

## Religion and Violence

U.S. encourages "religious fundamentalism" to counter nationalist & socialist movements

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It has been known for some times that U.S. President George W. Bush allegedly "heard God" telling him to invade Iraq. It is also alleged that Bush said: "I'm driven with a mission from God". Why God would tell Bush to invade Iraq remains a mystery. Bush invaded Iraq because Bush alleged that Iraq possessed Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD). There were no WMD in Iraq. The war was an immoral act of aggression.

As it is promoted by Western politicians, propagandists and the mainstream media, the new "War on Terror", is a war against those Muslims, who "hate our freedom", and who have a broad strategy to "dominate much of the world". Although most Muslims believe - as Christians believe that Jesus is the only God - that "Islam is the only path to Heaven", Muslims are not interested in dominating the world, and most Muslims see this as impossible. On the contrary, most Muslim nations are striving to be free from Western domination and imperialism. The Arabs masses, in particular, want "liberation from foreign occupation and the freedoms of opinion, \_expression and movement", noted the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report.

A recent report by the *Defence Science Board* of the Pentagon revealed that; "Muslims do not 'hate our freedom,' but rather, they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favour of Israel against Palestinian rights, and the long-standing even increasing support for what Muslims collectively sees as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan, and the Gulf states". It is these U.S.-sponsored tyrannies and the unfair exploitation of the region's oil resources - by Western corporations - that contributed to the emergence of political resistance movements against Western domination and imperialism.

The illegal war on Iraq and the ongoing colonial Occupation of the country reinforce the anti-imperialism view of the Muslim peoples. Thus, political Islam is "the work of non-religious political intellectuals" as a response to Western imperialist policies, and has very little to do with 'Islam versus everything Western'. The labels of 'Islamists' and 'Jihadist' are convenient as a way to denigrate Islam in Western thoughts and remove any devotion to self-government and national independence.

By contrast, descriptions like nationalist and resistant are avoided by politicians, propagandists and the mass media because they describe people's aspirations. The current usage of 'Islamists', 'Jihadists' and 'insurgents' - in place of nationalists and resistant - to describe the Iraqi Resistance is straight propaganda designed to dehumanise the Iraqi people and deny them legitimacy to resistance based on a just cause. Furthermore, the misleading description of the Iraqi Resistance as "insurgency", represents violence and

devoid of any noble cause and self-defence. The purpose is to blacken the Iraqi Resistance not only in the eyes of the Iraqi people, but also in the eyes of Western public.

It is important to recognise that the U.S. has encouraged 'religious fundamentalism' to counter nationalist and socialist movements. In the 1980s the U.S. and its allies created and financed the so-called 'al-Qaida' groups against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Members of al-Qaida, including Osama bin Laden, were called the "freedom fighters". With the aid of these fundamentalist groups, the U.S. was able to spread its ideology in West Asia. In the U.S., Bush is supported by roughly 50 million right-wing fundamentalist Christians, who fuel his war machine and his rightwing agenda. The 20 million fundamentalist voters helped sweep Bush back into office on 02 November, 2005, and maintained a Republican majority in Congress.

In Iraq, the U.S. is cultivating all kinds of religious fundamentalists and fanatics at the expense of progressive and nationalist movements. Nationalism and pan-Arabism is imperialism's real enemy, not religious fundamentalism. It is now clear that the U.S. supports and encourages sectarian forces and territorial disintegration, as spelled out in the U.S.-crafted illegitimate constitution; the trap for unending colonial occupation. The truth is that the U.S. and its Western allies are not concerned with democracy and the rules of law; they act collectively to enhance and protect their own imperial and Zionist interests with disregard to human rights and democracy.

Contrary to Christian teachings – propagated by U.S. and Western leaders as "shared values" –, U.S. forces and their allies have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi Christians and Muslims. Based on the conservative estimate – 100,000 Iraqis killed between March 2003 to October 2004 – provided by the peer reviewed British medical journal the *Lancet* (*Lancet*, 364: 857), if one includes the atrocity of Fallujah, Ramadi, Qaim, Tel Afar, Hillah, Baghdad and the daily bloodsheds instigated by U.S. forces and their collaborators, the number of Iraqis killed since March 2003 would be in the 200,000 mark or even more. The majority of the victims have been innocent women and children. Who hates who?

In addition, Iraqis' basic human rights and freedom are violated on a daily basis. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been arrested, imprisoned, abused and tortured without charges. Instead of building Iraq, the U.S. is continuing the destruction of Iraq. Iraq's vital civilian infrastructure, including: transport and communication systems, the health care services and the education system have all been destroyed. A sovereign nation has been destroyed by premeditated violence. Sadly, the U.S. is fighting wars and committing war crimes against nations, such as Iraq, most Americans knew virtually nothing about.

The American people must know that, the reality on the ground in Iraq is that the U.S. brought death and destruction on massive scales. Each time a village or a town is attacked by U.S. forces, it is completely obliterated together with its civilian population. The people's only crime was that they are against the occupation of their country. It is a murderous crime that is completely removed from the conscience of Western public by the elites and very complicit mainstream media. The propaganda is that the U.S. is fighting a minority of Iraqi opposition to the Occupation is a falsehood. The opposite is true; only a small minority of expatriate criminals and fanatics support the U.S. Occupation. Echoing the majority of Iraqis opposing the Occupation, more than 100 members (more than one-third) of the same puppet parliament, signed a letter in June 2005, calling for 'the departure of the occupation'.

Unfortunately, violence and destruction have become an addiction of the U.S. elites and warmongers. On 05 October 2005, *Fox News* host Bill O'Reilly called on the U.S. government to assassinate Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. O'Reilly said: "We should take his life if he doesn't help us out" with the war in Iraq. Since when, a "Super Power" needs help against a defenceless nation, which has been a victim of international terrorism for nearly 15 years? Can you imagine a prominent Syrian TV host publicly advocating the assassination of the President of the United States? Chances are that the U.S. (and its allies) will order "a military action" against Syria on the basis of "inciting and glorifying terrorism". It seems that the violent destruction of Iraq and the mounting daily bloodshed are not enough to deter the U.S. from committing further crimes. An attack on Syria is a war of aggression against a sovereign country that neither attacked nor threatened to attack the U.S.

As the ruling of the German Federal Administrative Court showed that the attack by the U.S. and its allies against the nation of Iraq was a clear war of aggression – as specified in Article 4, Paragraph 4 of the UN Charter – that violated international law. In addition, The Nuremberg Tribunal clearly stated that; "To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole". There is *prima facie* evidence to prosecute those who violated international and U.S. laws, and order the invasion, which led to this mass murder.

President Bush uses religion because it serves his purpose of manipulating the public. If Mr. Bush is familiar with God's teachings; God said: "thou shall not kill". God doesn't advocate premeditated act of aggression and the mass murder of innocent human beings through "Shock and Awe" terrorism. The Iraqi people are defending themselves and their families against international terrorism.

To put an end to the mounting bloodshed in Iraq, President Bush should make the most humane decision and free the Iraqi people from U.S.-imposed oppression. The only path to freedom is the full and immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and their collaborators from Iraq.

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