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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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19.09.2020

## Be It Trump Or Biden, Iraq is Doomed



US Embassy in Baghdad.

It was announced on September 9 that the U.S. Administration would reduce troop numbers in Iraq from 5,200 to 3,000 by the end of the month. The commander Central Command, General McKenzie, said the withdrawal was to take place because of “the great progress the Iraqi forces have made” and that the “ultimate goal” was having local forces who were capable of preventing a resurgence of Islamic State in the country.”

In April 2003 the U.S. invaded Iraq in a wave of exuberant militarism that amongst other things was intended to stabilize the Middle East. As one means of achieving stabilization the deposed ruler of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was tried by a kangaroo court in 2006 and hanged in a disgusting travesty of justice, which summed up the direction in which Iraq was headed.

The Washington administration of the era, headed by the pathetic oddball George W Bush (he of 'Mission Accomplished'), was responsible for initiating the chaos which fell on the region, and no occupant of the White House has managed to achieve stability in the Middle East — or anywhere else, for that matter. The policy of the times was encapsulated by Vice-President Cheney, a truly foul person who will be best remembered for his lip-curling malevolence. Six months before the invasion he declared that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, a downright lie that was enthusiastically embraced by a wide spectrum of gullible idiots, including present presidential contender Joe Biden, who said America's war on Iraq would be part of "a march to peace and security."

Cheney went much further, with the mainstream media lapping up his bizarre predictions, especially when he forecast that "Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region" and that after the war, "With our help, a liberated Iraq can be a great nation once again . . . Our goal would be an Iraq that has territorial integrity, a government that is democratic and pluralistic, a nation where the human rights of every ethnic and religious group are recognized and protected."

The results have been starkly contrary to everything predicted by Cheney and all the other war-slaving savages who helped plunge Iraq and the region into chaotic carnage. The country's territorial integrity is threatened by nationwide instability and, for example, as the UK Foreign Office states, "Turkey conducts regular military action in the north of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and, occasionally, further south. There is particular risk in mountainous areas . . . and near the border with Turkey."

The government in Baghdad is hardly democratic, because under the quota system "the president comes from the Kurdish minority, the speaker of the parliament from the Sunni Arab minority, and the prime minister from the Shiite majority. Influential ministry posts are divided among the country's religious groups" — but not, of course, of religions that are at variance with Islamic theocracy. The Council For Foreign Relations noted in August that "experts say the system contributes to entrenched corruption in Iraq, which ranks as one of the most corrupt countries in the world," and the regular summation in the *Iraq Daily Roundup* by Margaret Grifis of Antiwar is indicative of the ever-increasing carnage and chaos in that stricken land.

As recorded by Associated Press, there are many militias, some being strongly supported by the loony leaders of Shia Iran and none of which contribute to "recognition and protection" of ethnic or religious communities which even under the tyrant Saddam Hussein were indeed treated in such a fashion. The Israeli

newspaper *Haaretz* reported that the Jews had constituted “a privileged group, protected and left to worship as they wished.” So far as is known, there are about five Jews left in Iraq.

As for Christians, the Archbishop of Irbil, the Right Reverend Bashar Warda, said in London last year that since the US invasion the Christian community had fallen from around 1.5 million to just 250,000. He asked if “a peaceful and innocent people [will] be allowed to be persecuted and eliminated because of their faith? And, for the sake of not wanting to speak the truth to the persecutors, will the world be complicit in our elimination?” But there has been no answer to that, and no comment from the Bush people who started the war, or any of those who followed it up with their stupid “surge” and other futile fandangos. And not a word from the Trump or Biden electioneering merry-go-round.

Trump is the supposed Christian Believer who announced in February that “In America, we don’t punish prayer. We don’t tear down crosses. We don’t ban symbols of faith. We don’t muzzle preachers . . . In America, we celebrate faith, we cherish religion, we lift our voices in prayer, and we raise our sights to the Glory of God.” Biden believes that “Personally for me, faith, it’s all about hope and purpose and strength, and for me, my religion is just an enormous sense of solace.”

Unfortunately they are both hypocrites.

Trump is a hypocrite about religion because he doesn’t believe in anything but money and power, and it is significant that his bible-brandishing charade in June was described by the former Archbishop of Canterbury as “an act of idolatry . . . In a context where racial privilege itself has long been an idolatry, where long-unchallenged institutional violence has been a routine means for the self-defense of that privilege, the image of the President clinging to the Scriptures as if to an amulet is bizarre even by the standards of recent years.” Biden, on the other hand, appears to be a genuine Believer, but cynically uses religion to attract votes in his campaign to be president. For example, he was a longtime supporter of the Hyde Amendment that forbade use of government money to pay for abortions, but when it looked as if he was going to lose votes by that stance he performed what the Brits call a reverse ferret and joined the majority.

It is apparent that the Iraq policies of Trump and Biden don’t rest on religious belief or indeed any sort of conviction, and that both are prepared to change course as the voting breezes might blow. Trump’s order of troop withdrawal from Iraq is nothing but a public relations ploy and Biden’s declaration on September 10 that he “supports drawing down

the troops” was entirely negated by his follow-up that he would keep a “small force” in the Middle East to “prevent extremists from posing a threat to the United States.” What garbage.

Nobody knows what the long-term U.S. policy might be for the country that Washington destroyed, and neither presidential candidate has the courage, conviction or ability to produce one.

Reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are depressing in their descriptions of the situation in Iraq, and it is obvious that Iraq is going further down the drain while Washington is incapable of preventing the slide that will ruin the lives of even more Iraqi citizens. Whether it’s Trump or Biden in the White House next year, Iraq is doomed.

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**CounterPunch 18.09.2020**