

Empire No More!

By Ken Coates,

Reviewed by Geoff Simons

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US imperial ambitions laid bare

THIS is a collection of papers dating from July 1999 to June 2004, on such topics as the NATO war against Yugoslavia, the politics of nuclear warfare, European militarism, the war in Iraq and human rights issues.

It is all good stuff, but much of the material will already be familiar to Morning Star readers.

The author acknowledges that "these writings do not pretend to furnish a history of troubled events" and it is certainly true that most of the topics are dealt with in greater detail elsewhere.

Nonetheless, it is very useful to have these topics addressed within one succinct volume, not least because it includes a number of important political documents that have not been given much publicity elsewhere.

It is good to be reminded of the first draft for defence policy guidance of February 18 1992, a candid statement of the need to preserve U.S. pre-eminence in the world - this draft was a precursor to the US aim of achieving a "full spectrum dominance" in the world. The draft includes the words: "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat of the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union.

"This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defence strategy and requires that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would... be sufficient to generate global power."

This meant that the advanced industrial nations must be deterred from challenging US leadership, just as "potential competitors" must be deterred "from ever aspiring to a larger regional or global role.

Similarly, and in particular, the US policy in the Middle East is made plain:

"In the Middle East and south-east Asia, our over all objective is to remain the predominant outside power in the region and preserve US and Western access to the region's oil."

Never were US imperial ambitions more clearly stated.

One 13-page paper, dealing with the Iraqi submission of the 11,800-page dossier of weapons information submitted under the terms of the security council resolution 1441, is especially interesting.

A central plank of US and British propoganda is that the Iraqis failed to disclose full information about their weapons arsenals and programmes.

But, in fact, the US decided to intercept the vast dossier and to suppress 8,000 pages of it before allowing the non-permanent members of the security council sight of the "meagre residuum."

This section include contributions from Hans Blix, from Colombia as president of the security council, from the International Atomic Energy Agency, from the Sunday Herald in Glasgow and from Ken Coates himself.

Finally, brief comments from German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, former Swedish foreign minister Anna Lindh and former UN high representative in Iraq Hans von Sponeck are appended.

Few people can now doubt that the Iraq war was built on lies.

In providing yet more evidence that this was so - and in collecting together much valuable political commentary of the utmost importance - Ken Coates has performed a worth-while services.

