

German media clamours for a new Iraq war

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The German media has reacted to the crisis in Iraq by intensifying their campaign for militarism and war. Last weekend, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) called for the Obama administration to intervene in the Middle East.

On Friday, in an editorial for the FAZ, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger writes, “It is an illusion to believe that one can remain aloof; sooner or later one would pay a price.” Faced with the danger emanating from the jihadist terrorist militia ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), Obama must “finally do more than hold more or less clever speeches.”

On Saturday, Hubert Wetzels was even more aggressive, writing in the SZ. Under the headline, “Looking away does not solve any problems”, he demanded that Obama “finally begin to take an interest in the Middle East—seriously, personally and with a strategic plan”. “No problems are solved” by “running away, looking away and remaining aloof.”

Wetzels leaves no doubt what he means by “taking a personal interest” and “solving a problem”: i.e. a new bloody military intervention in the Middle East. “A few aerial attacks on terrorists are not enough”, he writes. “The US must apply enormous military and diplomatic pressure if it wants to prevent the region drowning in blood.”

The “model” for such an intervention is the Iraq war of 2003, with Wetzels demanding a replay. Obama should remember, he says, that with Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel, almost his “entire foreign and security team” supported the “war solution” on October 11, 2002, which gave “the then President George W. Bush a free hand for an attack on Iraq”. But Obama is following the security doctrine, “Don’t do anything bloody stupid!”

Wetzels’s clamour for a new invasion of Iraq is as repulsive as his retrospective defence of the illegal war

of 2003. Obama likes to behave “as if the war in Iraq was merely a bloody remnant that his predecessor Bush left for him and which he has to clear up”. This was wrong, he said. “It wasn’t Bush and a couple of accomplices that marched into Iraq in 2003, but the United States.” With this, America has “taken over responsibility for the country, which did not end simply with the withdrawal of the American troops from Iraq at the end of 2011.”

How degenerate must one be to describe the invasion and occupation of Iraq with the words “taking on responsibility”? In relation to the figure of Wetzels, any surprise is conditional: a year ago he had demanded the firing of “a salvo of cruise missiles onto the headquarters of Bashar al-Assad’s army.”

The Iraq war is one of the greatest crimes in modern history. It was based on lies and brought about terrible human suffering. According to scientific estimates, more than one million Iraqis were killed and five million turned into refugees. Over 4,500 American soldiers lost their lives, and more than 30,000 were seriously injured.

The strengthening of ISIS and the destabilisation of Iraq are a direct consequence of the American intervention. The US bombed the country’s infrastructure to pieces. Its “divide and rule” strategy of occupation played off the various religious groups against each other, thus preparing the ground for the radical Islamic groups. Al Qaida was not present in Iraq before the overthrow of the secular regime of Saddam Hussein by the US.

The NATO war against Libya and the imperialist intervention in Syria have further strengthened the Islamic forces in the region. In both countries, the Western powers and their regional allies have armed and supported Sunni extremists in order to destroy regimes they found unpalatable.

The German media is reacting to the greatest débâcle

of US foreign policy since the defeat in Vietnam with desperate calls for the US-led intervention to be widened.

On Friday, SZ Middle East correspondent Tomas Avenarius wrote an editorial entitled, “Risky end to order”. He states: “Twelve years after the beginning of ‘war on terror’, the US and her allies confront a shambles. They withdrew from Iraq too soon. Together with the Europeans, they are rushing to leave Afghanistan to its own devices. New terrorist militias are forming, in Yemen, in Libya, in Nigeria.”

Avenarius adds: “This should give pause for thought to all those who call for an immediate end to the anti-terror struggle—and all the attendant domestic policy considerations in the form of surveillance. Yes, the price is high. But so is the risk of a defeat.”

What is driving the German media to line up so vehemently behind the “war on terror”, which is so clearly based on lies and has plunged an entire region into the abyss?

Avenarius’ article is revealing in this regard. He warns that the extremists are not only conducting a “holy war”, but are also seeking to destroy “the almost century-old state order in the Middle East.” They are “putting the axe to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the secret accord in which the imperialist powers of Great Britain and France divided up the region after the First World War, and which has given it its shape and borders to the present.” This threatened the US and Europe, he said. It meant “even more wars, even more terror, even more refugees” and “with this, a threat to the oil routes.”

In other words, the ruling circles in Germany and their mouthpieces in the media fear that the débâcle confronting the US in Iraq will place a question mark over the strategically important Middle East with its rich troves of raw materials. Their desperate embrace of the “war on terror” makes clear the methods the German ruling elite would employ to defend their economic and strategic interests.

The criminal dimensions of the “war on terror” are well known. It is a synonym for illegal wars of aggression, mass murder and the construction of a global police state. In its name, the US attacked not only Afghanistan and Iraq, but conducted abductions and torture, and placed millions of people around the world under surveillance.

Propagandists of the “war on terror”, such as Frankenberger, Wetzel and Avenarius may be of less historical significance than their forerunners—George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and their successors in the Obama administration. Politically speaking, however, they are no less criminally responsible.



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