

All three explications sound like bunk to us. We have our own explanation, and its reasoning goes much further back than any of the preceding ones.

After World War I, some British strategists and intelligence operatives—T. E. Lawrence prominent among them—decided that the sons of the desert had performed beautifully for the Allied cause against the Turks; they concluded that their romantic valor could be converted into political support for the West in the Middle East. Two decades later, the Arab world was studded with Hitler's admirers, and during World War II the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem organized Arab military units that fought for the Axis. Yet, a sentimental proclivity for the Arabs not only survived in the Foreign Office, but also has spread to the State Department, and is tenderly flourishing in the big oil corporations. After the last war, a new factor emerged: the fledgling state of Israel. Ever since, an implacable and nonnegotiable hatred against Israel has qualified, motivated, and governed every Arab political movement and initiative—be it radical or conservative in character. Those in the British and American foreign-policy establishments who, more or less overtly, supported mindless Arab emotionalism were called "Arabists," but they preferred to call themselves "pragmatists": Arabs, they maintained, number several hundred million, possess invaluable raw resources, and to alienate them by not giving them whatever they wish means Western suicide. Those who supported Israel pointed to the fact that Israel, with which we share a common civilizational heritage, could evolve into a superior political force whose impact on and expertise in the region might prove much more valuable to the West than demographic and material factors—they were called "idealists." Presidents Eisenhower and Carter were typical "pragmatists"; Truman and Nixon, not especially noted for their ardor for Jews, whether in Haifa or the Bronx, were "idealists." History has proved the idealists right. Israel did become a rarity among statehoods and societies in the

modern world: democratic, staunchly pro-Western, and militarily efficient all at once. When nazism vanished as an adored exemplar, most Arab military regimes extended their warmest sympathies to the Soviet Union—the West's principal challenger and enemy on the global scene. But a fondness for the Islamic cultural image, combined with the love for Saudi Arabia's billions and the hope of fabulous corporate profits



from dealing with whoever can provide macrodividends, caused American "Arabists" and "pragmatists" to multiply, in spite of all factual and reasonable evidence that an "evenhanded," that is pro-Arab, policy is not of benefit to us.

In 1982 Israel, prompted by a strategic necessity of self-defense, freed Lebanon from the Syrian-sponsored PLO occupation, thus delivering the country back to Western influence. At the behest of "Arabists" at the State Department, and "pragmatic" Republicans in his White House entourage, President Reagan—an "idealist" by instinct and earlier ideological allegiance—somehow under pressure from the international left's campaign against Israel's "imperialist cruelties" (exerted chiefly by the U.S. liberal press), reversed his position on the Middle East and sent the Marines to

Beirut. By doing this, he thwarted Israel's victory, impaired the accomplishment of its final objectives, saved the remnants of the PLO, preserved the Syrian positions in a large part of Lebanon, and disdained all Israeli advice on how to proceed in the hellish cauldron of Lebanese-Arab factional politics. Soon, we saw Marines brandishing their pistols at Israeli soldiers (who simply knew better where to look for snipers) and being praised for their "resolve" by Secretary Weinberger, the Administration's chief "Arabist," "pragmatist," and Saudi Arabia spokesman. Thus, the Israelis, who are not convinced that Lebanon can be preserved as a political entity without a war with Syria, withdrew from the center of the struggle. The Marines stayed. Their presence, to our mind, symbolizes the Western concept of how to deal with the Middle Eastern imbroglio without knowing who wants what, why, and at what price. The Lebanese government, which the Marines are supposed to protect, is weak, corrupt, treacherous, and utterly unreliable—in itself living proof that the state of Lebanon, as a legal framework for diverse groups constantly at each other's throats, is no longer a viable and feasible proposition. To many it seems, therefore, that we have resigned ourselves to losing young lives there without firing a shot because the "Arabists" and "pragmatists" who shape this administration's Middle Eastern policies and manipulate its alliances and "friendships" will never admit their expediency, irresponsibility, and bungling. Their careers are at stake.

This is why we were in Beirut on that fatal October day. □

### *Gott Strafe England!*

Voices are heard from the British Islands that are highly critical of Mr. Reagan's decision to do something about that other little island—Grenada. Let us take a brief peek at what for the last two centuries has been called in history books the perfidy of Albion. Once it was a

world calamity, but today it seems more like the annoying fuming of a has-been.

Mrs. Thatcher, a lady rather admired on these shores, quite vehemently scolded the U.S. for its actions. Grenada is formally a member of the British Commonwealth, so it would be natural that, when the Queen's own governor is practically imprisoned by Marxist-Leninist gangsters, the kingdom would do something about it—not to mention that the neighboring islands, also Commonwealth members, implored Britain for protection. But Britain, a sclerotic lion that knows the limits to which she can taunt a very robust and equally unpredictable bear, chose to do nothing. Once Reagan had made it clear that he is not overly concerned about the bear's sensitivities, some British conservatives made snide remarks that his move was intended to boost his domestic political fortunes—a stance that deserves moral censure. Suddenly, what happened in elections subsequent to the Tories' own little war in the Falklands was conveniently forgotten, as was our not-so-tacit support for our British "cousins" that has cost us a lot of Latin American good will.

The London press scornfully reprimanded us on the freedom-of-the-press issue: no correspondent was allowed to accompany the American task force in the Caribbean. No mention was made of the fact that Mrs. Thatcher, during the Falkland enterprise, permitted the British media to photograph only the Union Jack flying proudly from the warships and smiling faces of embarking patriotic paratroopers. Anyone who lived through Vietnam will recall how *our* media interviewed enemy propagandists and how much footage, or column inches, *they* were given in our press.

For many years prior to World War I, Britain and her royalty projected a most tender love for the Kaiser's Germany. Then it went to war on the side of France and Czarist Russia, and angry Germans carried placards that read "God Punish England!" during street demonstrations.

We do not ask God for retribution. But we do suggest that, having lost an empire, Britain could now relax a bit and afford both a sense of shame and a sense of fairness. □

### *Ship of Fools*

The debate on how to render America impotent has reached orgasmic intensity. Suddenly, everybody sees atomic war just around the corner; the conventional liberal media are organizing giant scare campaigns (in the name of the people's right to know), while the radicals, the professional freezeniks, the regular pro-Moscow troops, and all the incorporated communist-front enterprises accuse the liberal media of anti-internationalism—that is, of an inability to play in a Soviet-orchestrated arrangement as they do so successfully.

Faced with the news that the Russians had hydrogen bombs, Winston Churchill said that henceforth the very concept of defense was fundamentally altered. True enough, but this keen insight did not obliterate Clausewitz's more venerable truth—that war is politics by another means. Only the acceptance of the theorized, calculated, and conjectural premise that an atomic war is unwinnable under any circumstances negates Clausewitz's principle and eliminates war as a means to defend the basic institutions on which America was erected and still stands as a superior social entity. For if it is true that no war in our epoch can actually end in a

victory, then America is doomed. This verity means that a democracy, a pluralistic state, and a free society must perish. The reasons for this gloomy inference are pure, simple, and mercilessly unequivocal.

The idea of détente, as it was crystallized in the supersmart minds of its conceptualists, was quite optimistic in nature. It assumed that, during a historically protracted period of nonbellicosity, our moral superiority, political attractiveness, and economic efficiency would impress the Soviet society to such an extent that that society would eventually begin to exert pressure on its leadership, and that such a process could positively shape the world's future. Thus, any concession short of appeasement and surrender made sense. Such cheerful credulity resulted in the unleashing of Soviet-sponsored terrorist activities on an unheard-of scale, then in an open invasion of Afghanistan, then in the massacre of a nascent freedom in Poland. We now confront a behemoth totalitarian and military power committing outrages that once would have qualified as acts of war, but we cannot respond properly for we may trigger a war, which is a priori unwinnable. So—if we are disallowed from waging even a justified war in defense of our very existence—what are our other options?

One is that an armed conflict with the Soviet Union will be replaced with a propaganda war, which we would certainly lose. In such a war, lies are the most potent weapon. For example: the Soviet Ministry of Truth could tell Russians that

