

CHAPTER

6

WHY ARE THERE TWENTY-ONE SEPARATE ARAB STATES?



There is one Jewish state. There are 21 separate Arab states. Why? The short answer is that this is how the European powers divided up the region for their own administrative convenience. Thereafter, Arab strongmen maintained these artificial boundaries when the Europeans left.

Are we really a world of nations-states, or is this a façade recognized in the halls of the United Nations, and in Western Capitals? If Taiwan governs itself and has its own army, why is it not a recognized state?

It has no home at the U.N. because of pressure from the People's Republic of China.

Why are some states in Africa internationally recognized when their "official" governments control little of the geographic area within the recognized boundaries?

When despots wastefully use capital and labor to try to suppress unwilling citizens within the entire land area of their internationally recognized state, it is a recipe for human

disaster. The international community ignores reality in favor of artificial boundaries and wonders why Africa is a basket case.

Reality is also ignored in the Middle East. Oxford professor and historian Bernard Lewis best explains the situation:

“In the Western world, the basic unit of human organization is the nation, which is then subdivided in various ways, one of which is by religion. Muslims, however, tend to see not a nation subdivided into religious groups but a religion subdivided into nations. This no doubt partly because most of the nation-states that make up the modern Middle East are relatively new creations, left over from the era of Anglo-French imperial domination that followed the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, and they preserve the state-building and frontier demarcations of their former imperial masters. Even their names reflect this artificiality: Iraq was a medieval province, with borders very different from those of the modern republic; Syria, Palestine, and Libya are names from classical antiquity that hadn’t been used in the region for a thousand years or more before they were revived and imposed by European imperialists in the twentieth century: Algeria and Tunisia do not even exist as words in Arabic—the same name serves for the city and the country. Most remarkable of all, there is no word in the Arabic language for Arabia, and modern Saudi Arabia is spoken of instead as “the Saudi Arab kingdom” or “the peninsula of the Arabs,” depending on the context.”¹

“In the early centuries of the Muslim era, the Islamic community was one state under one ruler. Even after that community split up into many states, the ideal of