Creating an "Independent Sunni State": Washington Calls for the Partition and Fracturing of Syria and Iraq

Foreign Affairs Calls for Syria and Iraq to be Balkanized

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On the 29th of November, 2015, Foreign Affairs – the publication of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) – published an article titled: [Divide and Conquer in Syria and Iraq; Why the West Should Plan for a Partition](). It was written by Barak Mendelsohn, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Haverford College and a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. In the article, he argues that the "solution" to the current crisis in Syria and Iraq is the creation of an "independent Sunni state" (or Sunnistan), in addition to separating "the warring sides:"

> "The only way to elicit indigenous support is by offering the Sunnis greater stakes in the outcome. That means proposing an independent Sunni state that would link Sunni-dominated territories on both sides of the border. Washington's attachment to the artificial Sykes–Picots borders demarcated by France and Britain a century ago no longer makes sense. Few people truly believe that Syria and Iraq could each be put back together after so much blood has been spilled. A better alternative would be to separate the warring sides. Although the sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shias was not inevitable—it was, to some extent, the result of manipulation by self-interested elites—it is now a reality."

Mendelsohn's so-called "solution" for the region is in fact the strategy Western powers have been pursuing in the Middle East for years. His proposal is pretty much identical to the preferred "outcome" for Syria articulated by the former US Secretary of State and CFR member, Henry Kissinger. Speaking at the Ford School in 2013, Kissinger reveals his desire to see Syria Balkanized into "more or less autonomous regions ([from 27.35 into the interview]()):

> "There are three possible outcomes. An Assad victory. A Sunni victory. Or an outcome in which the various nationalities agree to co-exist together but in more or less autonomous regions, so that they can't oppress each other. That's the outcome I would prefer to see. But that's not the popular view.... I also think Assad ought to go, but I don't think it's the key. The key is; it's like Europe after the Thirty Years War, when the various Christian groups had been killing each other until they finally decided that they had to live together but in   separate units."

Carving out Sunnistan in the region was also recently advocated by the former US Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, in his NY Times article: [To Defeat ISIS, Create a Sunni State](). Bolton wants to create an"independent Sunni State" to act as a "bulwark" against Bashar al-Assad and Baghdad. Make no mistake about it; the strategy of the US had always been to create a Sunni micro-state in Eastern Syria and Western Iraq to isolate Assad. In the 2012 [declassified report]() from the DIA, the document reveals that the powers supporting the Syrian opposition – "Western countries, the Gulf states and Turkey" – wanted to create a "Salafist principality in Eastern Syria in order to isolate the Syrian regime, which is considered the strategic depth of the Shia expansion (Iraq and Iran)."

Obviously, Salafism (which some argue is synonymous with Wahhabism; whilst others argue that Wahhabism is a more extreme form of Salafism) is a branch of Sunni Islam. Many have argued that "violence" is "central" to Wahhabism and Salafism, as Catherine Shakdam expresses in her article, [Wahhabism, Al Saud and ISIS – the Unholy Trinity]():

> "Wahhabism is no more than an engineered perversion, a division, an abomination which has but spread like a cancer onto the Islamic world and now threatens to destroy all religions… Wahhabism is not of Islam and Islam will never be of Wahhabism – it is a folly to conceive that Islam would ever sanction murder, looting and atrocious barbarism. Islam opposes despotism, injustice, infamy, deceits, greed, extremism, asceticism – everything which is not balanced and good, fair and merciful, kind and compassionate. If anything, Wahhabism is the very negation of Islam. As many have called it before – Islam is not Wahhabism."

Shakdam continues:

> "Wahhabism is merely the misguided expression of one man's political ambition – Mohammed Abdel Wahhab, a man who was recruited by Empire Britain to erode at the fabric of Islam and crack the unity of its ummah (community). Wahhabism has now given birth to a monstrous abomination – extreme radicalism; a beast which has sprung and fed from Salafis and Wahhabis poison, fueled by the billions of Al Saud's petrodollars; a weapon exploited by neo-imperialists to justify military interventions in those wealthiest corners of the world. ISIS's obscene savagery epitomises the violence which is inherent and central to Wahhabism and Salafism, its other deviance. And though the world knows now the source of all terror, no power has yet dared speak against it; instead, the world has chosen to hate its designated victim – Islam."

Fracturing Iraq

In relation to Iraq, the plan to split the country into three parts has been publicly advocated by US officials ad nauseam. The President Emeritus of the CFR, Leslie Gelb, argued in a 2003 article for the [NY Times]() that the most feasible outcome in Iraq would be a "three-state solution: Kurds in the north, Sunnis in the center and Shiites in the south." In 2006, a potential map of a future Middle East was released by [Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters]() which depicted Iraq divided into three regions: a Sunni Iraq to the West, an Arab Shia State in the East and a Free Kurdistan in the North.

The current US Vice President, Joe Biden, also penned an article which was co-authored by

Gelb titled: [United Through Autonomy in Iraq](#). The 2006 article argues for a decentralized Iraqi state where power is held by three "ethno-religious" groups: "Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab." Furthermore, the NY Times published an article in 2013 titled: [Imagining a Remapped Middle East; How 5 Countries Could Become 14](#), which envisages the Middle East and Libya completely Balkanized.

Responding to the strategy of the West in Iraq, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, [called](#) the division of the country "unacceptable." Lavrov stated that this was "social engineering" and "state structure manipulation from far outside," adding that Russia believes "Iraqis – Shia, Sunnis and Kurds – should decide for themselves how to live together."

The Western elite's strategy is to create a Middle East (and a world for that matter) devoid of strong, sovereign, independent nation-states that can resist imperial advances.

Fracturing countries into feuding micro-states ensures Western interests are not confronted with a cohesive entity which can collectively unite to oppose this belligerent force. "Divide and conquer" as Mendelsohn's article is titled, the ancient strategy used by an array of imperial powers, from the Roman's to the British, remains the strategy of the Western Empire today.

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