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American Imperialism and Non-Conventional Warfare in Iraq: Premeditated Covert Operations and the ISIS Insurgency

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While recent developments in Iraq are being portrayed as spontaneous "spillover" from the imperialist war on Syria – still commonly referred to as an uprising, or "revolution" – they are in fact nothing of the sort and in reality represent a culmination of years of covert planning and premeditated imperial policy.

Before we come to any concrete conclusions on the renewed insurgency and its wider ramifications, it is first important to concretely demarcate the political actors involved, their aims and objectives, their fleeting alliances and contradictions, and in turn their concrete historical moments of unity. After all, it is not as if we are fooling ourselves with the theories of "headless capitalism" here.

On the contrary. The national classes making conscious decisions and building years of conscious planning to uphold, maintain, and increase their dominant social condition do not act in solely abstract manner under the whims of theoretical "market forces", bumbling their way into wars of aggression in resource-rich areas; they act consciously, definitively, yet also opportunistically, using all means available – but primarily violence and reaction. In turn building decades of objective history and current realities that we can, and must, learn from. It is therefore vital that we first acknowledge and incorporate the concrete history of these competing classes, their actions and aims, into the current objective situation. Then, and only then, can we start to address the many contradictions and interconnections between these classes and come to the correct conclusion with regard to those aims, actions and culpability, within the Iraq equation.

To achieve sound conclusions, we must first eliminate the white supremacist ideology that permeates the majority of western political commentary [1]: the idea that the western empire, led by the United States, is an inherently altruistic force, begrudgingly acting as global arbiter for the good of all mankind. Simple history proves this twisted ideology to be nothing other than a (white) bourgeois invention. Monopoly capitalism – imperialism – is the never-ending search for profit and domination at the expense of competing productive forces; the fundamental contradiction of capitalism at its highest stage. For imperialism to survive, it must consciously subsume, devour, and dominate all the productive forces in competition with it.

As Lenin said, "the supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism." [2] Translated to the modern era, this means that fascism forms the vital expression of the desperately decaying (ie: the moribund, parasitic capitalist, the imperialist) capitalist class; the class that uses extreme

violence, reaction and demagogy as replacement for its gradual yet fluctuating loss of strictly economic ability to bribe, extort, extract and control resources, to monopolise markets for profit "peacefully"; to uphold its rapidly diminishing – yet still superior – social condition. In this regard, we can and must view the United States as the ultimate fascist state from the international perspective, the historic examples of extreme American violence and demagogy employed by the American capitalist class in the conscious aim of upholding superior economic position on the world stage are long and plentiful, and should not need repeating.

When viewed in this historically concrete way, perceptions and the concepts formed regarding US imperial objectives – in Iraq or elsewhere – immediately begin to transform and detach themselves from the false ideological structures avowed to furnish western capitalism its unwarranted moral platform, endlessly recycled in all avenues of western culture. The harsh reality that "political reaction *all along the line* is a characteristic feature of imperialism" [2] becomes most evident.

Once this historically concrete concept of US imperialism is applied, it becomes necessary to further analyse the various capitalist classes and states that are both in competition with US imperialism and those that are temporarily united, or more specifically, dominated by it. As there is no unity without contradiction, it would be folly to believe that any state or class currently or previously allied to the dominant imperialist class is a permanent static feature, or that contradictions may not exist even during long periods of perceived unity.

In this context, the alliance of states *currently allied* under US imperialism in its attack on Iraq are primarily its long-held and loyal clients, those of the Gulf Cooperation Council, led by Saudi Arabia, alongside Israel, Turkey, and western Europe, this alliance will be referred to as the NATO/GCC axis. It is by no means a permanent static alliance, and has historically found many contradictions along the road to its *temporary* current unity on Iraq, but the fundamental feature of this alliance is the American imperialist class holding it together, dominating it, and dividing it for its own benefit.

The opposing force of this contradiction is the Iraqi state, or more broadly speaking, Iraq and its regional allies, namely: Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and a subdued yet resurgent Russia acting in a minimally supportive role, this alliance will be referred to as the Resistance axis. As with the imperialist alliance, there are many historical contradictions within that of the Resistance, but it is imperialism itself that produces its current fundamental aspect: in that its social condition and temporary unity is predicated on the necessity of its battle against imperialist predation. Any sound historical analysis of the economic stature, features, and all other aspects leading from the economic particularities of this alliance shows that it cannot be classed as imperialist, and is therefore the oppressed party in the equation when correctly conceived from the totality of the international perspective.

Analysing the political actors involved in crises, processes and conflict in their international totality using such concrete dialectical methods is a fundamental starting point if we are to reach sound conclusions on any of todays antagonisms.

From this starting point, we must then address the specific aims of the NATO/GCC axis as opposed to those of the Resistance axis. On the one hand, the imperialists and their allies (clients) are consciously employing militarism – the "vital expression" of capitalism – upon Iraq, Syria, Iran, and all other "lesser" nations in the inevitable quest for domination to expand their superiority and avert their imperial decay – this is the *quintessential feature* of

predatory imperialism. On the other hand, as a consequence, the far weaker, yet competing productive forces of the Resistance axis are forced to defend their social condition from the threat of imperialist annihilation.

Now that the political forces are correctly conceived and the relationship between the contradiction is apparent, we must address the perceptions being promulgated to form false concepts that obscure and even work to reverse this objective balance of forces. One such critical false concept, that of an empire as impartial benevolent peace broker between the antagonism of a "Sunni and Shia" divide – peddled endlessly by western media, commentariat and culture – has three distinct purposes in its current usage: firstly, to detach imperialism (NATO/GCC axis) from culpability for the insurgency and its political ramifications; secondly, to further incite the Iraqi Sunni population by portraying the Shia-dominated Maliki government and its ally Iran as cozying-up to imperialism against percieved Sunni foes; thirdly, and subsquently, this helps to conflate the insurgency as a natural expression of legitimate Sunni discontent, affording false equivalence and a moralistic smokescreen, therefore removing culpablity from the NATO/GCC axis and placing it at the door of the "sectarian policies" of the Maliki government, supported by Shia Iran. This false concept enables the NATO/GCC axis to exert the required pressure to achieve its goal of partition and the subsequent domination of the Iraqi state, while upholding the crucial image of impartiality.

Yet contrary to all such critical imperialist false concepts, a correct analysis reveals the antagonism within Iraq is in fact entirely political and a result of the principal aspect of the contradiction: the age-old imperial policy of fomenting and excacerbating sectarian and ethnic antipathy to divide, destroy, and dominate the productive forces – a policy employed with varying, yet invariably brutal and reactionary, results in Iraq since the US invasion of 2003. The political actors that have implemented this deepening of the sectarian divide since the occupation departed with its tail between its legs are the client states of the United States, primarily Saudi Arabia, and it is this dominant aspect of the contradiction that drives the antagonism in Iraq. To conclude: "the principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position." [3]

The forces allied to, and aiding the ISIS insurgency further expose this concrete reality. The Naqshbandi militia, the General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries (MICR), the former Ba'athists, Sunni politicans and defecting Iraqi army officers are largely the proxies and stooges of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies, ergo: the NATO/GCC axis. The Kurdish regional government – now calling for de facto partition in the anticipation of gaining the oil-rich province of Kirkuk, and making deals with the very actors tied to the ISIS insurgency – is also in alliance with NATO-member Turkey and Israel, ergo: the NATO/GCC axis. The actors responsible for the historic rise of ISIS et al in neighbouring Syria are of course the NATO/GCC alliance, as has been thoroughly documented [4,5,] and objectively proven regardless of the propaganda and misinformation [6,7,] that aims to depict otherwise.

These actors primarily responsible for the fall of Mosul and the anticipated partition of Iraq are the de facto regional clients of dominant imperialism – ISIS are merely the shock-troop proxies that implement such policy, creating "facts on the ground" when diplomacy and old-fashioned economic coercion no longer suffice. To deny this rational knowledge is to deny concrete analysis, deny historical materialism, the totality of imperialism, to suggest it does not exist beyond the abstract, and that there are no classes employing all means available

to uphold it.

In addition, the narrative of the ostensibly spontaneous rise of ISIS, and its apparent takeover of the western and northern regions of Iraq is a fantastically ahistorical concept built from years of media misinformation and propaganda. ISIS, its former incarnations and confrère across the region – particularly those of the last three years operating in Libya and Syria – *are most definitely not* abstract spontaneous expressions of Sunni discontent or a "Sunni-Shia divide"; nor the Iraqi governments mismanagement and corruption; nor the alleged "sectarian policies" or the threat of Iranian "Shia expansion". While there may well be minimal truth within such malformed and distorted perceptions promulgated by the lackeys of imperialism, they are secondary to the fundamental reality that ISIS et al are the organised, concrete manifestation of western imperial policy and its reactionary clients who implement it; they represent nothing more than the corollary of the extremist-dominated Syrian insurgency, in turn nothing more than a tool of imperial machinations. They are mercenaries, private military contractors, intelligence operatives, thrill-seekers and deluded zealots, hoodwinking the desperate and vulnerable subjects of social immiseration; a paramilitary force that is by no means autogenous and whose social condition is reliant upon the imperial class that has engineered and now sustains it.

Sensational tales of bank robberies and extortion rackets that span entire cities are nothing more than crass exaggerations and propaganda built to extricate the imperial sponsors of reaction in Iraq. To posit the absurd theory that a "rag-tag militia" has built an illegal cross-country organisation capable of producing billions in revenue from Syria's dilapidated and war-ridden oil industry is a fantastical sophism detached from reality. In similar vein, we must also ask how exactly this "rag-tag militia" has not only successfully sustained itself during a war, but has superseded the imaginary "moderates" that have received billions of dollars, thousands of tons of arms and logistical support from the NATO/GCC axis – while fighting right alongside them. Are we supposed to believe that the allies (clients) of US imperialism are openly funding and arming such reactionaries against the will of their imperial sponsor, and that it is impotent to stop them? Can anyone but an utter simpleton, charlatan, or partisan hack posit such an apolitical reductionist absurdity?

The argument against this analysis of ISIS and its allies in the insurgency will inevitably be made that it is somehow "denying the agency" of Iraqis – in this case ISIS et al – exposing an "inverse Orientalism", and this argument will grow as the insurgency is increasingly conflated and transformed into a "Sunni revolution" akin to its predecessor in Syria. But we have addressed this fallacy before [8] when the opportunists attempted to use it to whitewash their support of the imperialist contras in Syria, we should not need do it again.

The ISIS-led insurgency currently gripping the western and northern regions of Iraq is but a continuation of the imperialist-sponsored insurgency in neighboring Syria. The state actors responsible for arming and funding said insurgency hold the same principal objectives in Iraq as those pursued in Syria for the last three years, namely: the destruction of state sovereignty; weakening the allies of an independent Iran; the permanent division of Iraq and Syria along sectarian lines establishing antagonistic "mini-states" incapable of forming a unified front against US/Israeli imperial domination.

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Notes

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