

ISIS in Iraq: A disaster made in the USA

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The launching of a US air war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) will only compound a catastrophe that has “Made in the USA” stamped all over it. The overrunning of much of Iraq by the Al Qaeda offshoot is the result not of a “failed policy,” but of criminal decisions that go back nearly twenty-five years.

The Gulf War of 1991 was followed by more than a decade of brutal sanctions and air strikes that killed an estimated one million Iraqis. Next was the conspiracy, hatched behind the backs of the American people, to use outright lies as the pretext for a war of conquest launched in 2003.

It is not possible to discuss the current situation without naming names: Bush, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld, Rice, Powell—the plotters who knowingly lied to the American people and the world to justify a war for oil and US imperialist domination. As everyone now knows, their claims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were a tissue of lies.

The other big lie was the claim that Saddam Hussein was in league with Al Qaeda. Before the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, there was no Al Qaeda in the country. The secular Baathist regime was hostile to the Islamist jihadist group. But the overthrow of Hussein and installation of a sectarian Shiite puppet regime opened the door for Al Qaeda to set up shop and flourish.

The authors of this slaughter themselves coined the terms that condemn them, such as “shock and awe.” They introduced other terms into the world’s vocabulary: Abu Ghraib, Fallujah, white phosphorus, rendition, water-boarding and Guantanamo.

Thousands of US troops were killed in the eight-year war and occupation. Tens of thousands more suffered permanent physical and psychological damage. Trillions of dollars were squandered while US workers’ living standards were devastated by layoffs,

wage cuts and the gutting of social programs.

Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were slaughtered, millions were turned into refugees, and the entire country was reduced to near rubble. Sectarian tensions between Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish populations were deliberately stoked as part of a divide-and-rule strategy.

Obama, who won election largely by presenting himself as an opponent of the Iraq war, once in office continued the war and adhered to the timeline proposed by Bush for withdrawing US troops. He saw to it that none of the conspirators of the Bush years were held to account for their crimes.

Not only that. He and accomplices such as Hillary Clinton cultivated Al Qaeda-linked groups, such as ISIS, and used them as proxy forces in their wars for regime-change in Libya and Syria. The result was 50,000 deaths in Libya, the murder of the deposed president, Muammar Gaddafi, and the descent of the country into anarchy, bloody fighting between rival militias, and the collapse of its oil industry.

Thus far, the civil war stoked up by Washington and led by ISIS in Syria has killed over 100,000 and turned millions into refugees. Now, Washington is bombing in Iraq the very forces it has built up in Syria.

The attempt by the president in his Thursday night announcement to present the launching of an air war in Iraq as a humanitarian effort to rescue besieged Yazidis reeks of hypocrisy—all the more given his full backing for Israeli mass murder of civilians in Gaza. Obama’s claim that he will carry out only a “limited” and “targeted” campaign and not send “combat troops” back to Iraq is another lie.

“As the president made clear,” Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby said Friday, “the United States military will continue to take direct action against [ISIS] when they threaten our personnel and facilities.” Another official said, “The enemy gets a vote. If they stop, we stop. If they attack, we bring

down the hammer.” The current campaign could last weeks, officials said.

The very same people who have set aflame the entire Middle East are preparing a similar disaster in Ukraine and mapping out plans for war against Russia and China, both nuclear powers.

As always, the American media pumps out government propaganda in the guise of “news.” In all the coverage seeking to justify the renewed bombing campaign, not one of the well-heeled commentators and columnists thinks to ask whether the American government and military bears responsibility for the catastrophe in Iraq.

All of this shows that the eruption of US militarism abroad goes hand in hand with the breakdown of democracy at home. None of those responsible for these crimes are answerable to the American people. None of them are held to account. They are part of an oligarchy of corporate billionaires, intelligence chiefs and military brass that rules America.

It is up to the working class to disarm the warmongers and bring the war criminals to justice. The alternative is one war after another, leading inevitably to a new world war, this time with nuclear weapons.

The urgent task at hand is the building of a mass international anti-war movement, based on the working class and armed with a revolutionary program for the overthrow of capitalism, the root cause of war, and establishment of socialism.



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