupied Zone. It is therefore axiomatic that if a Soviet contingent were permitted to participate in a UN Security force in Palestine, the same pattern of Communist control might be expected to emerge within the area occupied by Soviet troops.[95]

Similarly, British officials believed that permitting the Soviet Union military to enter the Middle Eastern region could have major consequences. According to William Louis, Foreign Secretary Bevin was sharply aware of Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin's desire to exploit Arab relations in order to capitalize on his expansionist campaign.[96] Bevin wrote of Stalin to his Minister of State: "You will learn that he would have no compunction at all in exploiting these nationalities to achieve his object by means of a whole series which Russia could control."[97]

As of February 1948, the Soviet Union had yet to take an official position on whether or not they would support an international force.[98] The British and the United States viewed the Soviet Union as unpredictable, untrustworthy, and ambitious, ready to aid whoever suited their needs. In April 1948, the New York Times published a story that cited a report released by the International Committee for the Study of European Questions, a privately funded organization, in which they found that the Soviet Union had been sending arms to the Arabs, while simultaneously aiding Jewish Polish and Romanian emigration to Palestine.[99] The fact that the Soviet Union was careful to walk the fence between both the Palestinian Jewish and Arab communities fueled the existing mistrust that the United States and Britain had about their intentions. Ultimately, Britain and the United States believed that the Soviet Union troops would "goad the Arab population into greater violence" in order to gain control and influence with Arab leaders in the region.[100]

This influence was likely to have global implications, and the possibility of atomic warfare in the Middle East weighed heavily on the minds of both the British and American governments.[101] The White House staff viewed the situation in the Middle East as a ticking "time bomb," where any conflict that involved the Soviet Union could lead to World War III.[102]

Relationship and Access to Arab Territories
In addition to concerns over Soviet influence, the Unites States and Britain were also worried about the potential effects that a UNSC led international force would have on their own influence in the region. Following the end of World War I, the Allied States had scrambled to assert their dominance over the area which had previously belonged to the Ottoman Empire: Syria and Lebanon were handed over to France, and Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq to Britain.[103] By the end of WWII, however, Palestine was the only remaining territory in the region under Western mandate. As a result of Britain's pending exit from Palestine, Western governments felt a growing need to maintain strong Arab relations to access Arab territory for their economic and military strategies. In this context, United States and Britain were concerned about the consequences that their participation in an international force would have on their relationship with Arab leaders. If the British or the United States were to enact any force against the Arabs, their ability to maintain relations with Middle Eastern governments would be compromised, resulting in loss of their ability to keep troops in the region and thus enable the Soviet Union to gain political leverage.[104] A top-secret report produced by the United States Director of the Policy Planning Staff in January 1948 stated that if the United States were to send troops to Palestine or support a volunteer police force, they would have to

rethink their entire political position in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.[105]

As of October 1947, the British had two air bases in Iraq that they needed to protect, whereas the United States military still did not have any bases in the Middle East.[106] In the post-war environment, expanding one's military access to the region was critical to both countries, not least because a presence in the region enabled the United States and Britain's access to the Eastern Mediterranean region, where both states were providing support to the government against the communist opposition army in the Greek Civil War (1946-1949).[107] In this context, a memo written in October 1947 by Loy W. Henderson, the United States Head of Near Eastern and African Affairs, expressed his concern that Arab hostilities were already exacerbated and further damage to relations could endanger the United States position in Greece, Turkey and Iran—areas vulnerable to Soviet Union influence. [108]

In addition, American and British interests in the region were increasingly influenced by the growing global importance of oil, which had become a crucial geopolitical factor in the late 1940s.[109] A memo circulated by Bevin to the British Cabinet in February 1948 emphasized that the Marshall Plan depended on the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Middle East to Western Europe and Britain.[110] Should Arab states limit access to oil, the United States economic incentive plan would be threatened, which would prevent their ability to provide financial aid to countries that were supported by the Plan. Saudi Arabia also supplied the United States' Navy with oil. [111] --Ibn Saud, Monarch of Saudi Arabia financed the Arab League military which supported the Palestinians, and their dissention towards the Partition plan.[112] Further, the British government believed that Iraqi and Syrian governments were highly

likely to fight against a UN security force. Should western governments draw ire from Arab leaders, Iraqi oil might cease to flow to Tripoli, and pipeline projects for piping Arab and Persian Gulf oil to the Mediterranean could be suspended.[113] There was also a fear that permitting the Soviet Union to enter the Middle East would leave oil fields in the Persian Gulf vulnerable to air strikes.[114]

Anglo-American speculations that supporting an international force endangered their access to oil and military outposts were soon confirmed by Arab states. In February 1948, the Arab League Secretary General declared that no military bases or access to pipelines would be permitted nor would economic priority be given to any country who favored implementing the Partition Plan.[115]

Stalling Partition and An International Force

Due to its concerns over the ramifications of implementing an international force, Britain adopted a policy of non-intervention. It had already abstained from the vote on Resolution 181 in the General Assembly and now simply refused to accept any plan that would involve the presence of military forces in Palestine before their exit date. A British memorandum circulated to British Cabinet members in February 1948 stressed the necessity for the British UN Delegate to abstain on UNSC motions pertaining to an UN security force for geopolitical reasons.[116]

As discussed above, the United States policy on the Middle East was comparable to the British in many regards. Although President Truman had initially supported Partition, by being vocal about the need to both support Palestinians and create an independent Jewish state, he was faced with growing uneasiness from the State Department. While Truman had championed

Partition, State Department officials believed that United States support of the plan would endanger its relationship with Arab leaders. This concern became a critical factor in the months leading up to Partition, and eventually pushed the President to take more proactive measures to stall an international force.[117]

With less than two months left until Partition, the United States, seeking to appease the Arab states and prevent the Soviet Union from gaining access to the Middle East, proposed an alternative "Trusteeship Plan."[118] The plan would replace Partition, and instead make the UN a temporary trustee. Effectively, the decision to send an international force was put on the back burner, as the debate instead turned to the new Trusteeship Plan. Warren Austin, the United States Delegate to the UN at the time, brought forth three trusteeship proposals to the UNSC on March 19, 1948. Under the trusteeship plan, the UN would assume the role as the new mandate power until the Arab Palestinians and Jewish Palestinians could agree on a resolution to share the land. The plan would still require an international force; one that relied on Britain's cooperation and contribution.[119] However, Britain was adamant about remaining neutral. On April 16, 1948, the United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom recounted a meeting with Bevin, who said that the plan would be unacceptable to the Cabinet and House of Commons.[120] An earlier memo by the Ambassador spoke about the British government impetus to "get the boy's home from Palestine."[121] Equally, the Jewish Agency did not support a UN trusteeship— they believed that the proposed plan was unrealistic and nothing more than the United States strategy to kill Partition.[122]

The US Consul General of Jerusalem reported that the Arab states were glad that the US had decided to abandon Partition but were still determined to "crush Zionism."[123]

A memo by United States Foreign Affairs bureaucrat Robert C. McClintock affirms that disposing of Partition was indeed the strategy of the United States to revisit the issue of whether or not a conflict in Palestine was a threat to world security; a decision that would legally permit the UNSC to implement a security force.[124] By this point, maintaining arm's length from an international force in Palestine was the best strategy for the United States in order to avoid a confrontation with the Soviet Union. A brief written by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the United States reported that a conflict between Arabs and Jewish was inevitable and would require substantial US forces, numbers that would deplete personnel stationed in other parts of the Middle East.[125] Further, the Secretary of Defense wrote to the Secretary of State on April 19, 1948 that should the United States support an international force, it would be necessary to review US policy regarding Italy, Iran, Greece, China and Turkey: "The United States position on Palestine may render these policies meaningless."[126] To further curb the possibility of the participation of western governments—or the Soviet Union for that matter—in an international force, the United States suggested that an force be formed from neutral states such as Brazil, the Netherlands and Sweden.[127] Although these nations voted in favor of the original Partition Plan, these Member States were not willing to actively participate in such a force, nor support an alternative trusteeship. Like the British and the US, they were concerned that they would incur ire from Arab state leaders by supporting partition.[128]

While the United States was campaigning their new plans for a trusteeship among Member States, escalating violence and tensions in Palestine further diverted focus away from implementing Resolution 181 towards the negotiation of a truce between the Jewish Agency and the Arab Higher Committee. In the spring of 1948, violence in Palestine reached an unprecedented level. On April 13, 1948, the United States Consul at Jerusalem reported the horrific events that occurred in the Arab village Deir Yasin, in which Jewish militia groups—the Irgun and Stern Gang—killed over 250 peaceful citizens, more than half were women and children. He believed that as a result, Arabs would want to avenge Deir Yasin and a cease-fire was remote.[129] Jewish and Arab Palestinian communities were determined to establish their own states with or without UN support. At a special UN General Assembly session on April 1, 1948, the Jewish Agency submission made it clear that a provisional Jewish government would be instituted in accordance with Resolution 181 once Mandate Palestine ended. Similarly, representatives of the Arab Higher Committee stated that if the plan failed, they would establish a Palestinian government under the same international laws that enabled Britain to administer the territory.[130]

As a response to the situation on the ground, the UNSC took measures to adopt Resolution 46 on April 17, 1948, calling on all governments to take steps to assist in the implementation of measures to bring about the cessation of acts of violence in Palestine and to establish conditions of peace.[131] The motion called on Arab and Jewish groups to cease all military activities and cease providing aid to militia groups, but did not mention the provision of a UN security force.[132] Instead, a Truce Commission was established in which UNSC members attempted to broker peace with Arab leaders and the Jewish Agency.[133] The question of permitting more Jews to enter Palestinian territory proved to be a major issue of contention that prevented either side from agreeing to a truce. A memo from Warren Austin written on April 29, 1948 notes that the Egyptian, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, and Lebanese delegations would not sign any document that would "permit the entry of a

single Jew in Palestine."[134] Similarly, in a diary entry written on April 4, 1948 by the United States Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal recounts a meeting with Dean Rusk, Director of the Office of United Nations Affairs and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He writes that members from the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that a completely effective truce was impossible, and they could not assure the end of violence.[135]

In spite of the increase of intercommunal violence, and the growing infeasibility of both a trusteeship and a truce, an international force to implement the original Partition Plan was still not brought to the UNSC for serious consideration. At midnight, seconds before the end of the British Mandate, May 14, 1948, Ben Gurion declared the State of Israel, and hours later, Arab states: Syria, Jordan and Egypt invaded. By July 1948, UNSC invoked charter VII ("Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression"), which permitted UNSC Members to enforce a cease fire. However, a UN security force was never sent to Palestine and the UNSC disregarded the UN Mediator's recommendation to impose economic and political sanctions for non-compliance of a cease fire. Once the Arab-Israeli War eventually came to an end in 1949, thousands of lives had been lost, and over 750,000 Arabs forced to flee their homes.[136]

Conclusion

This article has looked at the ways in which UNSC Member States, and particularly the United States and Britain, responded to the direction from the UN General Assembly to ensure peace in Palestine once Mandate Palestine ended. This included deliberating the coalescing of a UN security force in an emerging Cold War era. It has asserted that

Britain and the United States were caught between honoring the UN Mandate, maintaining peace between the West and Soviet Union, and sustaining their relationships with Arab states. In this context, Britain and the United States became a driving force in the decisions that led to inactivity of the UNSC to send an UN security force, made clear in the conversations and media articles drawn out in this paper. In mapping out the (in)actions of the UNSC between 1947 and 1948, this manuscript highlights the structural inadequacies of the UNSC; one of which decision-making power of the UN as a whole is contingent upon a select group of UN Member States. As the case of the partition of Palestine shows, Member States have a duty first to their country, and then to the UN. While this becomes particularly clear in the case of the UNSC, it is also applicable to Member States in general; for instance, so-called "Middle Power" members also did not want to participate in a non-UNSC international force, largely out of fear of weakening relations with the Arabs.

Secretary General Trygve Lie's autobiography emphasizes the very tensions that existed between UNSC Member States' duties to their own people, and their duties to the United Nations. When Lie learned in March 1948 of the US decision to withdraw support for Partition in favour of a Trusteeship plan, he said:

> the American reversal was a blow to the United Nations and showed a profoundly disheartening disregard for its effectiveness and standing.[137]

Further, he suggested to the United States UN delegate Warren Austin that they both

> resign as a means of arousing popular opinion to the realization of the danger in which the whole structure of the United Nations has been placed.[138]

Although neither did actually resign, Dean Rusk recounts the events that occurred on the day that the United States recognized Israel in the General Assembly session on May 14, 1948: Austin, who had been instructed to promote Partition and then Trusteeship, dramatically left the floor upon learning this news.[139] He made a poignant decision not to

return to the session, aware that the decision was a snub to members of the UN. These anecdotes illustrate the argument made by this article, that UN accountability mechanisms to enact peace efforts are highly infeasible, predicated on the unstable, and often-changing, political will of individual Member States.

[59] Ellen Jenny Ravndal, "Exit Britain: British Withdrawal from the Palestine Mandate in the Early Cold War, 1947-1948," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21, no. 3 (2010)., 417-418

[60] The term Jewish is used to denote the Jewish community in Palestine, rather than Zionist. Although Zionism was a popular term utilized in the media during this period, this term is attached to a politial ideology about the return of the Jews to their rightful land. Whereas not all Jewish peoples who fled to Palestine subscribed to the Zionist ideology.

[61] The United Nations, "The Plan of Partition and the End of the British Mandate," *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* (United Nations, 2008), http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/palestine/ch2.pdf., 1-4

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[63] William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (New York;Oxford;: Clarendon Press, 1984)., 383-396, 483

[64] "Annexes: The Palestine Mandate Preamble," *League of Nations Official Journal* 3, no. 8-PartII (1922)., 1007

[65] Ibid.

[66] Charles D. Smith, "The Mandate for Palestine," in *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2013)., 100, 101

[67] Benny Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven, United States Yale University Press, 2008)., 12-16

[68] Oren Yiftachel, "Nation-building and the Division of Space: Ashkenazi Domination in the Israeli 'Ethnocracy'," Nationalism and Ethnic Politics 4, no. 3 (1998), 39.

[69] Charles Smith, "The End of the Mandate and the Creation of Israel (1945-1949)," in *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Bedford/St.Marten's, 2013)., 188

[70] "Transfer of Power in Palestine," *The Times*, December 13, 1947.

[71] Smith, "The End of the Mandate and the Creation of Israel (1945-1949).", 185

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 136.

[74] Unispal.Un.Org, "A/364 of September 3 1947," ed. United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (General Assembly 1947).

[75] See Smith, 138.

[76] Ibid., 138.

[77] Ibid., 139.

[78] William L. Cleveland and Martin P. Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Fifth ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group, 2013)., 192, 244

[79] "Transfer of Power in Palestine."

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[85] James Reston, "President Warned on Palestine Force: Vandenberg and U.S. Military Chiefs Opposed to Sending Regular Army Troops " *New York Times* October 13, 1947.

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[90] Thomas J. Hamilton, "U.S. Makes Offer on Force of U.N," *New York Times* December 22, 1947.

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Medieval Christian Historiography of the First Crusade: Justification Through Narration

YONI DABAS, *Yale University*

Abstract

This article examines three Christian accounts of the First Crusade in order to examine how this literature served a political purpose in legitimizing the power of the Church at home and abroad. In support of current critical scholarship undertaken by Natasha R. Hodgson, Sophia Rose Arjanam, Marcus Bull, and Ernst Breisach, I argue that these accounts produce a narrative of the "Christian hero" and the "Muslin anti-hero," which helps to portray the institution of the European church as righteous and benevolent. In this way, historical accounts of the Crusades work as what Giovanni Levi has called "a political weapon." Nevertheless, this article also shows how accounts of the First Crusade are filled with tension; Christian writers sometimes oppose the binary narratives of "good" Christians and "bad" Muslims, and communicate more nuanced understandings of ethics, religion, and socio-political developments. In this way, I argue that accounts of the First Crusade must not just be understood as top-down religious propaganda, but also as products of individual opinions and experiences, leaving room for complexity and self-critique.

keywords: The First Crusade; Christianity; Islam; historical narrative;

The First Crusade is integral to understanding the origins of the relationship between Christians and Muslims in modern history.[1] For western Christians in particular, the event was a fundamental part of legitimizing a new relationship between religious and political authority. The First Crusade resulted in a massive chronicling of the Christian military history, which would be used by the Latin Church in its pursuit of seeking primacy in the power structures of Europe. As Natasha R. Hodgson argues, these writings should also be seen as a form of state propaganda aimed at creating a long-lasting narrative of Christian superiority over Muslims.[2] As such, studying early historiography of the crusades does not just help us understand how literature was used domestically to facilitate the growing power of the Church in Europe, but also how this writing was used to legitimize the assault on non-Christian populations in the Middle East. This research can aid in understanding how this event led to waves of destructive and violent crusades in the centuries to come and explores the roots of enduring hostility and fear between the Church and communities in the Middle East.

The three accounts I focus on in this article produce a narrative of the "Christian hero" and the "Muslin anti-hero," which help to portray the institution of the European Church as righteous and benevolent. In this way, historical accounts of the crusades work as what Giovanni Levi has called "a political weapon."[3] Nevertheless, this article also shows how accounts of the First Crusade are also filled with tension; Christian writers sometimes oppose the binary narratives of "good" Christians and "bad" Muslims, and communicate more nuanced understandings of ethics, religion, and socio-political developments. In this way, I argue that accounts of the First Crusade must not just be understood as top-down religious propaganda, but also as products of individual opinions and experiences, leaving room for complexity and self-critique.

This paper begins by providing a political and religious context for the First Crusade, as well as an analysis of contemporary practice in history-writing by Christians. It then discusses how Christian sources characterized Muslims and crusaders, revealing the politically and religiously tinged nature of their historiography. Finally, this paper rationalizes the differences within Christian accounts through the evaluation of the consistency of overarching themes present in each account.

The three Christian accounts interrogated by this paper were written by Fulcher of Chartres (d.1127), Robert the Monk (d.1120), and Guibert de Nogent (d.1124). Fulcher of Chartres and Robert the Monk participated in the Council of Clermont—the assembly in which the crusades were initiated—and provided descriptions of the major battles of the First Crusade. Fulcher of Chartres was a famous warrior, clergyman, and an advisor to Baldwin I. Historians believe he was educated at the Cathedral School of Chartres.[4] During the First Crusade, he reached Jerusalem where he remained for the rest of his life, serving as a chaplain, joining further military campaigns and completing his chronicle of the First Crusade.[5] Fulcher of Chartres's chronicle is considered to be one of the most realistic depictions of the First Crusade by contemporary historians.[6] Unlike Fulcher of Chartres, Robert the Monk's real identity is dubious, but he is believed to have been part of the monastery of St. Remi in France.[7] Some scholars suggest that his writings of the First Crusade were guided by his abbot, and therefore the focus of his piece was on constructing a narrative more than an unbiased recounting of events. He describes the battles of the First Crusade from the point of view of a soldier.[8] Guibert de Nognet was a French historian, an abbot, and later a

theologian, and his book uses the most hostile language of all three pieces.[9] This paper analyzes the portrayal of Muslims in these Christian sources, as well as their self-characterization in context of military encounters.

Background: Political and Religious Context

The First Crusade was the result of political and religious tensions that had accumulated since the collapse of the Roman Empire.[10] In the seventh century, the Carolingian Frank dynasty dominated western Europe, while the Isaurian dynasty gained control over the Byzantine Empire in eastern Europe. Each of these dynasties was affiliated with a different church. Over the course of the next few centuries, threats from non-Christian forces, including Muslims from the east and Scandinavian tribes from the north, helped consolidate alliances within the realm of Christendom. The domination of the Church in regard to formation of states and legal systems continued to grow up until the First Crusade, when the papacy had achieved enough political authority to initiate conflict on behalf of western Christendom against perceived external threats.[11]

Over time, political and religious developments in Europe and the Near East culminated in the First Crusade. For one, the threat of Islamic expansion was becoming more pressing for many Christian leaders both in eastern and western Europe, as the followers of Muhammad spread across the Levant, Anatolia, North Africa, and Iberia.[12] In 1071, one of the newly-formed Muslim dynasties, the Seljuqs, defeated the crumbling Byzantine empire in Manzikert. This allowed the Seljuqs to establish control of what had previously been considered Christian land. The loss of land to the Seljuqs was later used by the western Church to justify the First Crusade as a means of protecting the eastern borders of Christendom, which in turn required crafting an ideological narrative that appropriately vilified of Muslims in order to justify the holiness of the military endeavor.[13] Although the loss of Christian lands to Muslims primarily affected the Byzantine and Levantine Church, the Latin Church soon became involved, responding to eastern calls for a military campaign to take back Christian lands. Western motivations for this alliance were multiple: the Latin Church both wanted to project and extend its power in Europe and grow its influence over the eastern Churches.[14]

Beginning in the late eleventh century, a Christian campaign outside of Europe was called by several popes. In 1074, a letter from Pope Gregory VII was sent to the king of England, Henry IV, demanding military action against Muslim aggression towards the struggling Byzantine empire: "Aided by the prayers of all Christian men, are under compulsion to go over there for the same faith and for the defense of Christians."15 These ideas were repeated by the papacy in subsequent decades. In 1095, Pope Urban II gave a speech in Clermont, France where he began to call for a crusade. Initially, the enthusiasm of Pope Urban II gave rise to several unorganized, spontaneous campaigns by mobs known as "the People's Crusade."16 This crusade—ostensibly led by a priest known as Peter the Hermit—resulted in the massacre of thousands of Jews in Eastern Europe in 1096. In 1097, the first formal crusade to the holy land started. Following an extensive recruitment campaign led by Pope Urban II, tens of thousands of men (and to a lesser extent women)—most of whom were peasants—gathered under the lead of several notable princes and members of the European high nobility to head for the holy land.

The First Crusade consisted of a series of wars and campaigns targeting different sites in the eastern Mediterranean. Initially, the crusaders moved through towns in the Eastern Byzantine empire, eventually arriving at Antioch to siege the city.[17] Antioch stood strong, resulting in shortage of supplies for the crusaders, damage to their morale and crusaders fleeing the battlefield. Amidst the siege, Bohemond the Crusader managed to convince the head of the city's guards to sneak the crusaders in. In the middle of the night, crusaders stormed and captured the city using ladders. The crusaders used Antioch as a base to hold off the wave of Muslim reinforcements, becoming besieged by Kerbogha, the Turk *atabeg* ("governor") of Mosul.[18] Overcoming Kerbogha, moving through Marrat an-Numan and Arqa, the crusade army arrived at its final destination Jerusalem. The clash in Jerusalem was a victory for the crusaders. Finishing in July 1099, it resulted in a devastation of the Muslim armies and the city's population.[19] The crusaders promptly established the kingdom of Jerusalem. The news about the capture of Jerusalem was celebrated in Europe and made the First Crusade as an astonishing military and political success for the Church.[20]

Christian Writing Practices at the Time of the First Crusade

Beginning in the tenth century, western Christian European historians were known for their effort in producing world-history chronicles. These chronicles are characterized by Ernst Breisach as "world chronicles," and feature a combination of biblical and religious history, military and political narratives, and moral and spiritual lessons.[21] In the early eleventh century, these chronicles started to be appreciated as a powerful weapon in the struggle for power

between the pope and European kings. Both the papacy and European kings offered patronage to historians in order to produce literature that would support their struggle for political authority. The papacy sought to promote its political autonomy by shifting the focus of historians to, inter alia, the history of the church, the admiration of warriors and noble values, and the promotion of anti-imperial ideas.[22] European kings used court historians to promote historiography that favored imperial ideas and ordered the issues of biographies to serve as examples for proper Christian life.[23]

Towards the end of the eleventh century, this historiographic feud came to a halt, as did the popularity of "world chronicles."[24] The initiation of the First Crusade brought a new opportunity for western European Christian writers to record a unified Christian history instead of choosing sides in the conflict between kings and the papacy. Instead of focusing on European political order, many western Christian historians emphasized the bravery of crusading knights and their holy goal, narrating the story of the First Crusade.[25] Originating in Latin-Christian culture between 800-1200 CE, literature produced within this genre was not aimed at making an accurate reconstruction of the past, but rather at showing how God's will is expressed through the deeds of Christian soldiers and nobles.[26] The First Crusade and its outcomes perfectly suited this theme. The chronicles that were written by Church clerics and monks gave divine legitimacy to Latin Church authority over newly conquered territories.

Characterization of the Self: The Christian Hero

Through their accounts of the First Crusade Fulcher of Chartres, Robert the Monk, and

Guibert de Nogent all contributed to the formation of a new Christian post-world chronicle literature. A central tenet of this literature was the perception of the heroic Christian self. The figure of the hero has been an essential motif and character in Western literature since the time of the first Greek epics in the early Archaic period (ca. 800-500 BC).[27] This style of Greek epic seems to have been adopted by medieval Christian writers, who appear to share a similar theme and language to those in Greek epics, constructing a figure of the "Christian hero." This includes telling history in extravagant language, emphasizing the influence of the Gods on historical events, and portraying superior characters that performed heroic deeds. Indeed, the "Christian hero" was not only a hero because of his bravery in battle, but also due to divine obligation and motivation; punishing the heathens in the name of God and helping brethren in faith. The features of the Christian hero in the stories of the First Crusade formed a character that is unquestionably righteous; the perfect representation of the Church. I argue that the Greek epics style that is used in the chronicles of the First Crusade might have been chosen to increase their popularity with readers and to glorify the deeds of crusaders.

In all sources analyzed, the figure of the Christian hero is immediately introduced by the authors through their reference to the 1095 speech delivered by Pope Urban II. The speech, which is used as an opening quote by all three writers, was delivered by the Pope in Clermont, France, and discusses the importance of helping the brethren in faith in the East, which are the Christians under the rule of the Byzantine empire. In it, Pope Urban II called for defending Christianity against Muslim oppressors and recapturing the Holy Land:

> Concerning this affair, I, with suppliant prayer—not I, but the Lord—exhort you,

> heralds of Christ, to persuade all of whatever class, both knights and footmen, both rich and poor, in numerous edicts, to strive to help expel that wicked race from our Christian lands before it is too late.[28]

Pope Urban II's speech encompasses the papacy's characterization of Muslims as aggressors and Christians as heroic, divinely-sent defenders even before the First Crusade took place. As such, the authors identify to their readers that the Christian crusader is a hero risking his life to fight evil.

When it was first delivered, the Clermont speech had a strong and immediate impact on the crowd and on all of Christian Europe. In his chronicles, Fulcher of Chartres describes how this speech influenced the crowd—"the audience inspired to enthusiasm… thinking that nothing could be more worthy, at once promised to go."[29] It is therefore clear why all the writers open their chronicles about the First Crusade with this speech. The original speech was part of an institutionalized programme of propaganda aimed at justifying violence in the Middle East, which allowed the Christian writers to use the speech to set the scene for a Christian hero fighting against the Muslim threats.

As the Christian chronicles continue their depiction of the First Crusades, the heroic qualities of the Christian fighter are continuously reasserted. For one, all three writers go to great lengths to describe the crusaders' fighting spirit. Fulcher of Chartres, for instance, writes that in the last battle of Antioch, crusaders won the battle despite their exhaustion and lack of supplies:

> Everybody, placed in such great need and stress, blessed and glorified God in a voice of exultation, God, who in the righteousness of His compassion liberated those trusting in Him from such savage enemies.[30]

In comparison, the account of Robert the Monk is copiously richer with admiration of the heroic crusader's fighting spirit:

> Our men virtually confined to their tents up to this point, found fresh reserves of courage and revenge themselves on the enemy for their wounds and serious injuries.[31]

This enthusiasm is shared by Guibert De Nogent who also applauds the bravery of the Christian soldiers, describing how "closely packed and filled with courage, our troops went to fight, each man encouraging the other by his close presence.[32] In addition to the stamina and fighting spirit of the Christian crusaders, the surveyed sources highlight the courage shown by crusaders on the front-line. Fulcher of Charles documents how the crusaders keep on fighting fearlessly despite facing certain death based on the description of siege of Jerusalem:

> Then a few but brave soldiers, at a signal from the horn, climbed on the tower. Nevertheless, the Saracens defended themselves from these soldiers and, with slings, hurled firebrands dipped in oil and grease at the tower and at the soldiers, who were in it.[33]

The description of a collision between Crusaders of great valor and petrified enemies appears frequently in the chronicles of the First Crusade. In Robert the Monk's account, Muslims are portrayed as fearful of the crusaders:

> The Christians gloried and exulted in the knowledge; to the Persians and Arabs it brought fear and trembling. The courage of the former grew; the latter were paralyzed with fear.[34]

These descriptions of the fearful enemy and the brave Christian soldiers are also apparent in the writings of Fulcher of Chartres. In one account, he describes the following battle between Turks and Franks:

> But fear having been let loose from heaven against [the Turks], as if the whole world had fallen, all of them took unrestrained flight, and the Franks chased them with all their might.[35]

Both sources' perspectives on the fear of the Muslim enemy and the courage of the crusaders match the military achievements of the First Crusade, each seizing the opportunity of a victorious battle to elevate crusaders' heroism and exaggerate the enemy's fear.

Christian sources of the First Crusade also highlight the bravery of their soldiers through a "looking-glass self" writing style, in which they discuss how Muslims perceive Christians. This writing style was not only useful for Christian writers to glorify crusaders bravery but also to demoralize the Muslim armies they faced. This rhetoric was expressed via letters, speechs and prviate conversations that Muslim leaders and soldiers allegdly comunicated to each other about the crusaders. Robert the Monk, frequently uses the looking-glass self to depict courage and bravery. The first notable appearance of this reflection starts before the battle of Antioch, when he describes Kerbogha, the *atabeg* of Mosul, in preparation for the arrival of the crusaders to Antioch. Initially, Kerbogha is described mocking crusaders' swords and their ability to win. This description is paired with a quotation of Kerbogha in which he claims that the Christians are an arrogant race that falsely believe that they can beat his army: "They are a presumptuous race and too ambitious for the possessions of others."[36] Later, however, Robert the Monk quotes a supposed dialogue between Kerbogha and his mother, where she warns him not to go to war with the Christians because the strength of their God and the superiority of the Frankish race: "You [Kerbogha] have no experience of the strength of the God of the Christians, and especially of the race of the Franks."[37] In this way, and as pointed out by Natasha R. Hodgson, this fictitious dialogue was used by Christian writers to justify Christian superiority. Hodgson explains that the attention Christian writers give to

Kerbogha's mother's warnings demonstrate how Christian writers narrated her character as "a mouthpiece for propaganda on crusading."[38] Christian writers were infatuated with documenting themselves as heroes, protecting their religion and joining forces for a "divine" goal.

Characterization of the Other: The Corrupt Muslim

The image of the Christian hero is not solely produced through depictions of bravery and religious zest, but also through its juxtaposition with the image of a dehumanized, immoral, and corrupt Muslim. As Sophia Rose Arjana discusses in *Muslims in the Western Imagination,* representation of Muslims as villains in Christian writings in the past was part of a political ideology in which "Muslims [were] presented as a related enemy that helped to constitute European identity—'the shadow of an age-less ghost'."[39] In this way, writers of the First Crusade relied heavily on producing a negative image of Muslims to describe and understand themselves.

Zoomorphic Language and Barbarism
In accounts of the First Crusade analyzed in this paper, the writers each employ a shared set of literary techniques to dehumanize their enemy. First, they tend to describe their enemy using zoomorphic language. In his description of the battle for Jerusalem, for example, Fulcher of Charters describes Muslim soldiers as obedient animals to their leaders:

> You should have seen the animals which had been captured, as if at a signal from the leaders, march in a straight line on the left and right of the battle lines, although herded by no one.[40]

Robert the Monk also uses zoomorphic language when describing Muslim soldiers in battle:

> When they get ready for attack, they come forward in disciplined ranks… silenced as if they were dumb. But when they reach their enemies, they then rush forward to attack, slacking the reins, as if they were lions raging with the hunger of starvation and thirsting for the blood of animals.[41]

Moreover, Robert the Monk writes a story about a howling Turkish Sultan, likening his screams with that of an animal.[42]

Christian writers also promoted the notion of the animalistic Muslim through highlighting "barbaric" behavior and characteristics. Often times, this bestiality was expressed through hypersexuality. This is typical in the literature advocated by the Church that used the idea of immoral sexuality as a very powerful tool against Muslims and Jews. As Edward Said argues, a "bad sexuality" has historically been ascribed to Arab men by western writers and is an integral part of an Orientalist gaze that can be traced back to the Classical period in Ancient Greece.[43] In this context, Guibert de Nogent's writing provides several depictions of Muslim's sexual matters. For instance, he describes infidelity in marriage, prostitution of virgins, and the rape of men as integral to Muslim society:

> They took virgins and made them public prostitute, since they were never deterred by shame or felling for marital fidelity... According to their own judgment, this wretchedness may have many women, that is not enough, but they must stain their dignity at the hog-trough of such filth by using men also.[44]

Notably, raping women was not seen by Guibert de Nogent to be as immoral as raping men. He sums up his point of view on Muslims by stating that "they became worse than animals."[45] The hypersexualization of the Arab men in the First Crusade chronicles

clearly resembles rhetoric used by modern Orientalists and shows how this historic discourse affected contemporary Western perceptions.[46] Robert the Monk uses similar language when he quotes a letter that was supposedly sent to a high ranked crusader about horrific acts Turks committed against Christian populations, claiming that "[the Muslims] rob and mock noble women and their daughters, taking turns to defile them like animals."[47] The letter also notes that Muslims enjoy circumcising Christian boys and raping men and children. In this way, Guibert de Nogent and Robert the Monk depict Muslim men as sexually immoral beings that are products of a sexually immoral society.

Another barbaric quality attributed to Muslims is that of greed. In the Christian accounts, Muslim greed for gold and silver was a central and reoccurring theme. In Guibert de Nogent's writings, for example, he describes Muslims cutting the stomachs of pilgrims' corpses to find out if they had swallowed gold.[48] In Robert the Monk's account, the writer supposedly quotes the defeated Emir of Babylon. In this speech, the Emir cries for his loss of the battle against the crusaders. It appears from the speech that what interested the Emir more than the loss of lives and the loss of Jerusalem is the loss of money. He expressed grief and sorrow for the cost he paid in vain. Moreover, in his cry, the Emir shares details about the so-called shrine of Muhammad—"O Mohammed… who has ever invested more in the magnificence of your worship with shrines ornate with gold and silver?"[49] In this way, the Christian writers depict Muslims as fixated on money rather than expressing grief.

Anti-Christian Nature

Christian writers also seek to produce the Christian hero and the Muslin anti-hero by depicting the latter as positioned as far from religious enlightenment as possible. First, the written accounts analyzed in this paper highlight the ways in which Muslim rulers and populations mistreat Christians. Fulcher of Chartres points out that the ruler of Antioch saw the Christian inhabitants of the city as a threat: "The Turks hated these Christians, for they feared that somehow the latter might assist the Franks against a Turkish attack."[50] In his book, Fulcher of Chartres writes that when the Armenian population under Islamic rule saw the crusaders, they rejoiced.[51]

The idea of Christian imprisonment by Muslim overlords was a common topic amongst Christian writers. Christian prisoners were considered to suffer greatly at the hands of their barbaric capturers, and the authors argue that crusaders are better-off dying than being imprisoned by Muslims. Guibert de Nogent, for example, maintains that the Christian soldiers that died in battle had a better fate than those that survived and ended up as prisoners. He reasons his argument by further explaining that the Christian captives were either killed, became slaves under the "cruelest masters" or were forced to convert:

> the faithful who died received in exchange eternal life, while those who survived led lives wretchedly bound by the yoke of slavery, harsher I believe, than what those who died endured.[52]

The Christian writers' alarming descriptions of imprisonment by Muslims might be the outcome of stories told by soldiers that survived captivity, or the outcome of a lack of actual knowledge that sparked rumors and excited the writers' imagination. Moreover, it is possible that in order to prevent conversion and promote courage in battle, Christian writers, influenced by Church propaganda, tried to convince crusaders that it was preferable and more dignified to die in battle.

Furthermore, Muslims are often characterized as having a special hatred for

Christianity. For instance, in the account of Robert the Monk, the writer describes the battle of Ashkelon that took place in the summer of 1099. He gives an explanation of why Muslim rulers decided to fight against the Christian forces, claiming that "[t]he root of all malice hoped thus to destroy all the Christians and their city and to eradicate all the memory of the sculpture of the lord."[53] Robert the Monk extends his argument by explaining that Jerusalem bears no religious importance to Islam. As mentioned in his writings, the only reason why Muslims want to fight for Jerusalem is to destroy it. In order to convey this message, Robert the Monk quotes the supposed words of the defeated Emir of Babylon that led the Muslim forces in Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, whore and adulteress of cities, if you ever fall into my hands I shall raze you to the ground and destroy the Sepulcher of the One buried in you."[54] Here, the idea of a Muslim threat to Jerusalem has also an important role in presenting crusaders as protectors of Jerusalem.

Finally, to highlight the heathenism of Muslims, Christian writers also sought to patronize and delegitimize their religious beliefs. For instance, although the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned many times as the most important figure of his religion, the Christian sources are filled with demoralizing descriptions of Muhammad. This specifically appears in the writings of Guibert de Nogent who presents Muhammad as a false prophet whose divine visions are in fact epileptic seizures: "He [Muhammad] often suffered terribly while the terrified prophets watched his eyes turing upward, his face twisting, his lips foaming, his teeth grinding."[55] Guibert de Nogent also repeatedly misspells Muhammad's name—seemingly on purpose—and claims to not remember it: "whose name, if I have it right, was Mathomus."[56] In his account of the battle of Antioch, Robert the Monk also belittles

Muhammad by claiming that he cannot resurrect Muslim soldiers that died in battle as their fate was determine by Jesus.[57] Christian writings thus established Muhammad as an enemy of Christianity, legitimizing their attack on Muslims.[58]

Tension in Christian Writing

Although the overarching narrative of the Christian hero and the corrupt Muslim seeps through in all accounts of the First Crusade surveyed for this article, depictions of either group are not always so black-and-white. In many instances, Christian writers show a more dynamic understanding both of the self and the other. For one, Muslim opponents are sometimes described positively. Guibert de Nogent, for instance, shows an understanding and appreciation of politics in the Muslim world. He specifically highlights the Turks as an important and developed nation amongst Muslims, explaining that the Turks are superior in military matters, horsemanship, and courage: "the kingdom of the Parthians, whom we, because of changes in the language, call the Turks, is pre-eminent in military matters, in horsemanship, and in courage, although it is a very small country."[59] Similarly, Fulcher of Charters also glorifies Turk soldiers in the battle of Antioch, emphasizing their fighting spirit despite their loss in the battle.[60] In another chapter of his book, Fulcher of Chartres describes a noble Turkish knight that bravely led his soldiers in the battle against the crusaders in Antioch.[61] In a specific instance, he also describes the crusaders' retreat from a battlefield because of Turks' archery skills: "the Turks were howling like wolves and furiously shooting a cloud of arrows. We were stunned by this… We soon took flight. Nor is this remarkable because to all of us such warfare was unknown."[62] Muslim bravery is also mentioned by Robert the

Monk, who describes the Turks he encountered in one of the first battles of the crusade as "boldly attacking"; by using scouts, the Turks managed to optimally time their attack on the crusaders in a castle near Nicaea.[63] Impressed, he further explains that the Turks won the battle by cutting off the crusaders' water supply.[64] In the account of Fulcher of Chartres, the writer praises Turk archers and mentions them several times.

As Marcus Bull proposes, the frequent accolades of the Turks in accounts of the First Crusades may be due to the fact that some writers would have considered them distantly akin to the Franks.[65] Indeed, the accounts under study sometimes point to a latent Christian nature in the Turkish fighters. Fulcher of Chartres, for instance, tells a story about a Turk that cooperated with the Christian forces in the battle of Antioch. This Turk dreamt that the "Lord of Christians" told him to help the crusaders against his own people and so he did.[66] Nevertheless, the instances of praise for Muslims, whatever the motivation, is a testament to the ability of Christian writers to portray Muslim communities not solely as barbaric.

There are also instances of Christian writers portraying the crusaders in a negative light. This is particularly so in the writings of Fulcher of Chartres, who often goes to a great extent to criticize the Christian mission, in a way that Ernst Breisach calls "less enthusiastic reporting."[67] For example, Fulcher of Chartres describes the manipulation of Christian soldiers by a Christian religious figure that planted the holy lance in Antioch and fibbed a vision of its finding.[68] Muslim accounts corroborate the story of Fulcher of Chartres.[69] In addition to the story of the lance, Fulcher of Chartres attests to many instances where crusaders behaved dishonorably and cowardly. He provides first-hand examples of crusaders fleeing the battlefield, describing how

some of our men as you have heard about withdrew from a siege which was so difficult, some from want, some from cowardice, some from fear of death, first the poor, then the rich.[70]

He also bluntly criticizes the behavior of some leading crusaders:

Then Stephen, Count of Blois, left the siege and went home to France by sea. We all grieved on this account because he was a very noble man and was mighty in arms…If he had preserved he would have greatly rejoiced with the rest, for what he did was a disgrace to him.[71]

In addition to pointing out unheroic deeds of the crusaders, Fulcher of Chartres portrays extremely vividly the immoral and gruesome acts his fellow crusaders committed due to the starvation they faced. In one particularly horrific scene, he describes that the famine during the siege of Ma'arra was so severe that it led to cannibalism where Christian soldiers ate "the flesh of Saracens." This is an example of the realistic nature of Fulcher of Chartres's account and his unyielding way of describing the negative features of the First Crusade.

In most accounts surveyed for this article, the relative status and appreciation of Muslims and Christians also shift over time as the narrative progresses. Throughout the battles of the First Crusade, the writings of Robert the Monk and Fulcher of Chartres fluctuate between using demoralizing language when speaking of Muslims to more neutral or even positive terms. In these two accounts, we can discern a clear trend. When the crusaders lost in battles, feared for their fate, and starved due to successful Muslim tactics, Christian perceptions of the Muslim enemy became neutral, and even positive. However, when the crusaders accomplish a military objective, their negative perceptions of the Muslim enemy intensify. In these cases, the writers attempt to point out differences and fueled a sense of Christian superiority.

Nevertheless, although all accounts show a tendency to depart from the Christian hero/corrupt Muslim binary, the extent to which these employ a nuanced analysis of the Crusades differ between writers. Guibert de Nogent, for instance, always depicts the crusaders as superior to their Muslim enemy in battle, and Fulcher of Chartres' account often comes across as the most self-reflective and critical. In this context, the personal lives of these Christian writers have to be taken into account in order to understand how it affected the shaping of each book. Fulcher of Chartres, for instance, was well educated and also enjoyed high social and political status, basing his career in the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem.[72] His status and his established position in Jerusalem, might have given him the opportunity to be more independent in his writing. Indeed, unlike the chronicles of Robert the Monk and of Guibert de Nogent, Fulcher of Chartres's account was not written in Europe, and his physical separation from the Church is likely to have also been accompanied by a separation in knowledge production. Moreover, Fulcher of Chartres directly participated in the battles of the First Crusade, which might have contributed to his relatively more realistic and nuanced narration of the Christian mission.

Similar to Fulcher of Charters, Guibert de Nogent's account—which appears more aggressive and argumentative in its conviction of the Christian mission and superiority— can also be explained by an analysis of his life. Guibert de Nogent was a theologian and historian who worked as an abbot in an abbey in northern France.[73] His style of writing and use of language suggests that he was well educated, and that he did not participate in the First Crusade.[74] In this way, it is not surprising that his account is more one-sided in its descriptions, as this is likely to be the message the church would want to communicate. At the same time, the writing of Guibert de Nogent also seems to have departed from Church standards. Compared to other accounts of the First Crusade, his writing stands out in its engagement with the history and culture of the Muslim world. Marcus Bull argues that this interest made Guibert de Nogent's book unpopular with the Church in the early days after its publication,[75] most likely because the Church actively tried to minimize any interest in Islamic history and culture.

Conclusion

This article has looked at how Christian historical writers conceptualized the First Crusade. The accounts analyzed for this purpose reflect the adoption of ideologies that were compatible with legitimizing violence against Middle Eastern communities on behalf of the Church. In particular, this often took the form of a hero verus anti-hero narrative, in which Christian writers portrayed the self—the crusaders and the Church's mission in the Near East—as heroic, civilized, and righteous, while portraying the other—the Muslim communities and supporting armies—as barbaric, corrupt, and immoral. By helping to propagate these stereotypes, Christian writers would influence the expanding relationship between Europe and the Middle East over the next few centuries, and contribute the idea for Europeans, and particularly western Europeans, that Muslims were dangerous and can be understood best as the subhuman "other." Through the years, just as what happened with the First Crusade, this type of dehumanization has proven to be effective in mobilizing mobs and in providing an organizing theme for more official armed expeditions.

At the same time, Christian writing of the Crusades was not always determined by official ideologies, but also showed some complexity in the depiction of both

Christians and Muslims. Often times, the way in which a writer would depict the Church mission and its Muslim counterpart depended on their unique positions and life experiences. Importantly, instances of praise and critique, whatever the motivation, point to a deviation from Church-mandated narratives. They reveal that both the Christian accounts per se and the relationship between historians and the Church are much more complicated than what the general overview of events would suggest. Nevertheless, this complexity should not detract from the ways in which all three accounts featured in this article still contribute(d) to larger themes regarding western superiority and moral justifications for violence against Middle Eastern communities.

In essence, this article's close analysis of three primary Christian accounts of the First Crusade help to provide a better understanding of the origins of Christian perceptions of Muslims on an interpersonal scale. Papal propaganda intermingles with individual opinions informed by physical encounters, which both make their way into accounts of the First Crusade. These accounts soon became a tool used by the Church both during and after as a form of validation for its doctrine of holy violence, fueling crusades to follow and shaping perceptions for centuries.

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33 Peters, The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres, 90.

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36 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 153.

37 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 154.

38 Guibert De Nogent, Deeds of God, 95-98; Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 154-157; Hodgson, Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative.

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42 Ibid., 113-124.

43 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (United States: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2014), 21.

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48 A similar, but somewhat conflicting story, appears in the chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres where the writer points out that poor crusaders were those who cut open stomachs of Muslims. In both instances, Muslims are presented as full of greed, either accused of swallowing their possessions before they die or behaving immorally by cutting up bodies for gold.

49 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 210.

50 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 94.

51 Ibid., 91.

52 Guibert De Nogent, *Deeds of God*, 37; 50-51.

53 Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 204.

54 Ibid., 210.

55 Guibert De Nogent, *Deeds of God*, 33.

56 Ibid., *Deeds of God*, 32-35.

57 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 85.

58 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 154; see also Nirmal Dass, The Deeds of the Franks and Other Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims:The Earliest Chronicle of the First Crusade (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011).

59 Guibert De Nogent, *Deeds of God*, 36.

60 Guibert De Nogent, *Deeds of God*, 132. Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 105.

61 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 103, 104-105, 186.

62 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 105.

63 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 85.

64 Robert the Monk, Historia Iherosolimitana, 85.

65 Bull, 'Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere,' in *Christian-Muslim Relations 600 - 1500.*

66 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 98.

67 Breisach, *Historiography,* 133.

68 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 104.

69 Ibn al-Athir, the historian, writes about the discovery of the holy lance in Antioch by Christians. In his book, al-Athir accuses a Christian monk of planting the holy lance in the church of Antioch – "He had previously buried a lance in a place there and removed his traces." Al-Athir goes on to claim that the monk encouraged Christian soldiers to find the lance, by exclaiming that this would lead them to victory. Fulcher of Chartres's acknowledgement of the fallacy of the lance provides an uncommon example of corroborating Muslim sources within the Christian writing of the First Crusad. Ibn al-Athir, *Crusading Period,* 16.

70 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 97.

71 Ibid., 112.

72 Fulcher of Chartres, *Expedition to Jerusalem*, 3.

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75 Bull, 'The Western Narratives of the First Crusade,' in *Christian-Muslim Relations 600-1500.*

Flora in an Extreme Rentier State: The Impact of Governance, Demography, and Political Economy on Vegetation and Greenery in Kuwait

AUSTIN CORONA, *Georgetown University in Qatar*

Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which the cultivation or natural growth of vegetation occurs in Kuwait through the projects and interests of individuals, organizations, and public actors in the country dedicated to vegetation management. Using historical literature and interviews conducted in Kuwait during the summer of 2019, the paper thus demonstrates the ways in which the modern dynamics of Kuwaiti society reflect upon the location and nature of vegetation and greenery in the country. This paper identifies three factors of Kuwait's modern government and culture that have significantly impacted the cultivation and natural growth of vegetation in the country. The first is the nature of Kuwait's bloated bureaucratic government structure and the use of public institutions to distribute the country's oil wealth to its citizenry through wages. The second is the nature of Kuwaiti national security concerns. Finally, the third is the effect of oil wealth and urbanization on leisure activities in the country. Together, these factors illustrate the effects of Kuwait's governance, demography, and political economy on the relationship between its people and its vegetation, a relationship that appears far different in the present moment than it did in pre-oil Kuwait.

keywords: Kuwait: Vegetation; Greenery: Governance; Demography; Political Economy; National Security; Bureaucracy; Leisure

Kuwait's dry climate and many years of soil degradation and reported overgrazing have made it a difficult place for vegetation to naturally occur. While empirical evidence is slim, scientists and researchers at Kuwait's research institutions and government agencies report that overgrazing by hired expat herders, thousands of recreational campers in the springtime, and outdoor motor sports in Kuwait's natural environment, along with the effects of climate change, have mounted difficult challenges to native vegetation in the country.[1] Therefore, much of the country's healthy terrestrial ecosystems occur in places where human intervention has, by design or coincidence, provided safe environments for the growth of native flora and fauna.

This paper will explore the ways in which the cultivation or natural growth of vegetation occurs in Kuwait through the projects and interests of individuals and organizations in the country dedicated to vegetation management. Using historical literature and interviews conducted in Kuwait during the summer of 2019,[2] this paper will demonstrate the ways in which the modern dynamics of Kuwait's political economy reflect upon the location and nature of vegetation communities in the country. In doing so, it builds on the already existing scientific literature by scientific researchers in Kuwait[3] while also using a discussion of vegetation management to complement Farah Al-Nakeeb[4] and Michael Herb's[5] descriptions of the Kuwaiti state and its development.

This paper identifies three factors of Kuwait's modern government and culture that have significantly impacted the cultivation and natural growth of vegetation in the country. The first is the nature of Kuwait's bloated bureaucratic government structure and the use of public institutions to distribute the country's oil wealth to its citizenry through wages. The second is the nature of Kuwaiti national security concerns.

Finally, the third is the effect of oil wealth and urbanization on leisure activities in the country. Together, these factors illustrate the effects of Kuwait's governance, demography, and political economy on the relationship between its people and its vegetation, a relationship that appears far different in the present moment than it did in pre-oil Kuwait.

Background

During the twentieth century, Kuwait underwent a significant socio-economic and political transition. What had previously been a sheikhdom reliant on tribal affiliations, pearling, and nomadic grazing, slowly transformed to a modern welfare state with immense oil wealth.[6] This transition had drastic effects on the relationships between Kuwait's people, land, and vegetation. Before Kuwait's modernization, land management generally revolved around local legal structures that defined the relationship between urban leaders and nomadic groups of herders whose grazing activities impacted the distribution of vegetation.[7] In that time, desert rangelands were not owned by individuals, but rather by entire tribes, and no member of a tribe was authorized to buy or sell tribal land individually.

Over the course of the twentieth century, changing geopolitical dynamics, coupled with the discovery of oil, would launch Kuwait into an area of modern state building. Following the export of the first barrels in 1946, oil quickly became the main source of income for the Kuwaiti government.[8] Although Kuwait was a British protectorate at the time, income from oil exports went straight to the country's ruler. With newly burgeoning oil revenues, the Kuwaiti government drew commissioned plans to modernize Kuwait City in the 1950s.[9] These developments produced the

first documented "owner" of Kuwait's non-urban land, and that was the state. To this day, the Kuwaiti state owns over 90% of the real estate in the country.[10] As a part of this process of urbanization and nationalization of non-urban lands, nomadic tribes largely disappeared from Kuwait's deserts.[11]

The discovery of oil eventually transformed Kuwait into a highly urbanized country with a central state that served as its main source of wealth and power. The Kuwaiti people too have benefitted from these developments, and are today one of the wealthiest people in the world.[12] In contrast to pre-modern Kuwaiti society, hardly any Kuwaitis rely on the land or the desert for their sustenance anymore. Instead, Kuwaitis now overwhelmingly rely on public wages for their income, with about 90% of the population employed in the public sector.[13] This new economic system means that most Kuwaitis—including descendants of nomadic peoples—spend most of their time in the city, removed from the deserts where previous generations used to dwell.

As Kuwait transitioned from a pre-modern, highly nomadic, and tribal society to a modern, urbanized nation state with immense oil wealth, changes in governance, demography and political economy altered the relationship between its population and vegetation management. Today, at least three distinct factors of modern Kuwaiti society significantly impact the cultivation and natural growth of vegetation in the country: a bloated bureaucracy, national security interests, and a leisure culture built on the commodification of greenery.

Bureaucracy

Kuwait's transition to a modern state included the growth of a massive state bureaucracy with the provision of immense power to public offices and top-down

planners.[14] In Michael Herb's *Wages of Oil,* Herb thoroughly explains how these immense and well-funded agencies' primary purpose is to distribute the state's oil wealth to the Kuwaiti population through wages.[15] Due to Kuwaiti bureaucracy's purpose as wealth-distribution mechanisms, projects emanating from the Kuwaiti government agencies often pale in comparison to the projects that should be theoretically possible for institutions with such wealth and manpower. Because, as Herb notes,[16] these agencies are not necessarily responses to the problems they are designed to address, but rather means to keep the Kuwaiti population happily employed, these agencies do not operate at the level their size and funding might suggest. In this way, despite the large size of the public bureaucracy, there has been little tradition of consistency or efficiency in the implementation of government plans.[17] For example, starting in the 1950s, the immensity of Kuwait's oil wealth fueled a profusion of plans and ideas for the redevelopment of Kuwait City that often fell short of full implementation. The initial plans laid out for the city in 1952 were never fully completed, and subsequent plans saw similar effects.[18]

According to several subjects interviewed for this article, the bloated bureaucracy of the Kuwaiti state has led to inefficiency in implementing large-scale projects related to the environment. To tackle the ecological issues presented by years of soil degradation and reported overgrazing in Kuwait's deserts there has been a longstanding pressure on the Kuwaiti government to implement land rehabilitation projects. However, although experts have planned many such projects, the plans have often failed to reach full implementation. For instance, during the 1990s, the Kuwaiti state developed a National Greenery Plan to support vegetation growth in urban and non-urban Kuwait. Most of the projects under this

plan were never implemented.[19] Interview subjects likewise informed the author that when elements of the plan actually were implemented, their maintenance was poor and unsuccessful.[20]

One cause for the frequent failure of public plans and projects related to vegetation is the bloat of bureaucracies. One such example is the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAFR) and its long-standing plan to rehabilitate the country's wild spaces with millions of individual plants. After the end of the first Gulf War in 1991, the United Nations Compensation Commission awarded USD 8 billion to Kuwait as a means for the restoration of the country's natural environment.[21] The state established an entity called Kuwait National Focal Point (KNFP) to administer and utilize these funds for the rehabilitation of Kuwait's terrestrial and marine ecosystems. To better utilize the resources awarded to them, the Kuwaiti state participated in the Kuwait-Japan Symposium on the Restoration of the Desert Environment in 1995 to estimate the ecological impacts of the Gulf War and the resulting oil spills. Kuwaiti and Japanese researchers developed innovative ideas for the removal of crude oil from desert sands and the afforestation of the country's ranges.[22] At that moment, the Kuwaiti state, backed by its generous UN award money and armed with almost complete ownership of all land within the country, stood poised to rehabilitate the Kuwaiti desert and repair much of the damage incurred during the Gulf War.

Nonetheless, according to those interviewed for this paper, PAAFR, a KNFP stakeholder responsible for the implementation of rehabilitation projects,[23] has taken over 25 years to finally implement an efficient large-scale afforestation project.[24] Where the large funds for environmental restoration have gone is not entirely a mystery, as some rehabilitation projects *have* been completed before now.[25] However, there is a common suggestion among interview subjects that private contracts for restoration and rehabilitation efforts have not been as efficient as possible. As one man, whom we can call Ahmad, reflected, the implementation of real progress seldom occurs due to a political environment in which the largess of competing bureaucracies, their relationship with the state's wealth, and the complete state control of the desert have stymied efforts to care for and strengthen Kuwait's natural vegetation populations.[26] He summed up this sentiment by comparing his practical experience and university schooling:

> I find a big difference between here and what I [learnt was theoretically possible] at university. So, [here in Kuwait], there's a lot of government ministries and bureaucracies, so that slows down the research.[27]

As Ahmad suggests, one explanation behind Kuwait's inability to implement efficient and impactful vegetation projects may be that the Kuwait's bureaucratic government structures have swollen to inconvenient sizes in order to feed an ever-growing demand for public employment. Even a casual visit to the offices of the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fish Resources (PAAFR) will reveal to any visitor the largess of Kuwait's public sector and the immensity of its bureaucracy. The department exists on a campus full of large buildings and gardens, by far one of the lushest spaces the researcher saw during time spent in the country. At the time the author visited, two large buildings with floor-to-ceiling windows were under construction, and the campus was so large the author had to consult maps to find his way to the interview site. Moreover, as a result of inefficient project management in such large bureaucracies, the management of environmental issues in Kuwait is a constant juggle between government agencies and

research institutions. The Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve, for instance, has operated under the management of at least three different entities, including the Ministry of Defense, the Environmental Public Authority, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.[28]

In the agricultural sector, where vegetation issues play a major role, interviews showed that another dynamic of Kuwait's public bureaucracies has resulted in an inability to efficiently implement projects—corruption. As such, interview subjects bemoaned the government's inability and corruption in that area:

> I noticed that the governmental failure has been extended to that industry. The corruption level is very high in the government, and I don't see that the government is taking the agriculture industry quite clearly, and that was clear in the way they agreed to give away farms to some politicians in order to get their loyalty.[29]

Moreover, as some pointed out, the government's management of wealth has crippled real progress in that sector:

> Yeah, they [farms] are actually highly inefficient, but they receive a lot of support from the government, so basically they keep the land and the agriculture just to receive the subsidies.[30]

To conclude, bloated bureaucracies and high public expenditure has often resulted in administrative inefficiency and the lack of successful implementation of projects related to the environment and vegetation. As a note, this is not to suggest that Kuwaiti researchers and bureaucrats are necessarily inept or uninterested in their work—many of the subjects interviewed are highly educated and intensely passionate about their projects. Instead, it is a recognition of the challenges of the political environment in which they operate.

National Security

As Kuwait transitioned to a modern nation state, new practices and interests related to national security would also have an impact on the country's vegetation. During the first half of the twentieth century, vegetation in Kuwait's deserts was a critical component of nomadic life in the country. Rainfall and vegetation defined the movements of nomadic tribes whose livestock required different species of plants from different pastures for their health and survival.[31] Urban leaders in Kuwait relied on those nomadic tribes for the security of Kuwait Town. Tribal groups who aligned with Kuwaiti urban leadership were the city's best line of defense against raids and attacks from tribes in the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.[32] As such, rainfall and vegetation often defined the movements of Kuwait Town's most valued security forces.

With the arrival of British colonial forces and, later, the beginning of Kuwaiti oil production, urban Kuwaitis came to rely more on western powers for their defense against external attacks, and the nomadic tribes lost much of their strategic importance in the region.[33] When Kuwait lost a significant cluster of rangelands in 1922 after the signing of the ʿUqair Protocol (signed by British and Saudi officials without the agreement of Kuwaiti leaders), it also lost the herdsmen and armed nomadic tribes that used those lands, and therefore its most important means for protection against hostile forces surrounding it.[34] Left practically defenseless in an unstable region, Kuwait relied on its status as a protectorate of the British crown for its defense in the years leading to its full independence in 1961. Moreover, while the Kuwaiti state became the country's primary powerbroker, so did the state apparatuses in neighboring Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Kuwait's primary security concern therefore changed

from periodic raids by nomadic tribes to military invasions led by foreign states.

The changed reality of Kuwaiti national security has had a visible impact on Kuwait's vegetation, as security initiatives have sometimes resulted in benefits for local flora and fauna. One of the main ways in which national security interests have contributed to land rehabilitation, for instance, is by producing *de facto*, albeit often unintentional, nature reserves. One such place is the demilitarized zone, protected and administered by the United Nations since 1991, that runs along Kuwait's northern border.[35] The zones comprising this long strip of UN-controlled land are prohibited from public use, and Kuwaiti vegetation researchers report that wild plant and animal life flourishes in the zone. The zone acts as a buffer between Kuwait and once-belligerent Iraq, serving to defend Kuwait from any further intrusions and safeguarding the wealthy country's security against its cash-strapped northern neighbor. Likewise, Kuwait's largest oil fields are closed to all public access, and, according to local researchers who have visited these areas, vegetation grows well there (oil, of course, is a critical aspect of Kuwait's security). As such, wherever wild rangeland is fenced off from grazing and other use for national security purposes, Kuwaiti vegetation recovers brilliantly.

The profusion of vegetation in fenced-off areas demonstrates the ways in which wild vegetation in Kuwait often grows according to the material effects of the state's security interests. While not intentional, the state takes great care to ensure the proper functioning of projects related to its national security, especially after the Gulf War, and the result is havens for wild vegetation. These nature reserves are not always unintentional, however. It is worth noting here that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense was one of the entities that has administered control over Sabah Al-Ahmed Natural Reserve north of Kuwait Bay. Indeed, the fact that a defense-related organ in the Kuwaiti government oversees a national park indicates a close relationship between Kuwait's land management and its security interests that should be explored further in future research.[36]

National security interests also impact vegetation and land management in different ways. In addition to wild vegetation, agricultural crops likewise play a role in the security interests of the state, although the relationship is slightly different. In this case, agriculture is important for food security in the case of an attack.[37] Qatar's recent struggles to provide itself with food after the imposition of the Saudi and Emirati-led embargo is a warning tale for other small desert states like Kuwait. One respondent commented on this dynamic:

> Kuwait is totally dependent on food imports, and that has become an issue especially after what happened between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Qatar was completely cut off so that was kind of a wake-up call, like, "what if that happens to us?," so there's an emphasis now on how to improve soil quality as far as nutrient enrichment and soil productivity, and that's how soil became an [important] issue as a resource.[38]

Having a local food supply is an important security asset. The government therefore allots permits to farm-owners in the communities of Al Wafrah and Al ʿAbdaly where agricultural projects occur. Farm-owners can take out sizable loans when they buy agricultural property, and then receive a subsidy from the government for every unit of a certain crop that they sell. Tomatoes, for instance, earn 35 fils (USD .12) per kilo, cucumbers earn 30 fils per kilo, eggplant earns 15 fils per kilo, and so on .[39] These agricultural efforts are a seemingly unnecessary appendage to a dry, wealthy

country reliant on oil wealth, if not for the state's security concerns.

A third way in which national security interests contribute to vegetation management is in the symbolic value of greening Kuwait. Kuwait's presence as a legitimate state, and not a region of another country like Saudi Arabia or Iraq, both of which invaded Kuwait during the twentieth century, is a critical aspect of recruiting international support for efforts to defend Kuwait against irredentist threats.[40] Any claims that Kuwait belongs to another country like those used to justify the Iraqi invasion in 1990 are dangerous for national security. To that point, one of the proposed purposes for the implementation of Kuwait's National Greenery Plan in the 1990's was to give Kuwait City a "sense of place" through the cultivation of greenery in urban areas.[41] This "sense of place" that plants provide Kuwait is a multi-faceted reflection of the country's vulnerable security status and its relationship with greenery.

Although the national security interests are primarily addressed by the state, implementation of projects combining national security and the symbolic value of greenery also involve non-governmental organizations. One such NGO, Kuwait Oasis, has even gone so far as to plant trees along the Kuwaiti borders, hoping to build a so-called "green wall" around the state that will be visible from space (not to mention the already existing greenery in the UN-controlled border-zones).[42] As one subject connected to the organization described:

> It's called Kuwait Green Wall. Basically, we are planting those trees in a certain format along the Kuwaiti border. It will help prevent sand dunes from coming in, but our objective is to create these systems which will bring in life again, and we are reinstating our green soldiers on the border. They are our best soldiers. We're trying to get life back in those regions.[43]

As the respondent suggests, such a green wall also has a symbolic meaning, becoming "green soldiers" against the encroachment of sand dunes.

Finally, symbolism attached to flora in Kuwait's desert is harnessed for national security practices in other ways. Kuwait's national tree, the *acacia pachyceras,* only exists in one natural-occurring instance. Located within the Sabah Al-Ahmed Nature Reserve and protected from any public access by concrete barrier,[44] the tree has sustained heavy damage both from campers in the pre-war years and military operations during the invasion. Even so, the tree lives on, claiming an age of over 120 years old.[45] Thus, Kuwait's national tree lives on as a symbolic testament to Kuwait's fortitude during and after the Iraqi invasion.

Kuwait's struggle to maintain national security revolves around a wide range of interests and practices—from the security of oil fields to the maintenance of national legitimacy—and that struggle has been reflected in practices involving greenery across the country, whether in symbols of national placehood or in restricted-access military zones turned *de facto* nature reserves. The uses and natural occurrence of Kuwait's vegetation thereby demonstrate the unique symbolic and practical concerns of Kuwaiti national security. In a country where the state controls most of the land and natural resources, this trend is unsurprising, though its manifestations are diverse and ubiquitous.

Leisure

A third dynamic of modern Kuwaiti society that impacts the production and maintenance of green spaces is the contemporary leisure culture built on the commodification of "green" family experiences. As discussed above, Kuwait's cradle-to-grave welfare system means that Kuwaiti citizens are often

financially comfortable, leaving ample time for leisure activities. Moreover, the development of the modern Kuwaiti state with its immense oil wealth and reduced reliance on local land also meant an increase in leisure activities that reconnect people to nature through artificial means. As most Kuwaitis now live in urban settings removed from nature, many look to greenery as a chance to ease the eyes and relax. In the words of one interview subject:

> Imagine that this area here [points to a small garden] was just street without any plants, how are you gonna feel? Or just even soil with nothing, how are you gonna feel? You don't feel alive with that.[46]

The idea of greenery as a form of relaxation and leisure can be best demonstrated in the case of farms. Indeed, although many farms focus on agricultural production, as discussed above, the purpose of Kuwaiti farms is also usually (though not always) recreational. In this case, the growth of vegetation represents escape and entertainment on the part of individuals who live their lives mostly in Kuwait's urban areas. In general, many farm-owners openly acknowledge this trend. While production is important to some Kuwaiti farm-owners, they commonly mention that Kuwait's agricultural sector is not dynamic or economical. Instead, farms in Kuwait are clearly a pleasurable endeavor designed as a respite from the noise of urban life.

One example of such farms is Blue Lake Farm, a tourism operation capable of handling over 8,000 visitors per day. It consists of small huts surrounded by green banks of sugar cane for family picnics, along with other family-inspired diversions and attractions.[47] As the owner of this farm put it:

> I don't want to be in the city, so I decided to come here [to the farm], and stay here. I like it better here where I can relax, and the visitors love it too.[48]

In this way, the realized and imagined construction of plant-oriented spaces for leisure and enjoyment resembles the construction of malls, cinemas, or even restaurants in urban Kuwait. Such spaces comprise physical locations where a family can share an experience and then have the freedom to leave so long as they pay the required price. Perhaps there is a connection between these ideas and the common practice of decorating Kuwaiti malls with live trees. Furthermore, in the agricultural sector, plant cultivation has become a source of pride for individual farm-owners much more than a source of livelihood. To that point, farm-owners in Kuwait prefer not to be referred to as "farmers," but rather "farm-owners,"[49] and multiple farm-owners reported that farming in Kuwait usually involves financial losses. As one interview subject said:

> Farmer is not the perfect word. They are more farm-owners than farmers, there aren't really peasants in Kuwait you know? Yeah, it's more of a hobby. It's more of a luxury. So people don't really like to be called a farmer, it makes them feel a little low.50

The motivation to continue farming comes from its value as a hobby and an escape from urban life. As such, in the agricultural world, a local expertise is developing around cultivation of crops in Kuwait. That expertise, however, is limited to small numbers of hobbyists and their laborers. For the moment, the allure of vegetation-related hobbies remains a driving factor in the production, utilization, and mastery of artificial green spaces around the country.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the status of greenery and vegetation management in contemporary Kuwait society. Against the

backdrop of a historical analysis of Kuwait's trajectory in the twentieth century, the reports and testimonies of interview subjects sketch out a dynamic and complex relationship between Kuwait's governance, demography, and political economy on the one hand and vegetation and greenery on the other. Key to this relationship is how the internal dynamics of an oil-dependent rentier state reflect directly on the location and nature of vegetal growth around the country. The effects of

bloated bureaucracies and their relationship with state wealth, the particular national security concerns of a small wealthy state in an unstable region, and the culture of leisure in modern Kuwait all have their own impact on vegetation and greenery through diverse avenues. The result is a natural vegetal projection, or profile, of the internal dynamics of Kuwait's political economy as a rentier state.

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[1] Overgrazing as an issue in Kuwait has a somewhat nebulous past. While it is clear most modern herdsmen are stateless Bidoon people and/or South Asian migrant laborers, herd-owners are usually nomadic by heritage, and citizens. While researchers are quick to point fingers at well relocation, the death of nomadic lifestyles, and a cultural emphasis on meat production for the de-vegetation of the Kuwaiti deserts, some historical accounts, including that of Violet Dickson in the 1950s, blame oil company workers for denuding the desert of its most important forage plants. Maps of vegetation communities taken over time are not enough to confirm that overgrazing around Kuwait City has changed the ecological makeup of the surrounding deserts. A pollen-dating test would be instrumental in reaching such a conclusion. Too much emphasis on over-grazing as the main culprit in the deforestation of Kuwait's shrublands is risky – ethnic tensions between traditionally urban and nomadic Kuwaitis are enough to create overblown accusations towards nomadic people and their practices. Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly true that vegetation grows much better in fenced areas, and overgrazing is at least a contributing factor to its degradation in the wild. For more on issues of land degradation in Kuwait, see e.g., J. M. Al-Awadhi S. A. Omar R. F. Misak, "Land degradation indicators in Kuwait," *Land Degradation & Development* 16, no. 2 (April 2005): 163-176; R. F. Misak, J. M. Al-Awadhi, S. A. Omar, S. A. Shahid, "Soil degradation in Kabd area, southwestern Kuwait City," *Land Degradation & Development* 13, no. 5 (October 2002): 403-415.

[2] In total, twenty-two interviews were conducted by the author.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Farah Al-Nakib, *Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2016).

[5] Michael Herb, *Wages of Oil* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2014).

[6] See Farah Al-Nakib, Kuwait Transformed: A History of Oil and Urban Life.

[7] Harold Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951), 14.

[8] Al-Nakib, Kuwait Transformed, 90.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 150.

[11] Farah Al-Nakib. "Revisiting 'Hadar' and 'Nomadic' in Kuwait: Citizenship, Housing, and the Construction of a Dichotomy," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 1 (2014): 5-30.

[12] "Country Comparison: GDP Per Capita," CIA World Factbook, Accessed December 22, 2020, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html

[13] "Oil-rich Kuwait Faces Looming Debt Crisis," *Al Jazeera*, 24 November 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/11/24/when-kuwait-emerged-from-a-monthslong-coronavirus-lockdown-hundr.

[14] See eg. Fuad Abdullah Al-Omar, "Growth of Public Expenditure and Bureaucracy in Kuwait," *Islamic Economic Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995): 1-16.

[15] Herb, *Wages,* Introduction.

[16] Herb, *Wages,* Introduction.

[17] This was the opinion of several subjects interviewed for this research.

[18] Gardiner, *Kuwait: The Making of a City,* (London, Burnt Hill: Longman, 1983), 85.

[19] During fieldwork in Kuwait the author saw and reviewed plans for Kuwait's National Greenery Plan of the 1990s.

[20] Practitioner 10, interviewed by the researcher, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[21], "Category F Claims", The United Nations Compensation Commission, Accessed 8/23/2019. https://uncc.ch/category-f

[22] N. Al-Awadhi, M.T. Balba, C. Kamizawa (eds.), *Restoration and Rehabilitation of the Desert Environment,* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 1996).

[23] "KNFP Overview," Kuwait National Focal Point, accessed 12/28/2020, http://www.kuwaitnfp.org/Client/Content.aspx?Id=38 , and "Stakeholders," Kuwait National Focal Point, accessed 12/28/2020, http://www.kuwaitnfp.org/Client/Stakeholders.aspx

[24] The causes for such a delay do not arise from any natural or human factor in the desert itself. Vegetation has regrown with surprising speed in protected areas around the country, according to several interview subjects who research desert rehabilitation.

[25] "Projects", Kuwait National Focal Point, Accessed 8/23/2019.
http://www.kuwaitnfp.org/Client/KERPProjects.aspx

[26] Practitioner 12, Research professional, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[27] Practitioner 12, interviewed by the author.

[28] Samira Omar, محمية صباح الأحمد الطبيعية: الخصائص الطبيعية والموارد البيئية (Kuwait, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, 2014).

[29] Practitioner 4 (agricultural business-owner), interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[30] Practitioner 3, interview.

[31] Peter Mandaville, *Bedouin Ethnobotany* (Tuscon: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2019).

[32] Harold Dickson, *The Arab*, 255.

[33] Michael Herb notes that the assembly and dismissal of the Kuwaiti National Assembly has historically corresponded with the rise of irredentist threats from Iraq, arguing that Kuwait's efforts to maintain an appearance of democracy relate to its need for foreign democratic powers to want to defend it against outside threats. Herb, *Wages,* 63.

[34] Administration Report of the Kuwait Political Agency for the Year 1930. Lt.-Colonel Harold Richard Patrick GB165-0085, MECA.

[35] "Background", United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, Accessed 7/23/2019. https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unikom/background.html

[36] Samira Omar, *Vegetation of Kuwait* (Kuwait City: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, 2000), 11.

[37] "Kuwait Country Profile," Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, fao.org http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=KWT

[38] Practitioner 3, interview.

[39] This is according to documents reviewed by the author summer of 2019.

[40] Herb, *Wages,* 63.

[41] Al-Awadhi, Balba, Kamizawa, *Restoration,* 159.

[42] "About Us", Kuwait Oasis, Accessed 8/23/2019. http://www.kuwait-oasis.com/about-us/

[43] Practitioner 6, NGO worker, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait. .

[44] Nawara Fattahova, "Deep Roots, How Plants Play An Important Role in Kuwait's Environment, History," *Kuwait Times,* 4 December 2016.

[45] Practitioner 7, Researcher, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[46] Practitioner 11, Researcher, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[47] Practitioner 8, Farm-owner, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City.

[48] Practitioner 9, Farm-owner, interviewed by the author, July 2019, Kuwait City

[49] Practitioner 4, interview.

[50] Ibid., interview.