

Reviling the Victim: West still in denial over cause of Iraq violence

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“We have to liberate ourselves from the notion that ‘we’ have caused this. We haven’t.”
—Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair¹

As Iraqis rebound from a blitz that has left Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) extremists in control of a small slice of their country, western leaders are busy blaming the victims. With U.S. President Obama still waffling over the extent of U.S. involvement, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has joined the chorus of denial. Meanwhile, Iran has intensified security along its western border with Iraq to guard against any possible spillover of terrorist activity.²

Blithely ignoring the fact that his presidential predecessor ordered the invasion that plunged Iraq into its current chaos and instability, Obama seems to hold the Iraqis at fault for their present U.S.-induced predicament. “Unfortunately, Iraq’s leaders have been unable to overcome too often the mistrust and sectarian differences that have long been simmering there,” pontificated POTUS at a recent press conference. Reviling the people victimized by the Anglo-American invasion and occupation, he insisted that “ultimately it’s up to the Iraqis, as a sovereign nation, to solve their problems.”³ Tony Blair, who conspired with former U.S. president George Bush to invade Iraq, has joined the blame game by denying any responsibility for the current crisis there. “Even if you had left Saddam in place in 2003, then when the Arab revolutions (emerged) in 2011, you would have still had a major problem in Iraq,”⁴ he declared.⁵

Contradicting denials by Obama and Blair, former British ambassador to the U.S. Sir Christopher Meyer affirmed that the 2003 U.S.-led incursion was “perhaps the most significant reason” for the current wave of violence flooding Iraq. Suggesting foreknowledge of the disastrous results of the joint U.S.-British assault, he explained, “We are reaping what we sowed in 2003. This is not hindsight. We knew in the run-up to war that the overthrow of Saddam would seriously destabilize Iraq.”⁶ Surprisingly, even right-wing pundit Glenn Beck has agreed that Bush’s Iraq invasion was a mistake and that the dire warnings by anti-war opponents were correct. “You were right. Liberals, you were right, we shouldn’t have,” Beck conceded.⁷

“The Jihadis are not simply fighting Iraqis, they are also willing to fight us,” Blair warned, trying to alarm the citizenry to justify British air strikes against the western-spawned takfiris.⁸ Obama agreed, claiming that “given the nature of these [ISIL] terrorists, it could pose a threat eventually to American interests as well.” While remaining silent on the current terrorist offensive in Iraq, Blair’s partner in crime Bush used the same threat-to-us theme to gain support for his infamous “surge” in 2007. “As President, my most solemn responsibility is to keep the American people safe,” Bush asserted, “So on my orders, good men and women are now fighting the terrorists on the front lines in Iraq.”⁹

As terrorism expert Evan Kohlmann¹⁰ said years ago, “There wouldn’t be an al-Qaida in Iraq if the U.S. wasn’t there.”¹¹ At the time of the surge, the “terrorists” in Iraq consisted of a mix of native insurgents and sympathetic recruits from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, Syria and Jordan.¹² Today, after fighting in Libya and Syria with full U.S.

backing, al-Qa'ida-affiliated takfiris, funded by their supporters through Kuwait,¹³ are ramping up to continue their "jihad" in Iraq.

Attempting to provoke Iran into providing an excuse for a military strike, Bush accused the Islamic Republic of "providing sophisticated IEDs to extremists in Iraq"¹⁴ when, in fact, it was the U.S. that was supporting the terrorists. Award-winning journalist Seymour Hersh revealed this startling truth in 2007 when he reported that the U.S. under Bush II had undertaken activities to destabilize Iran and Syria by aiding militants aligned with al-Qa'ida. "A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni [takfiri] extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda," he wrote, adding that Saudi Arabia funded some of these clandestine operations. Washington viewed supporting takfiri extremists as an effective policy to contain "the Shiite gain in Iraq."¹⁵

Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) had its beginnings in the northern region of Iraqi Kurdistan in 2002. At that time, Jordanian Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and his followers aligned with Kurdish militants preparing for the impending U.S. invasion, but it was not until 2004 that Zarqawi allegedly pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden. In August 2003, his band was behind several provocative bombings: the Jordanian Embassy and the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, and the Shrine of Imam Ali (AS) in the holy city of Najaf killing 125. As a result of these horrific acts, Zarqawi managed to ignite sectarian conflict and cause potential stabilizing actors such as the U.N. to flee from Iraq. Then in early 2004, the U.S. military claimed to have intercepted a letter, allegedly written by Zarqawi to al-Qa'ida leaders, in which he emphasized provoking sectarian violence as a method of building up the insurgency.¹⁶

Considering Hersh's disclosure in 2007, the letter would seem to be evidence that the U.S. was already covertly inciting sectarian violence in 2003 with Zarqawi's help. By 2006, Zarqawi had been credited with masterminding suicide bomb attacks on three American hotels in Amman, Jordan,¹⁷ and the bombing of the Shrine of Imams an-Naqi and al-Askari (AS) in Samarra, Iraq. Certainly the second Samarra bombing in June 2007 reeked of U.S. involvement, since the perpetrators, in order to carry out their malevolent task, had to evade 60 Federal Protection Service officers and 25 local Iraqi police, who had maintained a vigilant watch at the shrine since the first bombing occurred in February 2006.¹⁸

By this time, the feedback loop had been established: Bush would blame al-Qa'ida for any terrorist act in Iraq while continuing his covert aid to the Sunni insurgency in which AQI had become a strategic actor. It all played into Washington's global war on terror, for by blaming al-Qa'ida in Iraq, Bush manipulated the American public by continuously reigniting fears of terrorism and reminding them of the connection between al-Qa'ida and the 9/11 attacks.¹⁹ In this way, Bush was able to sell the "surge" and "fight" AQI by funneling money to the "awakening councils" all over Iraq. Further fanning the flames of citizens' fears was a 2007 report by the Director of National Intelligence, warning that "Al-Qa'ida ... has protected or regenerated key elements of its Homeland attack capability, including: a safe haven in the Pakistan Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), operational lieutenants, and its top leadership."²⁰

Meanwhile, AQI renamed itself the Islamic State of Iraq, presumably to avoid losing out on Washington's money. After Zarqawi allegedly was killed in a U.S. bombing raid, perhaps to

keep him from spilling the beans, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi took the helm of the terrorist organization, who himself was killed in an airstrike in April 2010 after which Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri, also known as Abu Du'a, became the leader. As U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq by December 2011, Abu Du'a directed his takfiris to fight against the Syrian government under the banner of al-Qa'ida affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra. By May 2013, the Islamic State of Iraq and Jabhat al-Nusra merged to form the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, while continuing to carry out deadly attacks in both Syria and Iraq.²¹

The late journalist Helen Thomas, who was known as the "Dean of the White House Press Corps," confronted Bush over his Iraq policies on numerous occasions. On July 12, 2007, she reminded Bush, "Mr. President, you started this war, a war of your choosing ... Two million Iraqis have fled their country as refugees. Two million more are displaced. Thousands and thousands are dead." Then she asked poignantly, "Don't you understand, you brought the al Qaeda into Iraq."²² Whether Bush understood or not is moot; as former Bush National Security Council official Flynt Leverett explained, the war hawks in his administration were convinced that "Iran is more dangerous and more provocative than the Sunni [takfiri] insurgents to American interests in Iraq."²³

So after being routed by the Syrian Army with the help of Hezbollah, the U.S.-nurtured takfiri terrorists have targeted Iraq,²⁴ and while western leaders blame Iraqis for the problem they themselves have created, ISIL militants are fighting for control of Iraq's largest refinery in Baiji²⁵ with rockets, mortars and other arms of western origin.²⁶ Accused by Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Malaki of executing genocide under the auspices of Saudi Arabia,²⁷ the malevolent militants continue their assault on Iraq, committing ghastly acts of mass murder that reportedly included the slaughter of 1,700 soldiers, policemen and civilians.²⁸

With Tehran understandably keeping a watchful eye on the ISIL in Iraq, it is all the more ironic that in the past, the U.S. has accused Iran of supporting predecessor AQI.²⁹ Although takfiri terrorism may have been born in Saudi Arabia, the cradle of this cancerous contagion was in the United States, which, no doubt, will again be its target. What goes around comes around.

Endnotes

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