

IRAQ: Tariq Aziz: “They Killed our Country. We are all Victims of Britain and America”

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“In the United States today, the Declaration of Independence hangs on schoolroom walls, but foreign policy follows Machiavelli.” (Howard Zinn, 1922-2010.)

On 5th December, the first day of the solemn, predominantly Shi’a Muslim marking of Ashura – the martyrdom of Hussein, the Prophet’s Grand son in 680 AD – in a statement few of the main stream media thought worthy of mention, Saad Al Muttalibi, a Minister, ironically, at the Iraqi Ministry of National Dialogue and Reconciliation, announced another impending murder. Tariq Aziz, Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, under Saddam Hussein, would be executed as soon as the Americans left.

The US troops were due to leave by 31st., December, but remaining troops slunk out under cover of darkness – as did the British four years earlier – on 18th December. Another barbaric act representing the “New Iraq”, may well be imminent.

At a ceremony marking imminent US military retreat, at Baghdad Airport, on 15th December, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta acknowledged that: “We spilled a lot of blood here” ... to achieve ... making the country sovereign and independent and able to secure itself.”

The independence of this now US client state, is as much as a myth as the security, since the occasion took place with America’s home-bound heroes cowering behind vast blast walls. Chairs reserved for the Prime Minister, President and others in Iraq’s Quisling government were empty. Perhaps they were too busy planning more celebratory post-departure blood spilling.

Tariq Aziz has to be top of the list. The fiercely patriotic, nationalistic reminder of an illegally overthrown government, which, whatever else, had put Iraq first and poured the country’s oil revenues in to health- care, education, clean water, modern infrastructure, turning a beautiful, but run down “third world” country in to a “near first world” one, to use the West’s patronizing patois.

Last year, Tariq Aziz gave his first interview(i) in his then, over seven years incarceration by the Americans. His insight was as astute as ever, as was his love, and despair, for his country.

“There is nothing here any more. Nothing. For thirty years Saddam built Iraq, and now it is destroyed. There are more sick than before, more hungry. The people don’t have services.

People are being killed every day in the tens, if not hundreds. We are all victims of America and Britain. They killed our country."

He talked of the Iraq, prior to the invasion, feeling vulnerable to Iran, the US and Britain. It was this feeling of vulnerability which led, for a long time to Iraq not saying categorically it had no weapons of mass destruction. Instead of those that threatened being uncertain if Iraq could retaliate, the country would be seen as the sitting duck they proved to be.

Further: "We are Arabs, we are Arab nationalists. We must be proud."

Aziz, knows the full extent of both Western and Iranian duplicity toward his country.

Prior to the invasion, this canny politician and diplomat opined that: "What the United States wanted, was not 'regime change' in Iraq, but rather 'region change.' " Recent years prove him chillingly correct.

He summed up the Bush Administration's reason for war against Iraq tersely as: "Oil and Israel."

With a Prime Minister and others with deep ties to Israel, Iran, and the largest US Embassy on earth representing many still seeking to cover the tracks of illegalities, lies and duplicity, no wonder whilst the West counted down to Christmas, this indomitable, frail, ill, incarcerated seventy four year old, was alone, trying to count how many days he has left on earth.

The terrible shadow of Saddam Hussein's sickening death, in the Christmas season, just before the the West's New Year dawned, also on the eve of the great Muslim Feast of Eid al Awda, must lie as terror across the hours.

A Christian, he is also reminder of the secular nature of the previous regime, in a country now riven with sectarian divides. "Divide and rule" played to murderous perfection. By 2006 half of Iraq's Christians had fled the country fearing for their lives(ii), thousands more have fled since.

Last year, Aziz reached such a low ebb, he expressed to his lawyer simply a wish that the nightmare of incarceration, isolation, injustice, untreated illness was over with. Even his hope, indeed courage - as all the former regime, he swore he would never abandon Iraq and did not - faltered.(iii) Now he wants to spend his remaining time with the wife and family he has been parted from for nearly eight years. Ominously, this year he was denied a Christmas'phone call with them, for the first time.

In April 2003, he negotiated safe passage for his family with the invading US: "I told the Americans that if they took my family to Amman (in neighbouring Jordan) they could take me to prison. My family left on an American plane. And I went to prison on a Thursday." The weight of pain and guilt on the family can only be imagined.

"My father served his country for more than twenty two years. He delivered himself to the US Army (after the fall of Hussein) because he wasn't afraid. He didn't do anything wrong. He served his country," Aziz's daughter, Zainab Aziz, has said. "He has been wronged."

Forgotten or conveniently buried is that Tareq Aziz's trials were entirely American affairs.

The Judge who tried him and Saddam Hussein was “trained” by a legal team from Notre Dame University at South Bend, Indiana. Ironically, a Catholic University.

Unsurprisingly there were also highly political overtones. The Law Professor who led the training, Jimmy Gurule has served, among other public law enforcement positions, as: “point person in the hunt for financiers of terrorism in the wake of September 11th 2001, terrorist attacks on America”(iv) to which the US was so keen to attempt to link Iraq.

On September 11th 2008, Nashville, Tennessee’s Vanderbilt University announced that the Iraqi Judge who convicted Saddam Hussein, Ra’id Juhi, was to join the US lawyers who created the Iraqi Special Tribunal, the kangaroo court responsible for his lynching.(v) “Vanderbilt law Professor Mike Newton played a pivotal role in the creation of the (Tribunal) that tried Saddam. He led the training for its judges and continues to advise the Tribunal today.”

Chicago’s De Paul University: “ ... has designed and managed human rights and rule of law projects in Iraq”, since 2003.(vi) Saddam Hussein’s hideous treatment, or Tareq Aziz’s alleged forced appearance in Court, in his pyjamas, both heckled by the Judge, are hardly De Paul’s finest legal zenith, either.

De Paul also devised a “Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Iraq Judiciary”, assisted with drafting the new Iraqi Constitution and the trials of former Ba’ath party Members and affiliates. So much for Iraq sovereignty and Georg W.Bush’s: “Let freedom reign.”(vii)

Sabah Al Mukhtar, President of the UK-based Arab Lawyers Association, takes a dim view of this Colonial approach: “Under the Geneva and Vienna Conventions, the occupying force has both responsibility and limitations. There is a duty of protection for citizens, children and the environment. The law of the occupied territories cannot be changed.”

Holding the British equally responsible, he argues that the occupiers were part of a leadership with: “Huge responsibility, who set up a system of trials that do not meet the basic international standards”, in accordance with the Vienna and Geneva Conventions.

Further: “Execution is the ultimate abuse of human rights.”

He points out that in the pre-invasion, formerly secular Iraq, where those of all faiths and none, previously shared feasts and celebrations, and where all religious institutions were annually provided maintenance grants by the government equally, Tareq Aziz, a Christian, was in fact charged with undermining Islamic movements.

Referring to a “Kangaroo Court”, Al Mukhtar is emphatic that it is incumbent on the Vatican and the Churches also to demand clemency for the seventy four year old.

Aziz of course, visited the Pope in 2003, to plea for the Vatican to intervene, to avert invasion and save his country and people, who had suffered so terribly from 1991 onwards.

Further, says Al Mukhtar: “The US and the UK still have the duty, and indeed the power, to protect Tareq Aziz. This proposed execution is simply vengeance in its lowest form.”

Tareq Aziz is the man who above all, stands between the lies, the duplicity, who knows the wickedness of the spin, illegalities, duplicity, subterfuge, betrayal, bribery, theft, traitors and big business – prepared to cull every last Iraqi, so long as they could get their hands on the

oil – and establish a base in this strategically vital country. The biggest US Embassy in the world looks pretty like “mission accomplished” – for the moment.

Badi Arif, an attorney who used to represent Mr Aziz, said there is a political motive behind the death sentence: “Mr. Aziz used to always tell me, ‘They’ll find a way to kill me and there is no way for me to escape this’ “, Arif commented.

Nuri Al Maliki made his groveling subservience to Washington clear, when on the 12th December he requested to go to the city’s Arlington Military Cemetery and jointly lay a wreath with President Obama, at the Memorial to the Unknown Soldier, to pay his respects to US service personnel who lost their lives, decimating the country of which he is – for now – Prime Minister.

Thanking the murderous, marauding, illegal, infanticide-addicted, raping and pillaging invader, must be a historic first.

An extensive search has found no record of Maliki visiting Iraq’s lost and bereaved – from Falluja to Basra, Mosul to Mahmudiyah – the latter, where fourteen year old Abeer al Janabi was multiply raped by US troops, then murdered and set fire to, with all her family. Presumably, they were also Obama’s “unbroken line of heroes”, to which he referred, in another defeat ceremony at Fort Bragg.

If legality does not prevail in the case of not alone Tareq Aziz and his colleagues, but of all those unaccountably detained, simply for differing political or religious beliefs, facing a terrible demise, in the name of Western “liberation”, all we collectively profess to hold dear, with legality’s Treaties and Conventions, stand condemned.

They include the relevant silent United Nations Organisations, cocooned in their great New York and Geneva Ivory Towers, their apparently speech deprived Secretary General, the great religious bastions, the Vatican, Arch Bishop Rowan Williams Lambeth Palace, Vincent Nicholls, Catholic Arch Bishop of Westminster’s and staff in his great building, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, The State Department, the UK Foreign Office, the European Union’s relevant, increasingly life threatened Organs, and the worlds great bastions of international law. They have been repeatedly approached and remained silent to the point of complicity.

Speaking at the 400th Anniversary of the printing of the King James Bible, on 16th December 2011, Prime Minister Cameron stated of the UK: “We are a Christian country and we should not be afraid to say so . The Bible has helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today. Values and morals we should actively stand up and defend. The alternative of moral neutrality should not be an option. “

A start would be displaying Britain’s: “morals and values ... standing up and defending” a brave, frail, Christian man from a barbarity imposed by an illegal invasion – a “Crusade”, that Cameron voted for – and demanding of the US, who call Britain the “indispensable ally”, that they ensure Aziz is returned to his family and that 2012 starts with a prisoner amnesty in Iraq.

It shouldn’t be a problem. The US still has 8,000 troops, fourteen war ‘planes, 125 helicopters and 28 drones, largely based in Iraqi Kurdistan. (Their “total withdrawal” apparently nearly as phony as George W. Bush’s photo shoot, presenting the troops with a

Thanksgiving turkey, which turned out to be plastic.)

“Moral neutrality”, is indeed not an option, for one who enjoined in killing this former Foreign Minister’s country.

Notes

- i. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/05/iraq-us-tariq-aziz-iran>
- ii. <http://www.christiansofiraq.com/havefled.html>
- iii. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25639>
- iv. <http://newsinfo.nd.edu/news/7110-notre-dame-resource-law-professor-helped-train-saddam-squos-judge/>
- v. <http://news.vanderbilt.edu/2008/09/media-advisory-iraqi-judge-who-convicted-saddam-huss-ein-joins-us-lawyers-who-created-the-iraqi-special-tribunal-63867>
- vi. http://www.law.depaul.edu/centers_institutes/iharli/projects/iraq.asp
- vii. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/elections/freedomessay/index.html>

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