

AMERICA'S "NEW IRAQ": "Vengeance Beyond the Grave". Killings, Kidnappings, Concentration Camps...

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"How does blood flow from a ghost?" (In: "They Didn't Ask: What's After Death?" Mahmoud Darwish, 1942-2008.)*

"Nothing so terrible has happened to us since the Crusades." An Iraqi friend.

In November 2010, Iraq's former Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, under the shadow of execution, wrote to his lawyer requesting to be buried in Jordan and to be returned to his homeland: "after Iraq is liberated." He feared his body would be desecrated - or exhumed by Iraq's puppet government.

Respect for anyone, yet alone the dead, has not been an attribute which has shone from "Prime Minister" Nuri al Maliki's US shoe-in client government.

In May 2006, al-Arabiya TV showed videotape they stated was the remains of a previous Prime Minister (1991-1993) Muhammad Hamza al Zubaydi being kicked, his head repeatedly stamped on by a group of men. Taken in to custody by US forces on 21st April 2003, his death of a "heart attack" in an American military hospital was announced on December 5th 2005, although he had died three days earlier, 2nd December. He was sixty seven.

Iraq's litany of pogroms since the invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein - under the occupation and the woeful "Governing Council", occupation and al Maliki's two predecessors, occupation and al Maliki, and now under al Maliki's solo, vengeful regime - has equaled the infamous, from Warsaw to *Kristallnacht*.

"Pogrom" is not used lightly, it is characterized by killings, destruction of homes, properties, businesses and religious centres, along with arbitrary arrests and concentrations camps.

From destruction in 2006 of Samarra's golden domes of The Askari Shrine, where the two Imams, Ali Al-Hadi and his son Hassan Al-Askary were believed entombed, across the nation, Mosques of both Sunni and Shi'a, Christian churches and Yazidi and other minority temples and shrines have been reduced to ashes and fragments, burned and bombed. US/UK democracy in Iraq gave rise to a very democratic pogrom: no belief group or ethnicity excluded.

Also since the invasion the terrorization, whether for religious reasons or ransom money, score settling or the unfathomable, in a country where people have co-existed for countless generations, has been bewildering.

Overnight (literally) Iraq changed from a land where, broadly, the streets of towns and cities could be walked alone, safely, late at night, to a country which awoke to find whole families in morgues bearing wounds indicating unimaginable torture. It woke to beheaded bodies chucked on rubbish dumps – and beheaded fathers and sons dumped on door steps or in front gardens.

Iraq also woke to ransom kidnappings, extortion, destruction of homes, premises, businesses – or their takeover by force.

The freedom-bringing “allies” created concentration camps at Abu Ghraib and Camp Bucca, Baghdad Airport and an alleged another eleven thousand, still seemingly unaccounted for, gulags.

But in the New Iraq, vengeance indeed goes beyond the grave. On the 29th March, Nuri al Maliki hosted the first Arab summit in Baghdad for twenty years, on which he spent a Billion \$’s, which included re-placing US-destroyed palm trees and providing a banquet featuring gold-leaf wrapped dates.

This as Iraqis struggle with minimal electricity, clean water and basic services. Baghdadis had cell ‘phones disconnected for a week, and security ensured they were either stuck in traffic for hours – or unable to get to work at all if they had any, captives in their “liberated” city.

The day before the Bacchalian extravaganza, on al Maliki’s instructions, an official was dispatched to Salahuddin Governorate, where Saddam Hussein was born in the village of al Awja and where he was taken for burial, after his US-backed lynching and the shocking subsequent treatment of his body. His two sons, summarily gunned down by US troops in Mosul, in July 2003, with his fifteen year old grandson, are also buried there.

Maliki’s envoy delivered an order to the Chief of Saddam’s al-Bu Nasir clan, Hassan al Nada, that the tomb be closed and the remains of the former President transferred elsewhere.(i)

Is it not dictators and despots who dictate, and order, while democratically elected Prime Ministers debate and decide by consensus?

“To order the closure of the tomb is strange, especially since it houses bodies of Abdul Rahman Arif and Abdul Karim Kassem’, commented Nada.

Arif, passionate pan-Arabist, was President from 1966-1968. As a then career soldier, he had supported the bloody overthrow of the British imposed monarchy in 1958, as President he sent Iraqi troops to fight against Israel in the 1967 Six Day War. He died in exile in Amman, Jordan, in 2007, having left Iraq after the invasion.

Kassem led the 14th July 1958 revolution, became first post-revolution Prime Minister (1958-1963) speedily closing the open door policy which had facilitated monopolies in, as Iraqis put it: “plundering the country’s oil wealth and ties Iraq to imperialist alliances.”

As ever, Iraqi history is repeating. And “ties” and “plundering” surely paying. Iraq is ranked third most corrupt country in the world and according to Ekurd.net (iii) al Maliki heads ten Iraqi politicians who came in with the invaders tanks, expected to become Billionaires within ten years. Most Iraqis deal daily with deprivation which makes the grinding misery of the embargo look favourable.

Maliki, in spite of being Shia, indeed also Secretary General of the Islamic Dawa Party and grandson of a Shia cleric, has clearly embraced the US Crusade from retribution to pocket lining and lack of respect, even for the dead – think, bin Laden’s vanished remains, Colonel Quaddafi’s unknown resting place, if there is one. Maliki is faithfully following.

“They ordered the bodies dug up, the tombs destroyed and the dead men dragged out of their graves”, wrote Thomas Asbridge in his authoritative history of the Crusades.(ii) He was writing of 1098. Iraq has not been taken back a hundred years since the invasion, a repeated refrain from Iraqis, but nearly thousand it seems.

After Iraq fell, chillingly symbolized by the covering of the face of the statue of Saddam Hussein with a US flag, on 9th April 2003 and its toppling, al Maliki became deputy leader of the Supreme National Debaathification Commission – the purging of all former Baath party (ie pan-Arabism supporters) members from employment.

The tomb of the co-founder of Pan Arabism, philosopher and sociologist, Michel Aflaq (1910-1989) was erased by US bulldozers.

In 1991 after the Basra Road massacre, General Norman Schwarzkopf announced that there was : “No one left to kill.” As April 9th approaches, the ninth anniversary of the destruction of the statue and Iraq, it seems al Maliki has outdone Shwarzkopf. He has moved on to attacking the dead.

This year’s anniversary falls within the Easter weekend. Iraqis and Iraq – where Abraham, Father of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, believers hold, was born at Ur, in the country’s south – are also in need of a resurrection and a miracle.

Notes

* <http://www.bloodaxebooks.com/titlepage.asp?isbn=1852247886>

i. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/03/28/203749.html>

ii. <http://www.amazon.com/The-Crusades-Authoritative-History-Holy/dp/0060787287>

iii. <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/3/state6023.htm>

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