

America and Iraq

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To understand how the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular think about the American intentions to wage war against Iraq, one needs to know the following premises that the Arabs believe in concerning Arab-Western relationship:

- 1- for many centuries, the Arabs have thought that the Europeans have been rivals and have done so many attempts to subdue, colonize or humiliate the Arabs. Probably that goes back to fifteen centuries ago when the Arabs defeated the Romans out of Syria (Greater Syria which include the current political entities: Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan). The Europeans waged a crusade and occupied parts of Egypt and Syria in the eleventh and twelve centuries. The Europeans, according to the Arabs, always thought of Syria and particularly its south-western part (Palestine) as a holy land that should belong to either the Christians or the Jews. That goes in line with the teachings of the Old Testament. The Arabs again defeated the Europeans, but the Europeans showed up after the First World War and the defeat of the Moslem Turkish Empire.
- 2- The West decided after the First World War to divide the Arab Land into so many small and week states. Syria was divided into four pieces, the land of two rivers (Iraq) into two, the Nile Valley into two, the Arabian Peninsula into several sheikdoms that are controlled be traditional tribes that pay loyalty to the West, and North Africa into several others. Together with this, the West have done all what is possible to make sure that all Arab regimes remain obedient to the Western will.
- 3- It was the Western countries led by Britain that decided to create Israel and remove Palestine from the map. The Palestinians were forced out of their homes and land, and they have been living in refugee camps for fifty-five years.
- 4- To insure the security and the welfare of Israel, the West has provided the Jewish state with the necessary economic, financial, political and military support. Also has put so much pressure on the Arab regimes to observe the security of Israel in practice and left them free for some time to show verbal hostility.
- 5- So as to insure that the Arabs remain weak and dependent on the West, the following policies have been implemented:
 - i- Make the necessary efforts to prevent Arab unity, and to oppose materially and militarily all attempts toward unification;
 - ii- Preserve Israel's military hegemony over the area;
 - iii- Prevent the Arabs from acquiring modern technology particularly that of military nature. The West, according to the Arabs (here I am not talking about the regimes) wants Arabia to remain a consumer of Western commodities;
 - iv- Give the necessary support to dictatorships because democracy in Arabia imposes the danger of political change. Political change means that new Arab leaders will emerge with a new hopeful and ambitious nation-building program. This ultimately means that Western grip over the Arabs will be weakened;
 - v- Control Arab wealth particularly in the Gulf including the Iraqi oil wealth.

- vi- Hold a big and harmful stick against all attempts of Arab national liberation.

Britain led the Western policies toward the Arabs after the First World War, and France played a less significant role. The United States became unhappy with the British and French colonialism after the Second World War and adopted policies of replacement. Although some tensions appeared between both parties at the beginning, France and Britain were no match to the US and became satisfied with minor roles. America did not see it fit to adopt traditional colonialism in the area and followed the policy of remote control depending on the Israeli military might and the repression of the Arab regimes. However, its policies continued to be along the lines of traditional western policies toward the area.

The above explains why the US is waging the war in Iraq. One needs to remember that the US gave all possible support to Saddam Hussein in the past so as to fight Iran. And it is widely thought that the Americans encouraged Saddam in one way or another to possess weapons of mass destruction. The Americans wanted to weaken Iran for the same reasons of weakening the Arabs, and took advantage of the animosity between Saddam and the then new Iranian regime. Saddam was a dictator at that time and he remained so.

Saddam is a believer in Arab unity and an enemy of Israel. He cooperated with the West for some time but that was for his own reasons concerning Iran. That is why Saddam decided to adopt a program of enhancing Iraqi scientific and technological capability. Such a program, according to the west is a rebellion that should be frustrated. But what is more important is Israel and its security. If Saddam develops weapons that are effective enough to deter Israel then he will rally the Arabs to regain the Palestinian rights. It is strongly believed in Palestine that Israel has the biggest stake in the war that is about to break.

It is a war of the Jews

According to the Palestinians, America is extremely biased against the Arabs in favor of the Jews and Israel. For a long time the Jews have been working very hard on building influence in the US through the money they have and the mass media they control. The US, in the early twentieth century was not concerned very much about Zionism and the Jewish thinking of having a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but as the number of Jews in the US increased together with their influence it started to show interest regardless of Arab interests. At that time the Arabs were extremely backward and did not have presence in the US. Besides the Arabs were part of the Ottoman empire and later fell under Western colonialism. In other words, the Arabs did not have any influence in the US and did not have anybody to defend them.

The Jews have organized themselves in the US so as to influence the American public opinion and formulated the Jewish lobbies (interest groups) to influence the white house (the American president) and the congress (both house the senate and the house of

representatives). Because of the money they have, the Jews started to finance some candidates for the presidency or the congress so as to have them elected, and started to publish items through the mass media or books and educational curricula so as to bring sympathy for the Jews and hatred for the Arabs.

The Jews have capitalized on the ignorance of the American public and gave them so much faulty information. For instance, people thought at one time that the Arabs have tails and drink petroleum. The image of the Arabs has been distorted to a great extent, while the Jews have been enjoying an excellent image. In addition, Arab leaders have been giving a bad image because of dictatorship and because of their continuous defeats in wars against Israel.

Europe is not warm-hearted

Why the Europeans are not enthusiastic about the war? It is not because they do not want to disarm Iraq but because of two reasons: Europe will lose economically due to the war and it might not have its fair share of the cake if Iraq is controlled by war. Controlling Iraq through the United Nations insures that every party has the share tantamount to its influence. That is to say, opposing the war does not mean that there is a change in European policies toward the Arabs but that there is so much concern about stakes and domination.