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War Is Realizing the Israelizing of the World

By Dan Sanchez

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As US-driven wars plummet the Muslim world ever deeper into jihadi-ridden failed state chaos, events seem to be careening toward a tipping point. Eventually, the region will become so profuse a font of terrorists and refugees, that Western popular resistance to “boots on the ground” will be overwhelmed by terror and rage. Then, the US-led empire will finally have the public mandate it needs to thoroughly and permanently colonize the Greater Middle East.

It is easy to see how the Military Industrial Complex and crony energy industry would profit from such an outcome. But what about America’s “best friend” in the region? How does Israel stand to benefit from being surrounded by such chaos?

Tel Aviv has long pursued a strategy of “divide and conquer”: both directly, and indirectly through the tremendous influence of the Israel lobby and neocons over US foreign policy.

A famous article from the early 1980s by Israeli diplomat and journalist Oded Yinon is most explicit in this regard. The “Yinon Plan” calls for the **“dissolution”** of **“the entire Arab world”** including Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Arabian peninsula.” Each country was to be made to “fall apart along sectarian and ethnic lines,” after which each resulting fragment would be “hostile” to its neighbors.” Yinon incredibly claimed that:

“This state of affairs will be the guarantee for peace and security in the area in the long run”

According to Yinon, this Balkanization should be realized by fomenting discord and war among the Arabs:

“Every kind of inter-Arab confrontation will assist us in the short run and will shorten the way to the more important aim of **breaking up Iraq** into denominations as in Syria and in Lebanon.”

Sowing discord among Arabs had already been part of Israeli policy years before Yinon’s paper.

To counter the secular-Arab nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Israel supported an Islamist movement in the Occupied Territories, beginning in the late 70s (around the same time that the US began directly supporting the Islamic fundamentalist Mujahideen in Afghanistan). The Israel-sponsored Palestinian Islamist movement eventually resulted in the creation of Hamas, which Israel also supported and helped to rise.

Also in the late 70s, Israel began fomenting inter-Arab strife in Lebanon. Beginning in 1976, Israel militarily supported Maronite Christian Arabs, aggravating the Lebanese Civil War that had recently begun. In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon, and recruited locals to create a proxy force called the “South Lebanon Army.”

Israel invaded Lebanon again in 1982, and tried to install a Christian Fascist organization called the Phalange in power. This was foiled when the new Phalangist ruler was assassinated. In reprisal, the Phalange perpetrated, with Israeli connivance, the massacre of hundreds (perhaps thousands) of Palestinian refugees and Lebanese Shiites. (See Murray Rothbard’s moving contemporary coverage of the atrocity.)

The civil war that Israel helped foster fractured Lebanon for a decade and a half. It was Lebanon’s chaotic fragmentation that Yinon cited as the model for the rest of the Arab world.

The US has also long pit Muslim nations, sects, and ethnic groups against each other. Throughout the 80s, in addition to sponsoring the Afghan jihad and civil war, the US armed Iraq (including with chemical weapons) in its invasion of and war against Iran. At the very same time, the US was also secretly selling arms to the Iranian side of that same conflict. It is worth noting that two officials involved in the Iran-Contra Affair were Israel-first neocons Elliot Abrams and Michael Ledeen. Abrams was convicted (though later pardoned) on criminal charges.

This theme can also be seen in “A Clean Break”: a strategy document written in 1996 for the Israeli government by a neocon “study group” led by future Bush administration officials and Iraq War architects. In that document, “divide and conquer” went under the euphemism of “a strategy based on balance of power.” This strategy involved allying with some Muslim powers (Turkey and Jordan) to roll back and eventually overthrow others. Particularly it called for regime change in Iraq in order to destabilize Syria. And destabilizing both Syria and Iran was chiefly for the sake of countering the “challenges” those countries posed to Israel’s interests in Lebanon.

The primary author of “A Clean Break,” David Wurmser, also wrote another strategy document in 1996, this one for American audiences, called “Coping with Crumbling States.” Wurmser argued that “tribalism, sectarianism, and gang/clan-like competition” were what truly defined Arab politics. He claimed that secular-Arab nationalist regimes like Iraq’s and Syria’s tried to defy that reality, but would ultimately fail and be torn apart by it. Wurmser therefore called for “expediting” and controlling that inevitable “chaotic collapse” through regime change in Iraq.

Especially thanks to the incredibly effective efforts of the neocon Project for a New American Century (PNAC), regime change in Iraq became official US policy in 1998. Iraq’s fate was sealed when 9/11 struck while the US Presidency was dominated by neocons (including many Clean Break signatories and PNAC members) and their close allies.

Beginning with the ensuing Iraq War, the Yalon/Wurmser “divide and conquer” strategy went into permanent overdrive.

Following the overthrow of secular-Arab nationalist ruler Saddam Hussein, the policies of the American invaders could hardly have been better designed to instigate a civil war between Iraqi Sunnis and Shias.

The “de-Baathification” of the Iraqi government sent countless secular Sunnis into unemployed desperation. This was compounded with total disenfranchisement when the US-orchestrated first election handed total power over to the Shias. And it was further compounded with persecution when the US-armed (and Iran-backed) Shiite militias began ethnically cleansing Baghdad and other cities of Sunnis.

The invasion also unleashed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a terrorist who had previously been holed up hiding from Saddam’s security forces. The Sunni extremist’s shootings and suicide bombings of Shia and Shiite shrines, and the anti-Sunni reprisals they engendered, further divided Iraq along sectarian lines. Zarqawi’s gang became Al Qaeda in Iraq. After many of his extremist followers were thrust into close prison quarters with ex-Baathists, many of the latter were recruited. The military expertise thus acquired was crucial for the group’s later rise to conquest as ISIS.

All this was the perfect recipe for civil war. And when that civil war did break out, the US armed forces made reconciliation impossible by completely taking the Shiite side.

Now in neighboring Syria, the US has been fueling a civil war for the past four years by sponsoring international Sunni jihadis fighting alongside ISIS and Syrian Al Qaeda in their war to overthrow the secular-Arab nationalist ruler Bashar al-Assad, and to “purify” the land of Shias, Druze, Christians, and other non-Salafist “apostates.” Key co-sponsors of this jihad include the Muslim regimes of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. And key allies and defenders of Assad include such Muslim forces as Hezbollah, Iranian troops, and Iraqi militias. In some battles in Syria, Iraqi soldiers and Syrian rebels may each be shooting at the other with American weapons.

Many of the weapons and recruits that were poured into Syria by the US and its allies ended up going over to ISIS or Al Qaeda. So strengthened, ISIS then burst into Iraq (where it first emerged during the chaotic US occupation) and drove the Shiite Iraqi military out of the Sunni-populated northwest of the country.

Today's "divide and conquer" seems to be the 80s "divide and conquer" in reverse. In the 80s, the US armed a Sunni-led Iraqi invasion of Iran. Now, by arming the Iran-led militias that dominate the new Iraqi military, the US has effectively armed a Shia-led Iranian invasion of Iraq. Moreover, in the 80s, the US covertly armed the Shiite Iranian resistance to the Iraqi invasion. Now the US is covertly arming (through its conduits in the Syrian insurgency) the Sunni Iraqi resistance to the Iranian invasion.

Jihadi-ridden civil wars have also been fomented in Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, and Libya, the latter following the American overthrow of yet another secular-Arab nationalist ruler.

In these catastrophes we see virtually everything Yinon and Wurmser called for. We see Yinon's "inter-Arab confrontation," the "dissolution" of Arab countries which are "fall[ing] apart along ethnic and sectarian lines" into warring fragments. And we see Wurmser's "chaotic collapse" expedited by the smashing of secular-Arab nationalist regimes. It should also be noted that Wurmser gave short shrift to the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, especially as compared to that of Arab nationalism.

But, aside from Wurmser's far-fetched fantasies of Israel-beholden Hashemite monarchies emerging from the chaos, how could being surrounded by such a hellscape possibly "secure" Israel? Sheldon Richman incisively posited that:

"Inter-Arab confrontation promoted by the United States and Israel ... would suit expansionist Israelis who have no wish to deal justly with the Palestinians and the Occupied Territories. The more dangerous the Middle East appears, the more Israeli leaders can count on the United States not to push for a fair settlement with the Palestinians. The American people, moreover, are likely to be more lenient toward Israel's brutality if chaos prevails in the neighboring states."

Another line of strategic thinking was revealed by the *New York Times* in 2013:

"More quietly, Israelis have increasingly argued that the best outcome for Syria's two-and-a-half-year-old civil war, at least for the moment, is no outcome."

For Jerusalem, the status quo, horrific as it may be from a humanitarian perspective, seems preferable to either a victory by Mr. Assad's government and his Iranian backers or a strengthening of rebel groups, increasingly dominated by Sunni jihadis.

"'This is a playoff situation in which you need both teams to lose, but at least you don't want one to win—we'll settle for a tie,' said Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli consul general in New York.

'Let them both bleed, hemorrhage to death: that's the strategic thinking here. As long as this lingers, there's no real threat from Syria.'

As menacing as jihadi terrorists are to civilians, and as horrific as civil war is for those directly afflicted, the Israeli regime would rather be surrounded by both than to be neighbored by even a single stable Muslim or Arab state not subject to Washington's and Tel Aviv's will.

This is partly due to simple imperialism, made especially aggressive by Israel's Zionist ideology. Israel wants *lebensraum*, which includes both additional territory for itself and coerced access to resources and markets in foreign territories in the region. Non-client Muslim and Arab states are simply standing in the way of that. Every state lusts for *lebenraum*. What makes Israel's lust particularly dangerous is its blank-check backing by the American superpower.

But there is also the more particular issue of maintaining a particular bit of already-conquered *lebensraum*: the Israeli occupation of Palestine. No matter how weak (like Saddam) and meek (like Assad) Arab rulers are on the subject, the very notion of Arab nationalism is a standing threat to the Israelis as permanent occupiers and systematic dispossessors of Arabs. Israel hates Baathism for the same reason it hated the PLO before the latter was tamed. A nationally-conscious Arab world will never fully accept the Occupation.

Israel is prejudiced against regional stability, because a stable, coherent Arab state is more likely to have both the motivation and the wherewithal to resist Israeli designs on its country, and possibly even to stand up for the Palestinians.

One might wonder how jihadis and civil war are any better in these regards. It's not like the natural resources under Assad's barrel bombs or ISIS's sneakers are any more readily available to Israel. And, setting aside Mossad-related theories about ISIS and Al Qaeda, it's not like Islamist extremists are necessarily much more forgiving of the Occupation than Arab nationalists.

But the jihadis are preferred by Israel, not as permanent neighbors, but as catalysts for military escalation. By overthrowing moderates to the benefit of extremists, the Israeli-occupied US foreign policy is accelerating further war by polarizing the world. It is making the Israeli/Arab and Western/Muslim divides more severely black and white by eliminating the "gray zones" of co-existence. This is ISIS's own strategy as well.

Israeli hawks prefer ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Hamas to Saddam, Assad, and Arafat, because the people of the West are less likely to be willing to co-exist with the former than the latter. Especially as terrorist attacks and refugee crises mount in the West, the rise and reign of the terrorists may finally overcome public opposition to troop commitment, and necessitate the Western invasion and permanent occupation of the Greater Middle East, followed, of course, by its perpetual exploitation by, among other Washington favorites, Israel and Israeli corporations.

The West may become a Global Israel, forever occupying, forever dispossessing, forever bombing, and forever insecure. And the Middle East may become a Global Palestine, forever occupied, forever dispossessed, forever bombed, and forever desperately violent. That is how war is realizing the Israelizing of the world.