

Behind the recriminations over the fall of Ramadi

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The fall of Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's Anbar province, to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has provoked a series of charges and counter-charges over who is responsible.

The debacle reprised the collapse of Iraqi security forces in the fall of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, nearly a year ago. Nearly 10 months of US air strikes, stepped-up aid to the Iraqi military, and the deployment of over 3,000 US troops in support of Baghdad have apparently done little to contain, much less defeat, ISIS.

US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter was the most blunt, declaring that the Iraqi forces who melted away in the face of the ISIS offensive lacked the "will to fight." Similarly, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey commented that the Iraqi security forces were "not driven out of Ramadi. They drove out of Ramadi."

From within the Iraqi government and security forces as well as from Iran, there has been another explanation for the failure of the US intervention launched in August of last year to defeat ISIS: Washington has no real desire to annihilate the Islamist forces, its "war on terror" rhetoric notwithstanding.

The widespread acceptance of this explanation was indicated last week in a speech given by the senior commander of US Special Operations forces in Iraq, Army Brig. Gen. Kurt Crytzer. Speaking before the Special Operations Forces Industry Conference, a forum for the military industrial complex held in Tampa, Florida, he reported that it is widely believed in Iraq, including within its security forces, that the Pentagon is "re-supplying" ISIS.

"Without an effective counter-narrative, this quickly took traction, resonating with many throughout Iraq," Crytzer said. "It's not just the poor and uneducated that believe it." The result, he added, was that US forces

were at risk of attack from Iraqis fighting ISIS. He cited an attempt to shoot down a US helicopter believed to be ferrying arms to the Islamists and friction between American troops and their Iraqi counterparts.

Crytzer gave no indication why such a "narrative" would resonate so broadly among the people of Iraq, while the media covering his address referred to the charge of US support for ISIS as an Iraqi "conspiracy theory."

There are no doubt "conspiracy theories"—which explain history as merely the working out of plots hatched by cabals at the pinnacle of society—but there also exist well-documented conspiracies by US imperialism in the Middle East. These conspiracies, which have not always produced the desired results, have decimated entire societies over the last decade.

As if to substantiate the Iraqi suspicions cited by General Crytzer, the US government has—in response to a Freedom of Information Act filing by the right-wing Judicial Watch group—declassified a series of documents, including one secret report produced by the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) dated August 12, 2012.

While Judicial Watch has focused entirely on the documents' supposed substantiation of Republican claims that the Obama administration—and Hillary Clinton, in particular—"lied" about the armed attack on the Benghazi consulate and CIA facility in 2012, it and similar right-wing outfits studiously ignore the far deeper implications of the August 2012 report.

The heavily redacted seven-page DIA document states that "the Salafist [sic], the Muslim Brotherhood, and AQI [Al Qaeda in Iraq] are the major forces driving the insurgency in Syria," while noting that "the West, Gulf countries, and Turkey" support the opposition; while Russia, China and Iran "support the [Assad]

regime.”

The document accurately predicts that “If the situation unravels, there is the possibility of establishing a declared or undeclared Salafist principality in eastern Syria... And this is exactly what the supporting powers to the opposition want, in order to isolate the Syrian regime...”

As for Iraq, the secret report continues: “This creates the ideal atmosphere for AQI to return to its old pockets in Mosul and Ramadi... ISI [Islamic State of Iraq] could also declare an Islamic state through its union with other terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria, which will create grave danger in regards to unifying Iraq and the protection of its territory.”

It should be recalled that this document was issued amid steadily escalating US support for the so-called “rebels” in Syria, with the CIA setting up a secret station in Turkey near the Syrian border to coordinate the funneling of arms, money and supplies to these forces, which, as was clearly known at the time, were dominated by Islamist elements such as Al Qaeda.

The report indicates that Washington and its allies were supportive of these forces carving out an Islamic state in Syria. And, while they saw the spread of such a state to neighboring Iraq as a likely danger, they considered this a chance worth taking in order to prosecute their proxy war for regime-change directed against Damascus and Syria’s backers—Iran, Russia and China.

It also should be recalled that this document was issued precisely at the moment that the entire international coterie of middle-class pseudo-left organizations—from the International Socialist Organization in the US, to the New Anti-capitalist Party in France, the Socialist Workers Party in Britain and the Left Party in Germany—was hailing the US proxy war in Syria as a “revolution,” and even crafting justifications for the US arming of the Islamists.

If Washington is pulling its punches in its supposed war on ISIS, it is not, as the *New York Times* absurdly suggested this week, out of concern for killing civilians. The US has butchered hundreds of thousands over the course of the last dozen years. Rather, it wants to preserve the Islamist gunmen, who constitute the principal fighting force in its proxy war to topple Assad, just as it employed similar forces to overthrow and murder Libya’s Gaddafi.

The US military/intelligence complex, along with its front-man, Barack Obama, is indifferent to the immense human suffering such policies inflict upon the peoples of the region. They are making their decisions based on strategic calculations in which elements such as Al Qaeda and ISIS are merely pawns in a far wider drive to assert US hegemony by means of aggression and war.



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