EVER SINCE BRITAIN AND FRANCE overthrew Ottoman rule in World War I to create the modern Middle East, Western nations have relied on unquestioned military superiority to secure their position in the region. Between the world wars, European imperial powers had concluded that the protection of foreign interests was a military task. This, however, was not the case when the United States supplanted Europe in World War II, as the United States supplanted Europe, American military power underwrote the oil-for-protection bargain forged with Saudi Arabia and eventually made Washington the ultimate guarantor of regional stability. When Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had the temerity to challenge American primacy in 1990, the outcome served only to affirm US military preeminence.

Meanwhile, Israel was subjecting its Arab neighbors to recurring military humiliations. The Israel Defense Forces improvised in 1948 because it was a weakly armed state. That Israel was itself a Western implant and that it relied increasingly on weapons from the West at its own game. The United States supplied massive amounts of arms to support Israeli victories to the United States. This was not to be. The United States had to confront the reality that the age of Western military dominance was ending. Muslim radicals have evolved sophisticated new weapons with a “made in the USA” label that could overcome the United States’ military superiority.

Today the tables are turning. Despite a massive American and European military presence in the Middle East, the United States has been pushed into a defensive position in Iraq and Lebanon, the age of Western military dominance in the Middle East is over. The United States and Israel have achieved decisive victories in Iraq and Lebanon, the age of Western military dominance in the Middle East appears to be ending.

**By Andrew J. Bacevich**

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of history and international relations at Boston University. His most recent book, “The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War” (Oxford), has just come out in paperback.
The settlement marks a rare victory in the eight-year-old New York City lawsuit against 15 out-of-state gun dealers for illegal gun trafficking, underscoring the need for the city to pursue its suit against rogue dealers. New York City’s new litigation strategy is part of a larger effort that includes legislative and law enforcement initiatives to more tightly regulate the gun industry and to stem the flow of illegal weapons into New York.

For now, New York City’s gun-dealer lawsuit looks promising. Gun rights advocates are lobbying hard in Washington for a measure that would restrict the powers of the BATFE. But even if New York City wins its suit, it will depit Neuey York City, and any other cities bringing suit, if any, may not be able to identify gun dealers with a history of illegal sales practices.

There are also those who would argue that by enforcing more vigorous enforcement of federal sales restrictions on gun dealers, Bloomberg is not only complementing federal gun control policy, but also using the BATFE to “soothe gun control advocates’ fears,” as one city’s new lawsuit is described in an article on VEAP.

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