

British Pawn Saudi Arabia Moves To Incite Sectarian Bloodbath

by Ramtanu Maitra

March 22—The House of Saud was not created by Allah, the Merciful God. It was created, and nurtured throughout its existence, by the British colonials. As a result, the Saudi Kingdom not only acts as the conjugal partner of Britain in Arabia, and beyond, it has fully adopted the British method of controlling the Muslim world by creating deep fissures within it, exploiting the historical sectarian differences between the Shi'as and Sunnis, and then, filling those fissures with the blood of the Muslims.

What has helped the Saudi Kingdom in carrying out this policy of bloodshed, is the United States' embrace of this vicious "Middle East policy," which, in essence, is conducted jointly from London and Riyadh. A glaring example of this was witnessed, following 9/11, when a hapless American President, George W. Bush, was manipulated, into launching the Iraq and Afghanistan invasions by the so-called neocons, who, under the rubric of protecting the beleaguered Israel from "hostile" Muslims in the region, were actually serving London's and Riyadh's interest.

Both these invasions have been exploited to the hilt by the Saudi Kingdom to kill many Shi'as and others—largely Muslims—and by those acts, have provoked counter-killings by the Shi'as. The Saudis carried this out under the veiled pretext of imposing upon those lands their version of Sunni Islam, Wahhabism. Wahhabism, the state religion of Saudi Arabia, which does not exist in that form anywhere else among the Islamic countries, is rejected by most Sunni Muslims because of its orthodox tenet, which decrees that it must be imposed only through killing of those who oppose it. This is the trademark ideology of the British colonials, and the Saudi Kingdom has adopted it wholly, with open bloodstained arms.

London calls this policy, which it has embraced since the days of Sykes-Picot, the "Sunni Stability Belt," and it is playing it full tilt, as part of its "divide-

and-conquer" imperial strategy. One option, is to attempt to provoke war against Iran, with its largely Shi'a population, which would assure permanent religious warfare worse than the Thirty Years War of 1618-1648—and, the British hope, imperial control over the resulting wasteland.

Plan for Sectarian Killings in Arabia

However, a new awakening has occurred in most of Arabia, and in Northern Africa's Maghreb countries. Following the utter collapse of the global financial system, the population—educated youth in particular—in Arabia is now out on the streets demanding employment, food for all, eradication of poverty, release of political prisoners, and basic civil rights. This has thrown the colonial British-created kings and sheikhs of Arabia, including the House of Saud, into an existential crisis. In order to douse the demands of their citizens, some of them have already approached the Saudi Kingdom to formulate ways to maintain the status quo. Saudis are now providing them with soldiers, goons, and killers, projecting these uprisings as sectarian in nature, and targeting the Shi'as, with the intent of unleashing a bloody sectarian war.

Take the case of Bahrain, for instance. Bahrain is a Shi'a-majority nation, whose reins are in the hands of the al-Khalifa sheikhs. The sheikhs, from a Sunni tribe in Kuwait, came to Bahrain and seized control of the country in the early part of the 19th Century, with the help the Wahhabism. Bahrain is not oil-rich, but it is the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, making it a highly strategic nation.

The British do not leave matters to the Saudis alone, of course. Exemplary is the case of Police Chief Ian Henderson, a British national, who cut his teeth running brutal counterinsurgency operations in Kenya in the 1950s. From the 1960s forward, Henderson has been

stationed in Bahrain, as head of the security police and the intelligence service. He staffed the security apparatus with foreign mercenaries, many veterans of the British colonial police administrations in Africa. Henderson was made a Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II, for his work in preserving the Empire. While Henderson ostensibly retired as head of security for Bahrain in 1998, he has been retained, ever since, as the chief security consultant to the ruling family.

Bahrain, where almost 30% of youth 18-25 years of age, many of whom are college educated, are unemployed, started witnessing mass protests beginning early February. Demonstrations on the streets of the capital city of Manama, as also in the interior, were inspired by the events in Egypt and Tunisia, rather than sectarian lines or political parties. Young women and men walked together holding banners saying “Shi’as and Sunnis are United.”

But the al-Khalifa sheikhs, unwilling to step down, and unable to control the mass uprising, brought in Saudi forces to suppress the demonstrators. Reports indicate that along with thousands of Saudi troops and dozens of tanks, the Saudis have also sent in al-Qaeda-type assassins who are now knifing Shi’a leaders protesting against the al-Khalifa sheikhs, with the intent of turning the uprising into a carnage of sectarian killing.

Prior to the arrival of the Saudi soldiers, and other killers, Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa was stalling the demonstrators by promising much less than what they wanted. Following his Feb. 23 visit to Riyadh, where he met with, among others, Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, who, for 27 years, has turned the country into a breeding ground for Islamic extremism, King Hamad shifted his stance. On March 21, to comply with his protector Saudi Arabia’s demands, and laying the foundation for a sectarian warfare, King Hamad said, “An external plot has been fomented for 20 to 30 years until the ground was ripe for subversive designs.... I here announce the failure of the fomented plot.” Then the foreign troops were unleashed.



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A pro-democracy demonstration in the Bahraini capital Manama March 4. Inspired by events in Tunisia and Egypt, young people in Bahrain marched down the street carrying banners declaring, “Shi’as and Sunnis Are United!”

Al-Khalifa’s Links to Wahhabis and Brits

The vulnerability of the al-Khalifa family is not difficult to comprehend. The tribe came from outside, and took control of the country with the help of the Wahhabis. Then, the family created close ties to Britain by signing the General Treaty of Peace in 1820. A binding treaty of protection, known as the Perpetual Truce of Peace and Friendship, was concluded in 1861, and further revised in 1892 and 1951. This treaty was similar to those entered into by the British government with the other Persian Gulf principalities. It specified that the local ruler could not dispose of any of his territory, except to the United Kingdom, and could not

enter into relationships with any other foreign government, without British consent. In order to undermine the Shi'a community, Britain carried out another of its trademark colonial policies: to change the demographic face of Bahrain. This policy of "de-Iranization" in Bahrain consisted of importing a large number of Sunni Arabs and others from British colonies as laborers into Bahrain.

For centuries, the British have supported the al-Khalifa Sunni tribe as rulers of Bahrain, inserting themselves into any possibility of the al-Khalifa family aligning itself with Iran, or with the interests of the Bahraini people over and above the interests of business and power. According to the General Treaty of Peace of 1820, the British promised to protect Bahrain from all aggression by sea, and to lend support in case of land attack. Now, it is evident that the mantle has been handed over to the Wahhabi rulers of Saudi Arabia to unleash sectarian war under the pretext of "protecting the al-Khalifa family."

In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh is apparently now on his last legs. Many top military commanders and political colleagues, all belonging to his tribe, have deserted him, and many of them have joined the protesters, who are demanding Saleh step down immediately. The desertion occurred within 36 hours after the Saleh regime, ostensibly under Saudi direction, put snipers on rooftops March 18 to mow down Shi'a leaders after the traditional Friday Jumma prayer. Snipers took at least 58 lives that day.

It is not that the Saudis didn't try to open up the Shi'a-Sunni fissure in Yemen. A Yemeni opposition leader, Riyadh Hussein al-Qadhi, said, "We blew the cover off the Saudi intelligence apparatus, which interferes in Yemen and cracks down on the people."

Yemen's British Woes

Because of President Saleh's long-term political instability, according to Arab officials and Western intelligence sources, the Saudis have been financing Saleh's counterinsurgency campaign to the tune of millions of dollars a week. There have been repeated reports, largely from the northern rebels who are known as al-Houthis, after the clan leading the rebellion, that the Saudi military is aiding Saleh's poorly trained and badly equipped forces with airstrikes against rebel strongholds along the mountainous border. According to

Texas-based security consultancy Strategic Forecasting, "Yemen and Saudi Arabia are now seeking out mercenaries, particularly from Ukraine, to fly Yemen's Soviet-era MiGs and Sukhois in hopes of regaining the upper hand against the al-Houthis and their Iranian backers in this proxy war."

Recall the British-Saudi alliance during the civil war in Yemen (1962-70). At the time, Britain—having received a bloody nose trying to stop Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser's move to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956—plunged into Yemen to ensure that Britain's important allies, such as Saudi Arabia, were placed in a position of authority among the rulers in Arabia. Clive Jones, in his book, *Britain and the Yemen Civil War, 1962-1965: Ministers, Mercenaries and Mandarins: Foreign Policy and the Limits of Covert Action*, pointed out that the operations were "a sustained mercenary involvement in the Yemen Civil War, to be paid for mainly through Saudi largesse."

Saudi Claws Beyond Arabia

One might surmise that the House of Saud's role in killing the Shi'as in Bahrain and Yemen, is a way to protect its own rule, particularly since Saudi Arabia also consists of 20-25% Shi'as, but the Saudi plan to commit sectarian killing to keep the Muslims divided goes beyond that. It is part of a strategic alliance with the British Empire, which was dramatically reinforced in 1985, with the infamous al-Yamamah deal, that has provided a slush fund for Sunni insurgencies from al-Qaeda to Africa.¹

Pakistan provides a prime example of such Saudi activities.

The divide between the Shi'as and Sunnis always existed in Pakistan, where the national identity remains extremely weak. Despite that, the bestial killing of minority Shi'as in Pakistan was a rarity until the Soviet Army invaded Afghanistan in late 1979. At the time, Pakistan was under a military dictator, Gen. Zia ul-Haq. Gen. Zia, who belonged to an orthodox school of Islam, Deobandi, was a favorite of the House of Saud.

There were a number of reasons why the Saudis liked him. One was that Zia had hanged the duly elected

1. See *EIR's* exclusive exposé of the BAE scandal, "Scandal of the Century Rocks British Crown and the City," June 22, 2007.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was a non-practicing Shi'a, married to an Iranian Shi'a. The Saudis found in Zia a "Crusader," whose Islamic tenet was very close to Wahhabism, who was willing to eliminate the Shi'as in Pakistan. That became an important element in Saudi policy, in light of the emergence of the Khomeini-led clerical Shi'a regime in Iran.

The first big break came after Zia imposed Islamization in Pakistan. Exploiting the existing faultline between Shi'a landlords and Sunni tenants in Jhang, Punjab, the Pakistani agencies unleashed the extremist Sunni organization Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) against the Shi'as. At this point, the sectarian differences started to be settled with bullets. The funding of the organization came from Saudi "charities," as the same sources began to pour money into Pakistan, to set up thousands of madrassas (schools), whose sole intent was to develop the foot soldiers indoctrinated in Wahhabism.

The Shi'as, who are about 15% of Pakistan's population, also received some help from Iran, but they were outnumbered and outgunned. The Sunni outfits were flush with arms and money which had flooded Pakistan due to the Afghan "jihad" against the Soviets. In addition, the Pakistani state, now receiving cash from Saudi Arabia, patronized the Sunni jihadists who were involved in targeting the Shi'as. The same Sunni jihadists were also deployed to commit bloodletting inside the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is no secret that the most extreme madrassas in Pakistan and Afghanistan mark the front line of radicalization of young Muslims, and the source of ready recruits for the insurgent groups. The history of these madrassas is closely linked to the history of conflict. As a result of the emergence of Saudi-funded Wahhabi-indoctrinated foot soldiers, Pakistan is now awash with violent Islamic extremists. While the foreign troops' presence in Afghanistan has further radicalized the situation in Pakistan, killings of Shi'as take place daily in Pakistan, and quite often, the Shi'as hit back, killing fellow Muslims who happen to be Sunnis.

The Saudi Role in Post-2003 Iraq

Cataloging of the Saudi successes in spilling Muslims' blood in recent years cannot be completed without mention of their contribution to the river of Iraqi blood that has flowed in the post-2003 invasion of Iraq by the U.S. forces. Dahr Jamil, in his *Asia Times* article, "The Royal Treatment: Saudi Involvement in Iraq

Overlooked" (Sept. 18, 2007), documented the Saudi role. He cited Iraqi lawmaker Sami Askari's claim that imams at Saudi mosques regularly call for jihad against Iraq's Shi'ites, and that the Saudi government had funded groups to cause chaos and bloodshed in Iraq's predominantly Shi'ite South.

Jamil, following his conversations with Sureya Sayadi, a Kurdish-American woman, living in the California Bay Area, after leaving Kirkuk in 1991, pointed out that Sayadi believes the Saudi monarchy is directly involved in funding "at least four new Islamic groups in Kurdistan. They are exploiting the fact that Kurds are mostly Sunni."

Jamil says that during the Summer of 2005, members of al-Qaeda and Ansar al-Sunna cells were among several extremists arrested in Erbil, and most of them were Kurds. Prior to this, Saudi mosque-building in the area during the 1990s, combined with the return of Kurdish militants who had fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, is believed to have led to the emergence of groups like Ansar al-Sunna. The general perception was that these men aspired to radicalize the general population by replicating the Afghan model in Kurdistan.

Reinforcing this trend around that time, Saudi Arabia established links with these Kurds to counter the power of Saddam Hussein. In 1992-93, Islamist Kurdish groups worked under the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organization and other "charities," which pumped \$22 million a month into Kurdish areas. Today the Saudi names have been replaced with Kurdish names. In the decade following the 1991 war, when Saudi "charities" constructed 1,832 new mosques, alarmed Kurdish officials instituted restrictions.

Finally, it has also been reported from Iraq that the political consolidation of Shi'a rule in Iraq, the escalation of violence against Sunnis following the bombing of the Samarra Mosque, and Israel's disastrous war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, have all led to an escalation of sectarian rhetoric. The Saudis rolled out their state-employed, bigoted, and militantly anti-Shi'a clerics, to characterize the conflict in Iraq as a *fitna* (Arabic, for seduce, tempt, or lure). Iran was apparently, and deliberately, failing to prevent Baghdad's ethnic cleansing of the Shi'as.

The Saudis continue to foment sectarian violence in Iraq and throughout the region—just as their British patrons demand.