

The bombings of the Golden Mosque in Samarra: Who Benefits?

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The most important question to ask regarding the bombings of the Golden Mosque in Samarra on the 22nd is: who benefits?

Prior to asking this question, let us note the timing of the bombing. The last weeks in Iraq have been a PR disaster for the occupiers.

First, the negative publicity of the video of British soldiers beating and abusing young Iraqis has generated a backlash for British occupation forces they've yet to face in Iraq.

Indicative of this, Abdul Jabbar Waheed, the head of the Misan provincial council in southern Iraq, announced his council's decision to lift the immunity British forces have enjoyed, so that the soldiers who beat the young Iraqis can be tried in Iraqi courts. Former U.S. proconsul Paul Bremer had issued an order granting all occupation soldiers and western contractors immunity to Iraqi law when he was head of the CPA but this province has now decided to lift that so the British soldiers can be investigated and tried under Iraqi law.

This deeply meaningful event, if replicated around Iraq, will generate a huge rift between the occupiers and local governments. A rift which, of course, the puppet government in Baghdad will be unable to mend.

The other huge event which drew Iraqis into greater solidarity with one another was more photos and video aired depicting atrocities within Abu Ghraib at the hands of U.S. occupation forces.

The inherent desecration of Islam and shaming of the Iraqi people shown in these images enrages all Iraqis.

In a recent press conference, the aforementioned Waheed urged the Brits to allow members of the provincial committee to visit a local jail to check on detainees; perhaps Waheed is alarmed as to what their condition may be after seeing more photos and videos from Abu Ghraib.

Waheed also warned British forces that if they didn't comply with the demands of the council, all British political, security and reconstruction initiatives will be boycotted.

Basra province has already taken similar steps, and similar machinations are occurring in Kerbala.

Basra and Misan provinces, for example, refused to raise the cost of petrol when the

puppet government in Baghdad, following orders from the IMF, decided to recently raise the cost of Iraqi petrol at the pumps several times last December.

The horrific attack which destroyed much of the Golden Mosque generated sectarian outrage which led to attacks on over 50 Sunni mosques. Many Sunni mosques in Baghdad were shot, burnt, or taken over. Three Imams were killed, along with scores of others in widespread violence.

This is what was shown by western corporate media.

As quickly as these horrible events began, they were called to an end and replaced by acts of solidarity between Sunni and Shia across Iraq.

This, however, was not shown by western corporate media.

The Sunnis were the first to go to demonstrations of solidarity with Shia in Samarra, as well as to condemn the mosque bombings. Demonstrations of solidarity between Sunni and Shia went off over all of Iraq: in Basra, Diwaniyah, Nasiriyah, Kut, and Salah al-Din.

Thousands of Shia marched shouting anti-American slogans through Sadr City, the huge Shia slum area of Baghdad, which is home to nearly half the population of the capital city. Meanwhile, in the primarily Shia city of Kut, south of Baghdad, thousands marched while shouting slogans against America and Israel and burning U.S. and Israeli flags.

Baghdad had huge demonstrations of solidarity, following announcements by several Shia religious leaders not to attack Sunni mosques.

Attacks stopped after these announcements, coupled with those from Sadr, which I'll discuss shortly.

Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, shortly after the Golden Mosque was attacked, called for 'easing things down and not attacking any Sunni mosques and shrines,' as Sunni religious authorities called for a truce and invited everyone to block the way of those trying to generate a sectarian war.

Sistani's office issued this statement: 'We call upon believers to express their protest ... through peaceful means. The extent of their sorrow and shock should not drag them into taking actions that serve the enemies who have been working to lead Iraq into sectarian strife.'

Shiite religious authority Ayatollah Hussein Ismail al-Sadr warned of the emergence of a sectarian strife 'that terrorists want to ignite between the Iraqis' by the bombings and said, 'The Iraqi Shiite authority strenuously denied that Sunnis could have done this work.'

He also said, 'Of course it is not Sunnis who did this work; it is the terrorists who are the enemies of the Shiites and Sunni, Muslims and non Muslims. They are the enemies of all religions; terrorism does not have a religion.'

He warned against touching any Sunni Mosque, saying, 'our Sunni brothers' mosques must be protected and we must all stand against terrorism and sabotage.' He added: 'The two shrines are located in the Samarra region, which [is] predominantly Sunni. They have

been protecting, using and guarding the mosques for years, it is not them but terrorism that targeted the mosques”

He ruled out the possibility of a civil war while telling a reporter, ‘I don’t believe there will a civil or religious war in Iraq; thank God that our Sunni and Shiite references are urging everyone to not respond to these terrorist and sabotage acts. We are aware of their attempts as are our people; Sistani had issued many statements [regarding this issue] just as we did.’

The other, and more prominent Sadr, Muqtada Al-Sadr, who has already lead two uprisings against occupation forces, held Takfiris [those who regard other Muslims as infidels], Ba’thists, and especially the foreign occupation responsible for the bombing attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra.

Sadr, who suspended his visit to Lebanon and cancelled his meeting with the president there, promptly returned to Iraq in order to call on the Iraqi parliament to vote on the request for the departure of the occupation forces from Iraq.

‘It was not the Sunnis who attacked the shrine of Imam Al-Hadi, God’s peace be upon him, but rather the occupation [forces] and Ba’athists’God damn them. We should not attack Sunni mosques. I ordered Al-Mahdi Army to protect the Shi’i and Sunni shrines.’

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, urged Iraqi Shia not to seek revenge against Sunni Muslims, saying there were definite plots ‘to force the Shia to attack the mosques and other properties respected by the Sunni. Any measure to contribute to that direction is helping the enemies of Islam and is forbidden by sharia.’

Instead, he blamed the intelligence services of the U.S. and Israel for being behind the bombs at the Golden Mosque.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that those who committed the attack on the Golden Mosque ‘have only one motive: to create a violent sedition between the Sunnis and the Shiites in order to derail the Iraqi rising democracy from its path.’

Well said Mr. Blair, particularly when we keep in mind the fact that less than a year ago in Basra, two undercover British SAS soldiers were detained by Iraqi security forces whilst traveling in a car full of bombs and remote detonators.

Jailed and accused by Muqtada al-Sadr and others of attempting to generate sectarian conflict by planting bombs in mosques, they were broken out of the Iraqi jail by the British military before they could be tried.

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