



Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East After World War II

Lloyd C. Gardner

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As American policy makers ponder a strategy for withdrawal from Iraq, one of our preeminent diplomatic historians uncovers the largely hidden story of how the United States got into the Middle East in the first place.

A breathtaking recovery of decisions taken, brazen motives, and backroom dealings, *Three Kings* is the first history of America's efforts to supplant the British empire in the Middle East, during and following World War II. From F.D.R. to L.B.J., this is the story of America's scramble for political influence, oil concessions, and a new military presence based on airpower and generous American aid to shaky regimes in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, and Iraq.

Marshaling new and revelatory evidence from the archives, Gardner deftly weaves together three decades of U.S. moves in the region, chronicling the early efforts to support and influence the Saudi regime (including the creation of Dhahran air base, the target of Osama bin Laden's first terrorist attack in 1996), the CIA-engineered coup in Iran, Nasser's Egypt, and, finally, the rise of Iraq as a major petroleum power.

Here, the tangled threads of oil, U.S. military might, Western commercial interests, and especially the Israel-Palestine question are visible from the very beginning of "The American Century"—a history with frightening relevance for the distant prospect of peace and stability in the region today.

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