

Burn, Men in Black, burn

By Pepe Escobar Asia Times Online 20 June 2014

Let's cut to the chase. As in chasing that Zara outdoor summer collection, complete with state of the art assault rifles, brand new white Nike sneakers and brand new, unlimited mileage white Toyotas crossing the Syrian-Iraqi desert; the Badass Jihadis in Black.

Once upon a (very recent) time, the US government used to help only "good terrorists" (in Syria), instead of "bad terrorists". That was an echo of a (less recent) time when it was supporting only "good Taliban" and not "bad Taliban".

So what happens when Brookings Institution so-called "experts" start blabbering that the Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) is really the baddest jihadi outfit on the planet (after all they were cast out of al-Qaeda)? Are they so badass that by warped newspeak logic they're now the new normal?

Since late last year, according to US government newspeak, the "good terrorists" in Syria are the al-Qaeda spinoff gang of Jabhat al-Nusra and (disgraced) Prince Bandar bin Sultan, aka Bandar Bush, the Islamic Front (essentially a Jabhat al-Nusra multiple outlet). And yet both Jabhat and ISIS had pledged allegiance to Ayman "the doctor" al-Zawahiri, the perennial gift that keeps on giving al-Qaeda capo.

That still leaves the question of what Men in Black ISIS, the catwalk-conscious beheading stormtroopers for a basket of hardcore tribal Sunnis and Ba'ath party "remnants" (remember Rummy in 2003?) are really up to.

We interrupt this desert catwalk to announce they will NOT invade Baghdad. On the other hand, they are busy accelerating the balkanization - and eventual partition - of both Syria and Iraq. They are NOT a CIA brainchild (how come Langley never thought about it?); they are in fact the bastard children of (disgraced) Bandar Bush's credit card largesse.

The fact that ISIS is NOT directly in Langley's payroll does not imply their strategic agenda essentially differs from that of the Empire of Chaos. The Obama administration may be sending a few marines to protect the swimming pools of the largest, Vatican-sized embassy on Planet Earth, plus a few "military advisers" to "retrain" the dissolving Iraqi Army. But that's a drop of Coke Zero in the Western Iraqi desert. There's no evidence Obama is about to authorize "kinetic support" against ISIS, even though Baghdad has already green-lighted it.

Even if Obama went ballistic ("targeted military action"), and/or manufactured a new kill list to be itemized by his drones, that would amount to no more than a little diversion. What matters is that the confluent ISIS/Beltway agenda remains the same; get rid of Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki (not by accident the new meme in US corporate media); curb Iran's political/economic influence over Iraq; fundamentally erase Sykes-Picot; and promote the "birth pangs" (remember Condi?) of vast wastelands bypassing centralized power and run by hardcore tribal Sunnis.

For the Empire of Chaos, ISIS is the agent provocateur that fell from (Allah's?) Heaven; the perfect ski mask-clad tool to keep the Global War on Terror (GWOT) in Enduring Freedom Forever mode.

The icing in the (melted) cake is that the House of Saud has [officially denied](#) support of ISIS. So this means it's true, even over Bandar Bush's carcass. Cue to the official House of Saud and House of Thani narrative about ISIS: they are not in charge of what's happening in Iraq. It's all organized by the Ba'athist "remnants".

Bring on more regime change

Now for the all-encompassing Iranian angle, because the whole drama, as usual, is mostly about "containment" of Iran. We just need to endure [this](#) to confirm it; the same old regurgitation about "evidence" that "Iran and its Syrian allies" have "cooperated" with ISIS and that Bashar al-Assad in Syria has a "business partnership" with ISIS. And don't forget the scaremongering; what's ahead is a "nuclear Iran" against a "Sunni Arab world" in which the great bogeymen remains al-Qaeda.

Neo-con propaganda denouncing the US government for being in bed with Tehran against ISIS is, once again, disinformation.

Commander of Iran's Basij, General Mohammad Reza Naqudi, was very close to the mark when he said, "Takfiri and Salafi groups in different regional states, especially in Syria and Iraq, are supported by the US", and that "the US is manipulating the Takfiri terrorists to tarnish the image of Islam and Muslims." The same applies to Speaker of the Majlis Ali Larijani; "It is obvious that the Americans and the countries around it have made such moves ... Terrorism has grown into an instrument for the big powers to advance their goals."

What this all implies is that Tehran has identified the ISIS catwalk parade for what it is; a trap. Moreover, they are also convinced Washington won't break with its vassals at the House of Saud. Translation: Washington remains committed to old school GWOT. What Tehran is already, practically, supporting - also with "advisers" on the ground - is a myriad of Shi'ite militias who are being deployed to secure Baghdad and especially the Shi'ite holy cities, Najaf and Karbala.

US Return of the Living Neo-Con Dead, meanwhile, insist on regurgitating their favorite theme; Maliki Maliki Maliki. Nothing of what's goin' on in Iraq has anything to do with Shock and Awe, the invasion, occupation and destruction of most of the country, Abu Ghraib, or the vicious, totally Washington-instigated sectarian war (Divide and Rule, all over again). It's all Maliki's fault. So he must be booted out. When everything fails - to the tune of trillions of dollars - the neo-con playbook always resets to default; regime change.

Slouching towards Hardcore Sunnistan

It's all extremely fishy about ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, aka Abu Dua, born in Samarra in 1971, a Saddam "remnant" but - crucially - a former prisoner of the US government in Camp Bucca from 2005 to 2009, as well as a former leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. It's no secret in the Levant that ISIS Men in Black were trained in 2012 by US instructors at a secret base in Safawi, in the northern desert of that fiction disguised as a country, Jordan, so they would later fight as Western-approved "rebels" in Syria.

It was al-Baghdadi who sent a batch of Men in Black to set up Jabhat al-Nusra ("good terrorists", remember?) in Syria. He may have split from Jabhat in late 2013, but still remains in charge of a vast desert wasteland from northern Syria to Western Iraq. He's the new Osama bin Laden (the gift that keeps on giving, again), the all but certain Emir of an Islamically correct desert Caliphate in the heart of the Levant.

Forget about Osama in the Hindu Kush; this is so much sexier.

A hardcore Sunnistan between Iraq's Kurdish north and the Shi'ite south, swimming in oil, extending all the way to Aleppo, Rakka and Deir ez-Zor in Syria, between the two rivers - the Tiger and the Euphrates - with Mosul as capital, back to its ancestral role of pivot between the twin rivers and the Mediterranean. Sykes-Picot, eat your heart out.

Obviously, al-Baghdadi could not have pulled that awesome feat off all by himself. Enter his top

Saddam "remnant" sidekick, Ba'ath party theorist extraordinaire Izzaat Ibrahim al-Douri, who happens to be from strategic Mosul. And most of all, enter the General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries - an awesomely "secret" organization which has had the guile to dribble, like an infernal composite of Lionel Messi and Luiz Suarez, the whole Western intel apparatus, Orwellian-Panopticon NSA included.

Well, not really, because this ISIS-Ba'athist coalition of the willing was brokered by none other than Bandar Bush - while he was still in action, with crucial, lateral input from Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan. No way to trace it all back to the Beltway.

What the General Military Council managed to assemble was no less than all the "remnants" of the good old early 2000s Iraqi resistance, top tribal sheiks, merge it with ISIS, and create what might be dubbed a "Resistance Army" - those Badass Jihadis in Black in their white Toyotas, now the stuff of legend, performing the miracle of being untrackable by the NSA's satellite maze. They're so hip they even have their own [Facebook page](#), with over 33,000 "likes".

Balkanize or bust

Meanwhile, the agenda of the Empire of Chaos proceed unabated. Balkanization is already a fact. Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, crucially a Kurd, pledged Kurdish Peshmerga "cooperation" with the Iraq army to keep oil-rich Kirkuk away from ISIS. Like clockwork, the Peshmergas for all practical purposes annexed Kirkuk. Grand Kurdistan beckons.

Grand Ayatollah Sistani, also for all practical purposes, launched a Shi'ite jihad against ISIS. For his part, the leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Sayyid Ammar al-Hakim, all but resurrected their formidable paramilitary, the Badr Corps - very close to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps. These are real badasses, against which ISIS does not stand a chance. And Muqtada al-Sadr is launching "Peace Brigades" to protect the Shi'ite holy cities and also Christian churches. Civil war rules.

Meanwhile, in the Land of Oz, the Pentagon will certainly be able to extract extra funds for its perennial crusade to save Western civilization from Islamist terror. After all, there's a (ski masked) neo-Osama bin Laden in da hood.

Although the majority of Iraqis reject balkanization, Sunnis will keep accusing Shi'ites of being Iranian pawns, and Shi'ites will keep accusing Sunnis of being the House of Saud's fifth column. ISIS will keep getting loads of cash from wealthy Saudi "donors". The US government will keep weaponizing Sunnis in Syria against Shi'ites and (perhaps) conducting soft "targeted military strikes" for Shi'ites against Sunnis in Iraq. Welcome to Divide and Rule run amok.

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