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AP Euro
Period C
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Article Evaluation Worksheet

Title: Ideas & Trends; Britain's Imperial Lessons

Author: Alan Cowell

News Source (Page): The New York Times

Date: March 31, 2002

What is the general subject of the article?

The legacy of Britain's empire has had lasting effects on molding the modern-day circumstances that plague the Middle East.

What is its main idea and overall purpose?

The issues the US was then facing in the middle east was a result of Britain's imperial empire. The article's purpose is to explain the history of this involvement and how Britain's role in dividing the Middle East into nation states has lasting impacts on the area today, including the Israeli-Pakistani conflict and Iraq.

What topic in the course does it relate to?

The article relates to World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Allies.

Five details supporting the main idea:

- a) Britain became involved in Afghanistan in the late 1800's to protect its access to India
- b) The division of the Middle East is mourned by Muslims as an end to Islamic reign
- c) Britain's imperial involvement in the Middle East led to many of today's conflicts
- d) The Great Game played by Britain was only a pre-WWII reality
- e) While Britain instated rulers and carved nations, they didn't ensure it would last

Is this article a fair treatment of the topic?

The article fairly describes the situation the US is now finding itself in, though describing it as though the US were becoming an imperialist nation. In addition, the author seems to be biased against Britain's imperial history and its negative effects in the region, though he cites authors and public sentiment of the time to support his reasoning. Overall, however, the author gives a fair and reasonable assessment of the topic.

State and explain your point of view and how this article deals with it. (Critique the article.)

I believe that the imperialist nature of Britain after World War I is the main reason that conflicts in the Middle East continue to spark today. As Britain did not fully take into account the ethnic divisions and nationalist aspirations of people in the region, the modern map of the area, drawn nearly a century ago, remains highly controversial and disputed. The article lists the historical involvement of Britain in the area from Afghanistan to the creation of nation-states following WWI. He shows that Britain's legacy in the region is still evident, even decades after the end of the British empire, and that the US' current troubles in the Middle East are largely a result of this legacy. However, the author omits the rationale behind Britain's division of the Middle East, and doesn't thoroughly describe how Britain came to be involved in the region, why it relied on it, or how it came to divide the area as it did.