

Divide et Impera: Iraq and ISIS

By Mary Beaudoin

The strategy of “divide et impera” (Latin for “divide and reign”), also referred to as “divide and rule” has been employed throughout history by those with imperial ambitions. Despite claims to the contrary, in the quest for power and control of the world’s resources, the U.S. and its allies have sought to tear apart any unified resistance to their plans. Today, in the Middle East, the U.S. (with the UK now relegated to the position of junior partner) continues the tactic that the British had used during the nineteenth century.

There is a familiar ring to what World War I British intelligence and military strategist T. E. Lawrence wrote in a report in 1916 called “The Politics of Mecca.”:

If we can only arrange that this political change shall be a violent one, we will have abolished the threat of Islam, by dividing it against itself, in its very heart. There will be a Khalifa in Turkey and a Khalifa in Arabia in theological warfare...[1]

On August 14, 2014, Sami Rasouli, a resident of Najaf and founder of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, a grassroots peace organization in Iraq, e-mailed:

Dividing Iraq is going as it’s planned—unfortunately within: a hard time of pain and suffering Iraqi people are going through.[2]

Adding to the pain and suffering for the people of Iraq is the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the latest manifestation of shape-shifting terrorists who keep the Western war machine in business as they pop up mysteriously, and with high drama, in strategic and resource-rich areas around the globe.



Prince Faisal, a Bedouin (front, center), and British military strategist T.E. Lawrence, legendary as Lawrence of Arabia (behind, to his right), fought together to split up the Ottoman Empire in WWI. However, during and after the war, the British and French took control of the Middle East with the Sykes-Picot agreement. Arab rebellions were put down. Eventually, Prince Faisal came to rule Iraq (Mesopotamia), and push for independence and nationalism.

Supposedly they acted independently, rampaging across Iraq in jihad to reclaim the Sunni Muslim world and carve out an Islamic caliphate from parts of Syria and Iraq, and they did it all with superhuman speed, establishing and securing it for themselves and eliminating anyone they didn't like—which seems to be anyone who is not them. And voilà—the Islamic State, abbreviation: IS.

“Nobody in Iraq believes ISIS represents Sunni Islam,” said Sami Rasouli when he was in Minneapolis in July: “They do not act like Muslims. They have attracted some misguided youth in Iraq and religious extremists who think they are [in the] right, but ISIS is foreign and funded by foreigners. ISIS is composed of fighters recruited from the Muslim and Arab world. They come from Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Libya, Afghanistan, and as far away as Europe and Chechnya. The average Iraqi believes they are what was previously called ‘al-Qaeda.’ They have come to complete the division of Iraq.”

Sami Rasouli's belief coincides with what is described by many Middle East observers: these masked marauders are condottieri, a professional mercenary army—expertly trained, well financed and equipped—a creation of the men in the shadows. Asia Times' “Roving Eye” columnist Pepe Escobar described their border crossing as “legendary” for “performing the miracle of being untrackable by the NSA satellite maze.” Their coordination and choreography were so obvious that he compares them to a catwalk in an Italian fashion show.[3] The arms they bore and the fleet of matching white Toyota trucks in which they rode boldly into Iraq are

identical to those supplied to the so-called (murderously comparable) “vetted, moderate” rebels in Syria, from whence they came.[4] Their paymasters for the Iraqi mission are said to be Saudi, long the silent-partner financiers of choice for Al Qaeda types recruited as foot soldiers in order to advance the agenda of the the U.S. and its allies.[5] According to Thierry Meyssan of Voltaire Network of Independent Journalists, the new emir of IS “has received new weapons from Ukraine, where Saudi Arabia has acquired a weapons factory, and via Turkey, which has created a special rail line alongside a military airport to supply the ISIL [ISIS/IS].”[6]

Petr Lvov of New Eastern Outlook gives context to the U.S. agenda: “It is evident that there is a battle for restructuring the oil and gas market in the world and it is currently being waged by the White House through the conflicts in Ukraine and Iraq. To maintain its hegemony, the United States, which imports only 3% of its oil from Iraq, needs to ensure control over all exports from this region as well as over the consumption for its competitors: Europe, China, Japan and India.”[7]

Breaking Iraq into three fragments will make it easier for the United States to ensure control. This is the cause of strife in Iraq. Sami Rasouli came to the U.S. in July to deliver a plaintive message about this in person: “I am here to tell you: don’t try to solve the problem of Iraq. Solve the problem of the U.S.: we want the foreigners to leave.”

He reminds his audiences of grassroots peace and justice people: “We did not have these sectarian divisions before the Occupation.” Ethnic and religious groups used to live in relative harmony in a pluralist, secular society: “I am Shi’ite. I married a Sunni. Today, it is hard to be like this in Iraq. My son has a Sunni name—Omar—and he is questioned about it by his schoolmates.”

And it’s mind-boggling, but he says the current situation is this: “The U.S. is funding them [Al Qaeda types] in Syria and bombing them in Iraq.”

The whole situation is made more terrible by the fact that the U.S. has supplied weapons to both sides—ISIS and the Iraqi government. Aside from the Saudis, the U.S. hand is shown in this by the statements of the highest-ranking government officials openly stating on several occasions that the U.S. was supplying weapons to rebels in Syria, where ISIS originated. President Obama himself expressed the idea that the weapons could get into the wrong hands and the mayhem could spread.[8] The U.S. has also been delivering weapons, “advisors,” and aerial vehicles to the Iraqi government.

Did the U.S. actually know that when ISIS branched off and came to Iraq, it would go so far as to advance toward Kurdish territory? Analysts differ about whether the scenario was planned that way, whether they went off script, or whether they were just allowed to grow strong in Syria and be unleashed in Iraq as a project of the Saudis to which the U.S. and its other allies turned a blind eye. Whatever the exact scenario, they have demonstrated an uncanny ability to gain control of strategic

locations. And as it was always the U.S. plan to divide Iraq, they provide a convenient reason for the U.S. to be in Iraq so that it can protect people (with highly-selective R2P humanitarian intervention) and—Kurdish oil— from them. Once they had served their purpose, the imperial project regarded ISIS fighters as expendable, and began bombing them. But there are more of them. We are told to expect more bombing.

What's going on in Iraq has every appearance of being the latest version of the "creative chaos" that goes along with "the birth pangs of the New Middle East," as former National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice famously described the deadly assault on southern Lebanon by Israel eight years earlier. Also appearing to fit the plan: when Iraqis were resisting the U.S. occupation, the destruction of mosques and death squads (the Salvador Option) in 2006/2007 fomented sectarian violence by pitting Sunni and Shi'ite against each other.[9]

At the same time, Joseph Biden—then Senator Biden—in a May 1, 2006, New York Times op ed proposed creating "a united Iraq by decentralizing it, giving each ethno-religious group—Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab—room to run its own affairs, while leaving the central government in charge of common interests." A man with a plan, Biden was awarded the powerful chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next year. The central government in charge of the "common interests" of Iraq—that is, those of the U.S. and oil companies—continues to be run (at least for now) out of the heavily fortified U.S. embassy in Baghdad, the largest in the world.

Ten years earlier, in 1996, Richard Perle (aka Prince of Darkness) and other neocons had developed "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," which was a master plan for restructuring the Middle East. It proposed destabilizing Syria and removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. It also called for "upholding the right of hot pursuit for self-defense into all Palestinian areas." It was preceded by the Yinon plan in 1982, "A Strategy for Israel in the Nineteen Eighties," which called for the fragmentation of the Middle East along ethnic and religious lines:

The dissolution of Syria and Iraq later on into ethnically or religiously unique areas such as in Lebanon, is Israel's primary target on the Eastern front in the long run...

Every kind of inter-Arab confrontation will assist us in the short run and shorten the way to the more important aim of breaking up Iraq into denominations as in Syria and Lebanon. In Iraq, a division into provinces along ethnic/religious lines as in Syria during Ottoman times is possible. So three (or more) states will exist around the three major cities: Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and Shi'ite areas in the south will separate from the Sunni and Kurdish north.

"The neocons are getting everything they want," says Sami Rasouli. The Kurdish north was already broken off from Iraq and has been operating as a largely autonomous region, openly declaring its alignment with Israel, which received its

first shipment of Kurdish crude on June 20. Oil tankers have arrived in U.S. ports. U.S. and Israeli advisors and trainers are established in Kurdistan and it has its own military, the Peshmerga, which they have trained. Now NATO partners France, the UK, and Germany, in addition to the U.S., rush weapons to supply them against the threat of ISIS, which has shown a keen interest in oil wells.

Sami Rasouli says that another reason why the U.S. is in Kurdistan is that the latter shares a 1,300 km (807 mile) border with Iran. Iraqi foreign policy is the domain of the U.S, he remarks, but Iran has been conducting Iraqi domestic policy. The U.S., Gulf oil partners and Israel are concerned about Iranian influence in Iraq and want to prevent it. Their ultimate goal is control of Iran, the largest, most cohesive, and most powerful of the Middle Eastern countries. Off its coast lie enormous deposits of oil and gas, coveted by the world.

The elimination of Palestine, and the breaking apart of Syria, Lebanon, and Iran, as well as of Iraq, would create “the New Middle East” for New World Order (NWO) control allowing the resources of the entire region to be open for exploitation.

But it doesn't have to happen that way. Formidable military power tries to enforce the plan, but people stand in solidarity, opposed to the horrific effects of weapons and the injustice of oppression. People throughout the world became outraged at the massacre of innocent people in Gaza this summer. The attempted fragmentation of the Middle East by the U.S. together with its NATO allies, Israel, and Gulf Cooperation Council partners, has been exposed more and more. A generation of young people with family origins in the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere stood up. Groups of Jewish people in Tel Aviv, as well as in the West, were some of the most vocal protesters of the actions of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's right-wing government, saying that it doesn't represent them and their values. Defenders of justice of all ages and ethnicities filled the streets of the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Russia, South America, and Australia, activated by a sense of compassion and united in their belief in everyone's common humanity.

It will be hard to divide them now.

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Endnotes:

1. T.E. Lawrence became legendary as Lawrence of Arabia during WWI for allying the British with Arab rebels—specifically, the Bedouin tribes of the Hijaz, western Arabia—in order to defeat the Ottoman Empire, under whose rule they chaffed. Anderson, Scott, “The True History of Lawrence of Arabia,” July 2014, Smithsonian Magazine; Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand*, WW. Norton & Co., 2013; Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab People*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991
2. e-mail to the writer of this article.

3. Escobar, Pepe, "Burn, men in black, burn," Asia Times, asiatimes.com, June 20, 2017.
4. Cartulucci, Tony, "Implausible Deniability – West's ISIS Terror Hordes in Iraq," August 8, 2014, Land Destroyer Report, landdestroyer.blogspot.com
5. Well documented in many places. A few examples: "Does Saudi Arabia Fund Terrorism?" The Middle East Quarterly, Spring 2006, Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 63- 64, reviewed and analyzed U.S. government documents from various agencies. Also: video of Hillary Clinton in what is unidentified, but appears to be a congressional hearing or meeting, saying: "And it was President Reagan in partnership with the Congress led by Democrats who said, 'You know what? It sounds like a pretty good idea. Let's deal with the ISI [Pakistani Inter-intelligence Service] and let's go recruit these mujahideen. That's great! Let's get some to come from Saudi Arabia and other places importing their Wahabi brand of Islam so that we can go beat the Soviet Union...'" "Behind the Truth," originally uploaded Dec. 28, 2011. Also original upload on April 28, 2009 Youtube.com.
6. "Iraq under attack by US, France, Saudi Arabia," Voltaire Network, June 11, 2014, voltairenet.org
7. Lavro, Petr, "Where America's true goals lie in the Middle East," New Eastern Outlook, journal-neo.org, June 26, 2014
8. "The problem with ISIS is the fact that they're destabilizing the country [Iraq]. That could spill over into some of our, you know, allies like Jordan and that they are engaged in wars in Syria where—in that vacuum that's been created—they could amass more arms, more resources." President Barack Obama, interview with Norah O'Donnell, CBS Face the Nation, June 22, 2014
9. Jamail, Dahr, "Iraq Dispatches," archived at dahrjamail.net; "John Pilger detects the Salvador Option," May 8, 2006, New Statesman, newstatesman.com