

False prophets

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Résumé ou extrait : Britain shaped the modern Middle East through the lines that it drew in the sand after the First World War and through the League of Nations mandates over the fledgling states that followed. Less than forty years later, the Suez crisis dealt a fatal blow to Britain's standing in the Middle East and is often represented as the final throes of British imperialism. However, as this insightful and compelling new book reveals, successive prime ministers have all sought to extend British influence in the Middle East and their actions have often led to a disastrous outcome. While Anthony Eden and Tony Blair are the two most prominent examples of prime ministers whose reputations have been ruined by their interventions in the region, they were not alone in taking significant risks in deploying British forces to the Middle East. There was an unspoken assumption that Britain could help solve its problems, even if only for the reason that British imperialism had created the problems in the first place. Drawing these threads together, Nigel Ashton explores the reasons why British leaders have been unable to resist returning to the mire of the Middle East, while highlighting the misconceptions about the region that have helped shape their interventions, and the legacy of history that has fuelled their pride and arrogance. Ultimately, he shows how their fears and insecurities made them into false prophets who conjured existential threats out of the sands of the Middle East.

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