

The War on ISIS is a Farce

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Nowhere in recent years have the contradictions of imperialism been so clear than in the West's war against ISIS. Working people are bombarded with messages in the media of the worldwide threat of ISIS, with the aim of the messages to convince working people of the need to sacrifice their civil liberties and democratic freedoms to counter ISIS and to support more military interventions in the Middle East. If Barack Obama, David Cameron, Tony Abbot, and other Western leaders were truly interested in countering the threat of ISIS, perhaps they should follow Stephen Harper's "strong leadership" by finding the nearest closet to lock themselves in.

The rise of ISIS has its origins in the illegal occupation of Iraq by the U.S., the U.K., and other Western forces in 2003, which caused the deaths of an estimated 5% of the Iraqi population. The Bush and Blair administrations falsely accused the Iraqi regime of harboring weapons of mass destructions, of supporting al-Qaeda, and of having some connection with the 9/11 attacks. What the public wasn't informed of was that the Bush administration had plans to attack Iraq long before 9/11 [1]. What's more, the U.S. facilitated the rise of Saddam's regime, supplied it with weapons of mass destruction in its war against Iran, and unlike Saudi Arabia and other allies of the U.S. in the region, Iraq was a secular state that was violently opposed to the reactionary Islamist ideology of al-Qaeda. The war, if anything, was a boon for al-Qaeda, which was never active in Iraq before the U.S.-led occupation.

In 2011, the U.S., the U.K., France, Canada, and other Western imperialist states, along with their allies in the region, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar, allied themselves with militant Islamist organizations in Libya and Syria to overthrow the secular governments of Muammar al-Gaddafi and Bashar al-Assad respectively.

Western imperialism invoked the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) doctrine to justify NATO airstrikes on Libya, killing thousands of civilians [2]. Libya was the wealthiest and most stable country in Africa, with the continent's highest standard of living and with universal healthcare and education for all its citizens, but in the aftermath of NATO's humanitarian intervention, the country fell into a state of collapse as rival tribes and Islamist organizations battled to control the country's wealth. Militant Islamists captured, brutally tortured, and murdered Gaddafi.

The NATO intervention in Libya directly facilitated the breakaway of the Azawad and the rise of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali. Using the "war on terror" ruse the U.S., E.U., Canada, and other imperialist states have been actively supporting the Malian regime in its war against Tuareg autonomy and AQIM, which they earlier supported in Libya along with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. Libya was virtually handed to al-Qaeda by NATO.

With their success in Libya, al-Qaeda and other Sunni Islamic militants quickly mobilized to

overthrow the secular government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, where the failure of Western imperialism is eerily similar to Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the 1990s and, albeit on a much larger scale, to Libya.

The U.S. policy of supporting hostile Sunni insurgent groups laid the foundation for the rise of ISIS, the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and nearly every single Sunni extremist group that has appeared in the last 40-50 years. In Afghanistan, to undermine the country's 1978 socialist revolution and spread instability into Soviet Turkestan, U.S. imperialism with its allies in the Persian Gulf and in Pakistan supported militant Islamist groups that would later form the nucleus of al-Qaeda and the Taliban [3].

The policy of supporting Sunni insurgent groups was given a further impetus following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, where an anti-U.S., theocratic Shiite regime was established. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh wrote in 2007:

“To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has cooperated with Saudi Arabia's government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.”

The Islamic State was formed in 2006 when al-Qaeda in Iraq merged with other Sunni insurgent organizations. The name was changed to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or Levant) (ISIS) in April 2013 after a second merger, this time between the Islamic State and al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, the al-Nusra Front.

The U.S., the U.K., Canada, and other imperialist states, through their allies Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, have been supporting the “moderate” Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels with hundreds of millions of dollars in weapons as well as setting up training camps and offering free medical treatment to injured fighters. The question that begs to be asked is how ISIS has managed to defeat the FSA despite hundreds of millions of dollars in aid from the West and its allies in the region?

You would have to be an absolute lunatic to believe that Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf States, all absolute monarchies run by a small clique of corrupt Arab sheikhs that couldn't be farther from an acceptable version of democracy, would support a moderate, democratic, and free Syrian organization. Even to the corporate media in the West it is no secret that these allies of the West fund reactionary Islamist organizations whose interests are antithetical to democracy. The Washington Post reported that “Qatar's cultivation of African Islamists, principally Somalia's al-Shabab insurgents, has...troubled the United States,” [4] which is drone bombing Somalia in the name of the “war on terror.” Israel, the region's “only democracy” we are told, itself supported Hamas to counter the influence of the secular Palestinian Liberation Organization in the 1980s.

These “moderate” FSA fighters that the U.S. and its allies support, if there really was an independent FSA, have en masse joined the ranks of ISIS. Dozens of outlets have detailed this fact. A Lebanese newspaper quoted an FSA commander as saying, “We are

collaborating with the Islamic State and al-Nusra,” [5] and Al-Jazeera reported in 2013 that “hundreds of fighters under the command of the opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA) have reportedly switched allegiance to al-Qaeda-aligned groups.” [6] The World Net Daily quoted Jordanian officials as saying that the rebels trained by U.S. instructors in Jordan have joined ISIS [7].

Furthermore there is overwhelming evidence that the U.S. and its allies are both directly and indirectly supporting ISIS. According to a source close to Iraqi intelligence, there is allegedly an ISIS training camp in Turkey that is in the vicinity of Incirlik Air Base near Adana, where American personnel and equipment are located [8]. NATO member Turkey is among the most staunch supporters of the rebels, a fact that an ISIS fighter detailed to the Jerusalem Post: “Turkey paved the way for us. Had Turkey not shown such understanding for us, the Islamic State would not be in its current place.” [9]

Former Iraqi Prime Minister and current Vice-President Nouri al-Maliki publicly accused U.S. allies Saudi Arabia and Qatar of bankrolling ISIS [10]. Kuwait, in particular, due to its weak financial laws, has become a financial and organizational hub for Syrian rebel groups. The Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C. reported “evidence that Kuwaiti donors have backed rebels who have committed atrocities and who are either directly linked to al-Qa’ida or cooperate with its affiliated brigades on the ground.” [11]

Evidence exists of direct Israeli support for ISIS fighters. United Nations observers in the Golan Heights reported to the United Nations Security Council of direct contact between ISIS and Israel, including Israeli Defense Forces supplying ISIS with unmarked crates and offering medical treatment to wounded fighters [12] [13]. An Israeli officer spoke out in opposition to the U.S. war against ISIS, claiming that in fighting ISIS the U.S. is strengthening what Israel perceives as the real threat, the Shiite alliance of Hezbollah and Iran [14].

Finally nearly all of the aid provided to the “moderate” rebels has been captured or sent to ISIS. It wasn’t long after the Washington Post reported that aid from the CIA and the State Department, which included dozens of Toyota pickup trucks, were being delivered to rebels on the Turkish-Syria border that the iconic photo of ISIS militants in a convoy of Toyota pickup trucks invading northern Iraq became public [15]. Less than four months after Obama pledged \$500 million in weapons and aid to the FSA rebels, ISIS had acquired the same amount of weapons from the FSA; a Syrian fighter told Al-Quds al-Arabi that much of the aid was sold to unknown parties in Turkey and Iraq [16]. Don’t forget about the repeated “accidental” weapon drops by the U.S. in ISIS-controlled territory! [17]

The war against ISIS in the Middle East by Western imperialism is a farce. ISIS has and continues to dutifully serve Western and Israeli imperialist interests in the Middle East, causing chaos in formerly staunch anti-imperialist states that had the strength to oppose Israel, and creating a force capable of countering Iranian influence.

The reason ISIS is now a “threat” is that Western imperialism, in failing to topple the Syrian government, requires a new pretext to continue its aggressive military interventions in the Middle East, in particular to weaken Syria and the Shiite leadership of Iraq for an attack on Iran. If defeating ISIS was the real objective, the Western powers would form an alliance with Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, which have relentlessly battled ISIS on the ground, not with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey.

Working people need to realize that the real threat to the world isn’t ISIS, Iran, or Syria, it is

Western imperialism.

Notes:

[1] <http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/01/10/oneill.bush/>

[2] <http://rt.com/news/libya-nato-civilian-deaths-323/>

[3] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/al-qaeda-and-the-war-on-terrorism/7718>

[4] http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/qatars-support-for-islamists--muddles-its-reputation-as-neutral-broker-in-mideast/2012/11/28/a9f8183a-f92e-11e1--8398-0327ab83ab91_story.html

[5] <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Sep-08/269883-frustration-drives--arsals-fsa-into-isis-ranks.ashx#ixzz3CpSZVuEG>

[6] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/2013920164342453621.html>

[7] <http://www.wnd.com/2014/06/officials-u-s-trained-isis-at-secret-base-in-jordan/>

[8] <http://www.wnd.com/2014/06/officials-u-s-trained-isis-at-secret-base-in-jordan/>

[9] <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2014/07/30/isis-fighter-claims-turkey--funds-the-jihadist-group/>

[10] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/09/us-iraq-saudi-qatar-idUSBREA2806S20140309>

[11] <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/12/06%20private%20gulf%20financing%20syria%20extremist%20rebels%20sectarian%20conflict%20dickinson/private%20gulf%20financing%20syria%20extremist%20rebels%20sectarian%20conflict%20dickinson.pdf>

[12] <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/.premium-1.630359>

[13] <http://www.infowars.com/un-finds-credible-ties-between-isis-and-israeli-defense-forces/>

[14] <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.623717>

[15] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/how-the-us-supports-the-islamic-state-isis-one-accidental-airdrop--vs-billions-in-covert-military-aid/5409449>

[16] <http://pjmedia.com/tatler/2014/09/10/vetted-moderate-free-syrian-army--commander-admits-alliance-with-isis-confirms-pj-media-reporting/>

[17] <http://pjmedia.com/tatler/2014/10/21/us-accidentally-airdrops-weapons-to-isis/>

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