

IRAQ: Defeating Extremism & Building a State

A Vision for Creating A Stable State

Identifying the Problem

- In order to not repeat past mistakes we must understand recent events and causality associated with them



Are Sunni Arabs a part of Iraq?

- Political participation for the Sunnis = Exiled Sunni leadership
 - Tariq Al-Hashimi Adnan Dulaimi Abdalnaser Aljanabi
 - Rafe Eissawi Ahmed Al-Alwani
- Sunnis pushing for region formation such as Diyala & Salahuddin led to militia occupation of Diyala governorate.
- Awakening movement undermined by programmed assassinations of their leadership.
- Sunni demonstrations that had lasted more than a year were crushed using government tanks and weapons, such as Hawijah, Ramadi, and Fallujah
- National Guard law which was a central part of government formation agreement has been ignored instead government has armed and funded the militias

Are Sunni Arabs a part of Iraq?

- Sunnis who stood up to and fought ISIS were not supported by the government neither with arms or other assistance i.e. Albu Nimr tribe massacre
- There are (563,000 family) displaced Sunnis in Northern Iraq and other places the most recent wave as reported by the UN was over 100,000 people.
 - The latest wave escaped to Baghdad only to be turned away at the city limits
- Complete imbalance in the security forces, the most stark example is in Diyala there are 16 security agencies all of them are Shia while the population majority is Sunni
- Tens of thousands (in excess of 50,000) of Sunnis are illegally incarcerated and are languishing in Gov. Jails



ISIS / DAESH

- Who is to blame for the present state of affairs?
 - The former government had complete control over the security file and simply allowed ISIS to take over key cities in Iraq (similar to allowing Alqaeda prisoners to escape from Abu Ghraib prison in 2012)
- ISIS is presenting itself as the protector of Sunnis in Iraq, the Government forces and militia actions are providing them with ample excuses
- ISIS is responsible for the destruction of Sunni cities, they have displaced and killed Sunni residents and do not represent
- Sunnis have turned against ISIS
- Cleansing Sunni provinces from ISIS must be a Sunni endeavor

ISIS / DAESH

- Militia involvement in those provinces will only serve to undermine Sunni attitudes of fighting against ISIS due to sectarian dynamics and militia brutality
- The Central Government has not provided sufficient arms and supplies to Sunnis willing to fight against ISIS including Sunni security forces
- Fighting ISIS must be a dual-pronged approach with a security and political dynamic
 - Reconciliation
 - Amnesty
 - National Guard
 - Sunni recruitment and training in armed forces
 - Resolving internally and externally displaced people and returning them to their homes and reconstructing those cities and towns

Militias

- 10s of illegal militias operating in Iraq out side control the central government.
- Sectarian actions of militias is only complicating Sunni resistance to ISIS
- Militias are the other side of the coin of ISIS and commit identical atrocities
- Militias are raiding prisons in order to release their members accused of atrocities and crimes, and executed Sunni prisoners latest examples include Diyala and Taji

Militias

- Utilizing the militias to fight ISIS in the short term should not translate to making them into legal uniformed forces as their loyalty will not be to the state
- Militias and ISIS are serving to undermine social cohesiveness
- Militias and ISIS both have threatened Iraq's neighbors

Post ISIS Defeat

- Proliferation of weapons will further complicate the security situation causing one of many possible security scenarios
 - Sunni versus Sunni warlords
 - Shia versus Shia warlords
 - Shia versus Sunni
 - Shia versus Kurds
- Institutionalization of security forces and weapon distribution can prevent this scenario
- Millions of displaced Sunnis need to be relocated, returned, and compensated

Post ISIS Defeat

- True political resolutions and reconciliation between Iraq's groups
- Abide by Iraq's constitutional mechanisms to create federal regions and distribute wealth
- Creating and training a national guard in each province
- Complete training and equipping a non-partisan / non-sectarian balanced armed forces

MISSION NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED!!!

- After US withdrawal the political and security situation was fragile
- Sunni and opposition politicians were targeted and intimidated
- Agreed upon government program was not implemented
- Iraqi Armed forces undermined
- Several militias undermine rule of Law
- Path to democratization undermined by both militias and rise of ISIS

THE VISION

Adopt New Counter-Insurgency Model

- Create Joint Committees:
 - Central Government
 - US & Coalition partners
 - Regional Representatives including Sunnis tribal forces
- Joint Committees should be responsible for distributing arms and supplies and overseeing training of forces
- Supplies distributed directly to JCs instead of being stored in MoD warehouses

What the Central Government Must Do

- Politically:
 - Commit to and act on agreed upon government program
 - Implement reconciliation agreements
 - Implement agreed upon amnesty program
 - Implement agreed upon de-Baathification provisions
 - Implement Civil & Military Service balance

What the Central Government Must Do

- Security
 - Dismantling and decommissioning the militias and stripping them of their weapons
 - Reconstruct the Iraqi Armed Forces on a non-partisan professional basis
 - Arming Iraq's tribes to fight ISIS, as a precursor to including them in the National Guard
 - Submit National Guard legislation to Parliament for approval
 - Returning and Compensating displaced people

How Can The United States Assist?

- Supporting political reform and reconciliation
- Ensuring the adoption and action on the government formation agreement
- Assisting in re-building security forces on a non-sectarian professional basis
 - 50,000 Ghost soldiers still exist
 - Weak and defeated forces, i.e. Ninewa
- Assist in developing state of law and not state of militias

How Can The United States Assist?

- Assist in providing technical assistance on legislation for National Guard forces as well as training and equipping them
- Assist in dismantling and decommissioning of militias and recruiting Iraqis based on personal commitments and not groups to the armed forces
- Help pressure the central government to compensate and return displaced people to their homes and cities
- Assist in creating and funding an international fund for aiding Iraq's displaced people

Arming Sunnis?

- The battle against ISIS is an international one
 - Sunnis in Iraq are the greatest potential ally in fighting ISIS
 - Sunnis need the assistance of the United States and international community in order to fight ISIS
 - Arms and assistance need to reach trustworthy Sunni leaders swiftly
 - Proven to work with Anbar Awakening Movement as Model
- **Reservations with Arming Sunnis are unfounded**
 - If the central government cannot partner with Sunnis who are fighting ISIS then who can it partner with?
 - Fractionalization of Iraq is the current reality army Sunnis will restore stability and ensure unity

Final Thoughts

The real threat in Iraq is equally ISIS and the Militias



Resolving this will not be easy but it is possible

