

Why are we worried about the Islamic State? Did I miss something?

Father David Smith Friday 29 August 2014

The war-drums are beating. Hysteria is spreading across the nation and reaching fever pitch! Al Baghdadi and his hordes of masked men are on their way to kill us all! Nobody is safe! First Syria, then Iraq, next ... Australia? Poor James Foley is the sign of things to come. Soon white men everywhere will be losing their heads!

I must have missed something! Last time I checked the '*Islamic State*' was not actually a *state* and the army of the non-state state barely warranted the title *army*.

I don't mean to minimise the terrible acts of carnage that have taken place and I am thankful indeed that I'm not living in Northern Iraq at the moment but, looking at the big picture, Al Baghdadi and his crew are no more than a large band of mercenaries, drawn together from around the world through misguided religious zeal along with the usual lust for power and money. They have been funded by foreign investors and have managed to secure for themselves a large cache of arms and supplies. But they are a weed without roots! They are not a country with an ongoing flow of resources. They have no industry behind them, no government, no international trade agreements, and hence no future! They are a weed without roots. When the external funding dries up so will they! Like a weed scorched by the sun they will wither and blow away.

Oh, but have I forgotten that they've been enriching themselves by robbing banks and taking over oil fields?

Not at all! What difference does that make?

I appreciate that if me and a few mates rob a bank and run off with a fistful of money we can go to the next town and start spending that money, but if me and a few thousand mates completely empty a bank it's not that simple. I can't imagine that piles of stolen bank notes are going to be honoured by international bankers and if they've stolen thousands of ingots of gold who are they going to trade them with? Your gold is worth nothing unless you have someone to trade it with!

As for the oil fields, even if we assume that these mercenaries have within their ranks persons capable of managing the whole process of oil extraction and refinement, who are they going to trade with? Has Baghdadi been working on a pipeline agreement with Russia perhaps? Is the USA likely to start buying his oil if the price is right?

OK. I'm told that Baghdadi has already successfully traded some oil through the black market in Turkey (if selling your oil for \$10/barrel when it's sold on for \$100/barrel can be called 'successful') but the UN has already made moves to crack down on this trade and that sort of black-market trade is never going to bring in the sort of income required to finance an army in the field, let alone a whole state! At any rate, how much effort would it take for the US and its allies to make sure that strict sanctions are put in place, completely curtailing the trading activities of this new *state*? Is it really cheaper and easier to bomb them all into oblivion?

Yes, there is another agenda at work here!

We cannot overlook the fact that ISIS/ISIL/IS was funded and nurtured from the very beginning by the West and its Gulf State clients. Recent publications on WikiLeaks make clear that back in 2007 Syria tried to persuade the US to join them in subduing these Al Qaeda affiliates but instead the US decided to use these militants against the Syrian government – funding them and training them in northern Jordan!

And we cannot overlook the fact that the US has been champing at the bit to once again take the reins of Iraq:

- Malaki simply didn't perform as a US client. He resisted the presence of US military bases and didn't favour US companies in the reconstruction of his country.
- Re-invasion gives the US a pretext for establishing an independent Kurdistan with a friendly government in the north of Iraq where most of the oil is.
- Ousting IS from Iraq can't be done without purging them from Syria as well, and once the US military is inside the borders of Syria it won't take long before they are in Damascus, toppling the Assad government as they had been trying to do up till now through the very people they are now trying to destroy!

Yes, there are lots of questions that should be being asked here but there is little space for rational debate when you're constantly bombarded with images of beheadings and crucifixions and hearing young idealists screaming on about *killing the infidel!* Nobody seems to notice what is missing in all this rhetoric – namely, an *Islamic State* spokesperson talking about how his government is attempting to set up a long-term trading relationship with Ecuador! No, there are no discussions about long-term trade relationships with anybody because those who are pulling the strings know full well that there is no long-term!

I appreciate that Mr Foley's murder was horrible and tragic but the death of two thousand people in Gaza was two thousand times more tragic, the deaths of two hundred thousand in Syria is two hundred thousand times more tragic, and the death of a million Iraqis has been a million times more tragic. The US has blood on its hands in every one of these arenas. Indeed, the hands of the US and its allies (including Australia) are not just blood-stained but blood-drenched and still dripping! And how much more blood will now be spilt once the whole process of re-invasion begins again? How many more Iraqis will die? How many more Syrians? And how many more Islamic State sympathisers will be created as the world watches the Western imperialist powers pursue their ambitions at the expense of the more Muslim peoples?!

No! Just cut off their funding! The Islamic State are a weed without roots. Once we stop the flow of money the Islamic State will dry up and wither and disappear. We in the West have nothing to fear from Al Baghdadi and his band of mercenaries but we have everything to fear from the whirlwind that will eventuate if Mr Obama's dogs of war are let off their leash!

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