

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد
بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپائی

The Nation

Tehran's Coup in Iraq?

by Robert Dreyfuss

03/28/2010

Iran is losing no time in assembling a pro-Tehran government in Iraq, and in so doing Tehran may push the Sunni minority in Iraq into violent rebellion. Already, there are reports from Iraq -- from Iraqi political insiders -- that former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi who led a nationalist, anti-Iranian coalition of secular Sunni and Shiite voters, may opt to boycott the upcoming new national assembly if he isn't given the right to form a government.

"We expect that there will be calls for a boycott of the parliament and for civil disobedience," according to Aiham Alsammarae, an ally of Allawi's. A violent reaction by Allawi's supporters can't be ruled out, he said, from voters who demand that Allawi be given the first crack at putting together a government. In the March 7 election, Allawi's Iraqi Nationalist Movement won 91 seats, edging out the State of Law party of Prime Minister Maliki, who won 89 seats.

But top Iraqi politicians representing Shiite sectarian politicians and Kurdish separatists filed dutifully to Iran yesterday for meetings on the formation of a new Iraqi government despite Allawi's win.

President Jalal Talabani, a Kurdish leader, visited Tehran this weekend for meetings with President Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader. Talabani was accompanied by Adel Abdel Mahdi, a leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) and Iraq's vice president, one of the leaders of the pro-Iranian Shiite religious bloc, the Iraqi National Alliance (INA). In parallel, leaders of Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law party traveled

to Iran to meet with Muqtada al-Sadr. Sadr and Abdel Mahdi are two key members of the INA, and behind the scenes Iran is knocking heads together to make sure that Maliki, the INA, and Talabani form a ruling alliance, according to Iraqi sources interviewed from Iraq and Jordan.

Their goal: to undercut former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. Under Iraqi law, and according to previous procedures, Allawi would normally be asked to form a government. But Maliki finagled a court decision that, he says, allows him to form a broader coalition first and then claim the right to announce a ruling majority.

According to Iraqi sources, Maliki, the INA, and Talabani -- who controls eight or nine seats within the Kurdish bloc -- agreed in Iran to form a government, which could muster about 170 seats, more than the 163 necessary in the 325-member parliament. As a result, the sources report, Masoud Barzani, the chief Kurdish leader, will also throw in with the pro-Maliki bloc. (Recently, Allawi and Barzani reportedly reached an understanding about an alliance, but even together they don't have enough votes to form a government.)

Allawi and his allies, including Saleh al-Mutlaq, who was banned from running for office by the so-called de-Baathification commission, have tried to reach out to the United States for support. But Washington, whose influence in Iraq is waning rapidly, and which plans to withdraw its last remaining combat forces from Iraq by August, hasn't responded to Allawi's overtures. Needless to say, the last thing that the Obama administration needs is to become embroiled in Iraq's post-election crisis, and there's little that Washington could do, anyway, to affect the outcome. Indeed, for years now it's been clear that American influence in Iraq has been shrinking, and that Iran's clout has been increasing.

But whether Washington likes it or not, Iraq may once again be pushed to the brink of civil war.