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Imperial Troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan

by Jacob G. Hornberger

4/5/2010

Things are not working out as well as the U.S. Empire intended in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

The original plan called for the installation of U.S. puppet regimes in both countries, regimes that would do the bidding of the Empire while maintaining the false semblance of sovereignty and independence.

For a model of what was intended for both countries, think Iran from 1953 to 1979. In 1953, the CIA instituted a coup in Iran that ousted Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammed Mossadegh, and replaced him with a U.S.-approved, compliant ruler, the Shah of Iran.

From 1953 to 1979, Iran was a dream-come-true for the CIA and the U.S. Empire. The country was ruled by the Shah, whose loyalty to the U.S. Empire was complete. He would do whatever the Empire requested of him. At the same time, the CIA permitted him a free hand to do whatever he wanted inside Iran, which he ruled with an iron fist. During that entire period, Iran was officially considered a friend of the Empire.

It all came to end in 1979, when the Iranian people revolted against this brutal, CIA-installed dictator, who had tortured his own people with the support of the CIA. The Shah was replaced by

an extremist Islamic regime. At that point, Iran lost its status as friend of the Empire and became an official enemy.

Now, back to Iraq. Guess where representatives of the top three political alliances traveled immediately after Iraq's recent election. If you guessed Iran, you guessed right! [According to the New York Times](#), "The ink was hardly dry on the polling results when three of the four major political alliances rushed delegations off to Tehran. Yet none of them sent anyone to the United States Embassy here, let alone to Washington."

The reason they traveled to Iran, rather than Washington, was to strategize on how to overcome the recent electoral victory of Ayad Allawi, whose coalition won the most votes, thereby possibly making him the next prime minister of Iraq.

That trip to Iran exposes one of the dark secrets of the U.S. invasion of Iraq: The invasion succeeded in installing a radical religious regime that has always felt more affinity for Iran (which, again, is now viewed as an enemy by the U.S. Empire) than it has for the Empire whose invasion installed it into power.

Moreover, everyone in Iraq knows that Allawi was the man the CIA had chosen to run Iraq. In fact, in the early days of the occupation, it was Allawi who was running the country, and with the type of brutality that characterized the Shah of Iran or, or as a better example, Saddam Hussein. (See my 2004 article "[Saddam, Chalabi, and Allawi Epitomize U.S. Foreign Policy](#).")

Did the CIA help Allawi win the recent election? Allawi says he hasn't heard from U.S. officials, but it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that the CIA is at least celebrating his victory, especially since, [according to the New York Times](#), Allawi was allegedly committing terrorist acts in Iraq on behalf of the CIA during the 1990s.

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan the Empire is in a horrible quandary because it's trying to act like it's not an Empire while simultaneously behaving like Afghanistan is one of its colonies.

When the Empire invaded and installed the Karzai regime into power, it desired to create the appearance that Afghanistan was still a sovereign and independent country, but with the underlying realization that Karzai could be counted on to loyally do the bidding of the Empire. In other words, another Shah of Iran and another 1953-1979 Iran-type relationship.

The problem is that Karzai is now publicly behaving like his regime really is sovereign and independent. For example, he is telling people that the U.S. did invade and occupy his country and that it participated in the fraud that marred the recent election. That's a no-no, and U.S. officials are furious about it. (See, for example, this [ABC News article](#).) Karzai is supposed to maintain the official line that the Empire is a liberator and is now serving as an invited guest in Afghanistan and that it would never rig elections. U.S. officials are now lashing out against corruption in the Karzai regime, forgetting that the Empire's occupation of the country has also been riddled with corruption.

The pitiful part of all this, however, is not the problems the Empire is experiencing in Iraq and Afghanistan but rather that all too many Americans continue refusing to confront the obvious: that all this is what American soldiers have killed, died, and destroyed for in Iraq and Afghanistan.