

## **The Partition of Iraq**

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On the wake of Iraqi elections, the possibility of partitioning Iraq into three segments has become more evident. Since the American invasion of Iraq, so many political observers expressed their fears that Iraq would become three states: a Moslem Shiite in the South, A Kurd in the North, and a bewildered Moslem Sunni in the Middle. Arab countries have been very anxious, while the US and its allies haven't been cautious in their policies and procedures.

The latest elections that were conducted few days ago show the diversified interest of the diverse population fabric of Iraq. The Sunnis decided not to participate, the Shiites went to the ballot box with enthusiasm, the Kurds were more enthusiastic because they had to elect the members of their own parliament in addition to the members of Iraq's national assembly. Each has its own reasons:

The Sunnis have been fiercely resisting the Americans in a determination to end occupation. They argue that democracy and occupation don't go together, and if the Iraqis want to have a free democratic political system, they have to free their Land first. The Shiites believe that resistance isn't necessary because through elections the Iraqis can decide what political system to have. They aren't enthusiastic about resistance because they were ruled and suppressed by the Sunnis over the years, and although they are a majority, as they say, Saddam never gave them their proportionate share in governance. So many of them look at the Americans as liberators.

However, they believe that liberation through elections is less costly than armed resistance. They are following a peaceful tactic that will enable them to follow their own policies once the Americans leave Iraq. Elections accelerate an American pull out.

The Kurds want their own independence within a nominally unified Iraq. They aren't Arabs and want to be on their own. They already have their own political institutions, flag, national anthem, institutionalized cultural system and economy. Practically, they are independent.

But the Iraqis don't decide in isolation or independently from other interested parties. The Americans aren't faithful to the unity of Iraq, but they are scared of a Shiite state that might ally itself with Iran. Iran is classified by the American administration as an evil state, and it will become stronger and more influential if southern Iraq becomes a similar religious state. Due to the same reason, the Americans are worried about the rise of a Shiite government on the whole of Iraq. There is a high possibility that a Shiite Iraq or a Shiite state will complicate matters for the Americans.

The Arab states are also worried because a Shiite state will mean an increasing Iranian influence in the area. Iran is growing in power and has a big thrust on the area. Arab states are Sunnis and most of them are friendly to the US. Any anti American foreign policy will have a negative spell on them due to the expected alliance between the Shiites and dissatisfied Arab population.

Turkey is a major player that hates to see an independent Kurd state. It has a big Kurd population which is estimated up to 16 million, four times the numbers in Iraq. If the Iraqi Kurds make a state, the Turkish Kurds will be incited and the Eastern part of Turkey will be off hand. The Turks are scared of future developments, and keep issuing warnings to the Iraqi Kurds.

Israel might be the biggest loser. It will face a new strong enemy if the Sunnis drive the Americans out or if the Shiites form the government. Either way, there will be an Islamic state in Iraq that will call for jihad (holly war) against Israel. The Iraqi resistance whether national or religious is strongly anti- Israel, and the Shiites are anti Israel. It is only the Kurds who are ready to establish friendly relations with Israel, but they are surrounded by powers that don't accept Israeli presence in Kurdistan.

Briefly, the situation in Iraq is ambiguous and complicated, but, most probably America won't be happy with the final outcome.