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A Common Market Solution for the Middle East

The institution of the nation-state, which still dominates the interplay of international affairs, makes it extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate the cleavages and turbulences splitting and shaking the Middle East. This is not too surprising when we realize how inadequate and destructive nationalism has become. Despite this, or probably because of this, the last two decades have witnessed a new, vigorous economic-social-political system make its appearance in Western Europe. It is a brilliantly creative departure from the old order, bringing fresh hope for the future as well as becoming a model for the resolution of the troubles and conflicts in the Near East.

During the beginning years of Western Society, the adolescent strengths and brash belligerences of growing groups served a useful purpose, with the hubris of vigorous or youthful nationalism being their primary motivation. The same or like drives, quickened by the survival need of a persecuted race to return to a home haven in a world that too often callously rationalizes or tolerates genocide, helped to create the State of Israel.

That momentous event thereupon accelerated a sociological and political trend which had been evident for some time in the more developed sections of Western Society. Consequently, we are observing a Middle Eastern microcosmic example, concentrated within a few decades, of how the Industrial Revolution (since about 1760) has been propelling nation-states everywhere on suicidal crash courses. Especially is this so with respect to their technology and science which far outstrip their wisdom, the former in the Space Age and the latter aborted by the psychoses of primordial territorialism. One might just as well give a four-year old a ready-to-explode grenade with which to play ball.

As a result, the time has come for a reappraisal of the nation-state as a feasible governmental instrument for twenty-first century existence. And the Middle East is peculiarly ready for such a renaissance in thinking and a consequential economic, social and political restructuring. Dangerous traumas now obsess the peoples of that region, understandably caused by much suffering, sincere ethnocentrism, honest religious differences and unfortunate

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chauvinisms, clearly demonstrating why neither the past nor the present could be used blindly to found a viable future. A new form of international society is a real necessity to avoid catastrophe in that unhappy area, and thereafter in the rest of the world. The limb-cutting and body-stretching tactics of the mythological Procrustes, that sadistic, folklore giant of ancient Attica (who seized travelers and tied them to an iron bedstead, after which he either cut off their legs or stretched his victims till they fitted it), must be abandoned by a nation-state-minded world community, if the Arab states and Israel, and probably also Turkey and Iran, are to exist in peace. Only a new symbiotic union, that at the same time promotes respective group independences and fulfillments, can succeed for those nation-states; in short, sovereign states of the Middle East should become intertwined member states in a Common Market, a Middle East Economic Community (MEEC).

To be sure, it will be a formidable task to achieve that goal, but much less so than what is now being attempted for the Near East. No matter how many wars, terroristic acts, raids, cease-fires and negotiated or imposed interim or so-called final settlements there may be over the years, history has repeatedly proved that none of them ever solves anything satisfactorily for nation-states except, upon occasion to avert or accelerate their liquidation. The cancers of continual aggression and violence, so symptomatic of nationalism, will only spread, deepen and destroy. We should not ignore the overworked, but nonetheless wise, aphorism of Aristotle that peoples who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

The beneficiaries of present policies in the Middle East certainly are not the masses living there, whether they be Arabs, Israelis, Turks, Iranians, Kurds, Bedouins or Druses. They yearn simply for peace with their neighbors and a reasonable plenty for their families, while enjoying their cultures and religions. Only certain Great Powers, that region's demagogues and dictators, and some oil dynasties and multinational oil enterprises can hope to benefit, and only at an extravagant cost of blood and money, and with such a severe compromising of morality and integrity, as to make even their continued dominance doubtful.

The elusive pot of gold (oil) at the end of the "energy" rainbow, that macabre will-o'-the-wisp lure, is again persuading ambitious Big Powers to seduce oil potentates and to sharpen swords for carving spheres of influence in rich oil territories. This, despite the frequency with which it has been shown that such procedures are not only very impermanent but ultimately disastrous.

Of course, we do know that Middle Eastern oil is necessary, perhaps even vital, to the world, at least for the next twenty or thirty years. But the antediluvian armed might methods traditionally used to guarantee a supply of raw materials for wealthy nations are tragically wrong. No one will really gain; no Middle Easterner, no European, no American, no Russian, no Chinese, no Japanese, not anyone. Those outmoded nationalistic games, so involved with

brinkmanship bluff and counterbluff, not only will not lead to long term solutions in the Near East but, with modern science, have become much too risky. New international rules to preserve the interests of all concerned must obtain, on a trading and not on a fighting basis. This can be done by providing that area with an MEEC integrated commerce within an MEEC supranational system.

To accomplish this diplomatic, political feat, our attitude toward the Middle East must be radically changed, finally abandoning the idea of warring, competitive nation-states. That concept is not at all in pace with the current expansion of universality. Much before the advent of an Industrial Society, Deutero-Isaiah (the anonymous Biblical prophet during the Babylonian Exile of twenty-five hundred years ago) pointed the way. His insight perceived it was necessary to expand a tribal, henotheistic Jehovah into an ecumenical monotheism and related immanent law that could formulate a supranational society for all persons, races and nations.

Today's urgency for political changes in international interchanges stems from the use of cosmic forces for conflict rather than cooperation. Unrestrained industrial competition, as compounded by communism or capitalism and compressed within the xenophobia of nationalism (the vestigial territorialism of primitive man), especially when aggravated by greed, pride or religious or racial tensions, cannot help but obliterate peaceful coexistence among nation-states. Faced with that prospect, the Middle East, if it should pursue nationalistic ways, will in the end have no victorious race, state or group, no superior religion, and certainly no peace for itself or with the rest of the world. One way or another, if the Near East should adhere to that course, the eventual holocaust will engulf all; and our species may well join those already in extinction.

Fortunately, there is an intelligent response to that Toynbeeian challenge to civilization, the Common Market, the brain child of Jean Monnet (one of the few greats of the twentieth century), who was inspired by Aristide Briand's 1918 plan for a United States of Europe. Ignoring ridicule and opposition, Monnet had the stamina, patience, vision and wisdom to work for over forty years on the construction of the European Economic Community (EEC). He knew that only the EEC would bring a United States of Europe and permanent peace to Western Europe. Prior to 1957 (when the Treaty Establishing the EEC was signed), that part of the world suffered from the same diseases of violence and war now sickening the Middle East. Western Europe was a constantly boiling caldron of misery, cruelty, and intolerance.

The solution for that European malaise was not born of wars, treaties of peace, balance-of-power alliances, military spheres of influence, or the other redundantly familiar tools of nation-states. Nor did transnational unions, without the prior cement of integrated economies, help. Associations of such unrelated sovereign states either die a-borning (the late League of Nations) or

slowly become sterile organizations (the United Nations, characterized by much discussion but little execution). It was the EEC concept, with the political goal of a United States of Europe, that brought the hope of permanent peace to that region. It is not strange then that the Middle East turmoil will continue as long as the same pre-EEC policies are pursued there.

Even though those supranational Powers, that did function well before the EEC or still do so outside the EEC, were and are based on transnationally interwoven economies, they were and are effective only when made possible by the shotgun marriages of empire and commerce. Because rival militarisms cocoon international trade within competitive territorial spheres of influence, the latter are always savagely disputed by raw power and are bloodily transitory (whether measured by generations or longer periods of time). While they last, however, a recognized and obeyed uniform law follows their mailed fists, a kind of precursor of the peacefully created and operating EEC.

To name a few typical, although different, examples, there were, at various places and times in history, the *Pax Romana*, the *Pax Britannica* and the *Pax* of the short-lived Mongolian Empire begun by Genghis Khan. One exception to the brute force sphere of influence was the spiritual spread of the Medieval Church under the aegis of its religious power. It failed to build a lasting world-wide (or at least Western European) political, social and economic order because it adopted the principles of an absolute monarchy to organize the Papacy, thus reducing the Church to the unholy level of its contemporary, evolving nation-states.

Happily, there were and are a few events in history to indicate the kind of international vehicle that can function peacefully and productively. Those experiences are bellwethers to guide us safely out of present international insanity.

One was the medieval Hanseatic League of free towns (such as Bremen, Lubeck and Hamburg) in northern Germany and adjoining countries, formed for their mutual economic advancement and the protection of their international trade. A uniform commercial code was developing in that nascent Common Market, with a peace among its cities because of their economic ties. The League, however, could not resist the military superiority of the member states of the Holy Roman Empire, in turn controlled by the Hapsburg Monarchs. It was still too soon for the world to accept a supranational union of economic reciprocity which was not born of and based on force.

Another was the emergence of the Swiss Confederation (composed of Germans, French and Italians). It pooled the economic and other strengths of its different peoples in an unusual defensive enclave in the isolated Alps, withal preserving their respective national personalities by the use of Cantonal units of government within a common federation.

Then came the novel and significant entry on the world stage of the United

States of America, a paradigm at first of a Common Market composed of separate, sovereign states. It was strongly unified in colonial days by the same economic interests and later successfully overcame a nearly fatal internal moral and economic division in the nineteenth century. Now, however, it is unable, even after an auspicious start, to provide an extended supranational system for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, to support and supervise its gargantuan multinational corporations in their pathbreaking of global economic exploitation and reorganization. Whatever the reasons may be, the American people, after several costly wars, appear hostile to the use of military power, preferring for want of a better alternative to retreat to the illusory bastion of grand isolation without having first founded a durable peaceful transnational way of life.

Some would say of such behavior that the tough pioneer fiber of the American people has been rewoven into the soft, delicate fabric of a too materialistic, spiritually hollow, decadent, and badly confused Great Power, ripe for plucking by its rivals. Others would say that the excellent instincts of the Americans, especially of the younger generations, are turning them from past methods to find other, more decent solutions to preserve posterity. Unfortunately, the result will be the same, failure in the future world, unless a workable international system without force is made functional by an expansion of the original idea that gave birth to the United States of America, *e.g.*, a much broader Western Hemisphere Economic Community that will lead eventually to social and political union.

Finally, we come to the EEC, a transnational union wherein nationalisms are evenly balanced and transmuted on the international plan of a planned single, supranational economy with an enforceable law. The EEC, which transcends nation-states, is the economic-social-political device replacing the slowly collapsing balance-of-power order of spheres of influence imposed by military strength. Most importantly, it fills that vacuum with a wider, more regional body that is independent of any one Great Power patron.

The EEC was founded as an economic union which would lead in successive stages to a United States of Europe before the end of the twentieth century. It will have common policies in the fields of tariffs, money and currency, law, taxation, social affairs, finance, and business associations (their organization, accounting procedures and operation and the sale and regulation of their securities), as well as judicial, legislative and executive institutions. By 1978, those Western European nation-states that have not joined the EEC (Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Austria, Spain, Portugal and Iceland) are scheduled to conclude free trade arrangements with it, specifically for the abolishment or amelioration of customs, tariffs and like economic barriers. Similar agreements are in preparation between the EEC and the non-member countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

Within that vast area of free trade, the EEC will be crystallizing as a separate economic, social and political entity. This it is and will be doing by gradually tearing down the many legal and fiscal barriers separating its nation-state members. These activities will promote and make possible the fundamental quartet of the 1957 EEC Treaty freedoms: the free movement of persons, goods and capital and the freedom of establishment and supply of services among and within EEC member states.

At first, all this seemed to be an impossible dream because of the inclusion in the EEC of former bitter, die-hard national enemies, but the miracle is happening and wars among the states of Western Europe belong to history. Even though EEC growth appears to be slow, it really is not so when understood as part of a political evolution in the context of geological or astronomical time-scales rather than in the relatively infinitesimal earth time periods of decades or centuries. What are twenty-five, fifty or even one hundred years in a struggle for survival? And there must be a beginning!

The argument has been made (specious in my judgment), that Common Markets such as the EEC will in turn fiercely contend with each other, and by wars if necessary, beyond reasonable competition. That may or may not be so, but, in any event, a Common Market twenty-first century will reduce the risks. The frightening potentials of about one hundred and fifty independent, selfish, bristling nation-states should shrink to those of probably six to ten Common Market Communities. A less complex world will be the result, leading over the years (whether centuries or millenia) to fewer and fewer combinations of Common Markets (and, eventually, to the nirvana of only one such ecumenical union) through the application of by then well understood reciprocal interests.

The foregoing definitely relates to and could help the Middle East, once a revolutionary analysis of its problems has been made and placed in perspective with a fresh approach. That geographical area has always been innovative in culture, philosophy and religion. It was there that the omniscient oneness of the same God for all was proclaimed, permeating three of the five major faiths.

There is no intent to sermonize herein regarding that religious sameness, wondrous though it may be. The point is merely to explain and underscore that those people, who were and are capable of such intuitively beneficent philosophies, have the capacity to follow in the footsteps of the EEC in order to guarantee what their mutual God, their Prophets and their teachers had so often promised all of them.

The 1957 EEC Treaty and its supplementary Conventions, as well as EEC legislative, judicial, executive and bureaucratic organs with their numerous regulations, directives and decisions, are readily available for study and research. The works of many commentators and actual operational interpretations will light the pathway that has already been traced. All that need

be done is to make adaptations and changes to meet special conditions in the Middle East.

That task is not insuperable for able specialists in sociology, economics and the law. And how much more intelligent and productive it would be to devote the energies, and intellectual resources of the Middle East nation-states, the Great Powers and the United Nations, as well as those of their representatives and emissaries, to the formation and functioning of an MEEC (comprising Turkey, Iran, the Arab states and Israel).

In all fairness, it must be said that strong compulsions for survival and deep yearnings for national or racial assertions make for right and wrong on all sides in the grievous Near East controversies. If left alone, without any lasting solutions, those differences will inevitably worsen and escalate. To quote J. L. Tolman (Professor of History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a member of the Israel Academy of Science and Humanities):

A student of national movements and race relations is led to the conclusion that in the long run the only way of securing peaceful coexistence between warring nationalities is to separate them and allow each of them the right to self-determination.¹

What more tried and true way to permit such self-determinations and yet translate nationalisms into transnationalism than with the EEC formula! The economic, social and political advantages of gathering Middle East nation-states and peoples under the umbrella of an MEEC would be enormous and for the good of that region and the entire world. What dynamic success could result from the creative industrial employment of substantial oil capital (as contrasted to its mere speculative or passive investment and superficial public works and nation-state ego power use), when combined with the technology, science, management ability, and labor supply available in the Near East! If only the leaders there could view the potential with proper objectivity, divorced from the blinding immaturity of pride, prejudice and emotion, all of the groups in that area could relate to each other and survive together on a much higher level of living and happiness. The Middle East would not only better itself and help develop the vast resources of the continent of Africa, but it could also be a stabilizing fulcrum of power, peace and prosperity in the world.

By establishing an MEEC, the Near East will preserve its own governance rather than becoming an exploitation and conflict area for Great Power contending subtly or ruthlessly for economic spheres of influence. History has frequently shown what happens to independent states caught in such contests. They either disappear or their peoples suffer unconscionable persecutions. By following the simple lesson taught in the example demonstrating the ease with which one can break sticks separately as compared to the difficulty of doing so

¹The Observer, London, December 24, 1972, at 9, col. 1.

when those same sticks are tied together in one compact bundle, the Middle East can create and guide its own future by standing strongly united in an MEEC and yet retaining its respective national and racial self-determinations in peace and cooperation thereunder. As a matter of fact, even the Great Powers would benefit from an MEEC, because they would compete competitively therein in trade without the blood and money disasters, traumas, and burdens of destructive wars.

It is encouraging to read what Willy Brandt, the former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (an EEC member state), wrote for *The New York Times* (April 29, 1973, section 4, page 17, column 2):

The European reality of an emancipated partnership is a new, indeed, perhaps sobering, experience for the Europeans. . . . We still find it hard to speak with one voice because some national facts of special character prevent us from reaching common decision.

However, it was that stormy period in March [1973], when the latest monetary crisis gave us a hard time, which proved that the consensus within the European community [EEC], which has formed around the nucleus of Franco-German solidarity, is only a hand's breath from becoming a reality. . . .

Europe's new self-awareness I am speaking about derives from the will to accomplish now the task in which it has failed for so long in the bonds of nationalism. . . .

It is incredible that such an available and reasonable EEC type solution for the Middle East should not be seriously considered and actually tried. Instead, persons in places of responsibility and decision prefer frustrating, self-defeating, diplomatic or military strategems, so reminiscent of earlier, or even current, barbaric custom. It would seem that those persons, many of whom are learned, experienced and sincere, should be striving to adopt a form of Near East Society geared to the twenty-first century—an MEEC to companion the EEC.

Economically, the area would seem to be made to order for an MEEC Treaty (along the lines of the 1957 EEC Treaty), with an MEEC combination in key Middle East cities of such EEC institutions as are now located in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. How much happier and simpler it would be to resolve the disputes concerning the symbolic internationalism of Jerusalem, and its Holy Places, within the Common Market philosophy of an MEEC. The location there of the most important MEEC headquarters alone could be the necessary face saving for its member states and others, albeit preserving a recognition of Israeli sovereignty.

Furthermore, and, if necessary, a new State of Palestine could more readily be formed from parts of present Arab nation-states and some of the Israeli Occupied Territories, when the economic, social and political ties of an MEEC are in full force and effect. This could satisfy both the desire of Palestinian Arabs for self-determination and the acknowledged requirement that Israel should have safe and secure borders. The same MEEC solution could also apply

to other Near East problems, such as those concerning the Kurds in Iraq, Iran and Turkey. Much can be accomplished peacefully within an MEEC, if it is used with willingness and ingenious creativity!

When there has been a realistic acceptance of the fact that there will be no effective Great Power or local victor solution in the Middle East under present irrational conditions (and who can doubt this as events there continue to unfold?), adjustments should be made to form a new transnational society therein. The ultimate goal of an MEEC could even be a new political union—The Federated States of the Middle East—by or even before the middle of the twenty-first century, with agreed, prior progressive stages such as were first outlined and are now taking place as part of the EEC's long-range plans for a United States of Europe.

Failing earnest efforts toward that end, confidence could well be lost in the sincerity and capacity of an allegedly theomorphic *homo sapiens* to exist as part of, the cosmic Universal Force. Unless he can do so, it would seem that those divine Ones and great Prophets, who spiritually and actually marched with mankind in the Near East, would have truly preached and sacrificed in vain.

