Iraq! Are we in the middle of a Civil War?

What really worries me is that our political (and most military) leaders have no concept on (or about) how to clean things up in Iraq. Actually it's pretty simple, first you must prevent 'em from installing a "Theocracy" using Sharia[1] law (right, and my name's Mickey Mouse)!

Abdul Aziz al Saud had the right idea when he formed Saudi Arabia by uniting the various tribes on the Arabian Peninsula! He claimed Saudi Arabia ***was*** a Muslim Theocracy, but nothing could have been further from the truth! Ol' Abdul knew that using his approach was the only way to unite the various tribes, claiming that such a country was all for the good of Islam. The Saud family had been traditional Wahabbi adherents (the most hardcore of practicing Muslims), for many years, Abdul Aziz however was a realist, and accomplishment of the mission came first!

Regardless of Abdul Aziz's rhetoric, what he created was a *Monarchy* pure and simple. He always gave the Mullahs their say, and then (cleverly) found ways to stick it where the sun didn't shine! This is a long story, but Abdul was one clever SOB! When no longer under any obligation to the Brits (about 1924), Abdul Aziz started to unify the Arabian Peninsula, promising each tribe that joining together would allow them to form the perfect Muslim Country, having control of the two holiest shrines in Islam (Mecca and Medina) not to mention having control of the annual Muslim Pilgrimage (the Hajj). Abdul had to promise each *Bedouin*[2] Leader what amounted to autonomy within their own tribes to get them to "sign on", but the country was coming together. In 1933, Abdul Aziz waved his hand over the result and blushingly named the new country for his own tribe, i.e. *Saudi Arabia*!

Saudi Arabia however is NOT Iraq!

What we have going on in Iraq is nothing short of a three-sided civil war (or at least the potential of a civil war), with the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds disliking (or at least not trusting) each other intensely! Is it a true case of hate? Not actually, but no (power?) "group" wants a "rival group" in charge where *Sharia* Law is the law of the land! The possibility of flagrant abuse is simply too great! While I'm not comparing the Mullahs to the SS in Nazi Germany, you may rest assured that no one living in Nazi Germany complained about the Gestapo or SS (at least not more than once)!

Human beings *in* power *enjoy* power, and will ***not*** relinquish it readily, nor apply it ***gently***! – don't forget, it's for GAWD! Ee-tye! The Sunnis are not the majority in Iraq, but have held sway due to the machinations of Saddam Hussein for decades, making sure that the Shiites were kept under his not so gentle thumb. Now that we're trying to put things to a democratic vote, the Sunnis are not about to let the Shiites get in a position of authority! The Shiites in Iraq see an opportunity to take control and reap long dreamed of sweet revenge against those who've kept control of the government for many years. This has the makings of a genuine disaster. The Sunnis aren't about to let that happen if they can find a way to prevent it!

Preventing one group from usurping power and exerting it over another simply because of greater numbers is the reason we have a bill of rights in (but written separately from) our Constitution! Never forget there aren't any provision for a bill of rights under the Sharia Law – and don't forget, Mohammed didn't make any mistakes! Just ask a gent whose head is rolling down the gutter!

The Relationship of Saudi Arabia and Iraq:

Saudi Arabia of course was always a supporter of Iraq (at least during my tenure), since Saudi Arabia is mainly run and controlled by Sunnis! During the late war between Iraq and Iran, we watched convoy after convoy of war goods headed for Iraq to make sure the Shiites in Iran didn't win! The Saudis lived in horror of Iraq being taken over by a Shiite controlled majority! They knew they weren't capable of handling things militarily (don't forget I used to train the "Camelnecks" and am aware of their awesome capabilities... Hummm...).

Why do you think Saudi Arabia was so anxious to find a way for the United States to bail 'em out during the first Gulf War?? We shot ourselves in the foot however, compliments of Gloria Steinem and her "Femi-Nazis" of *"NOW"* (**N**ational **O**rganization for **W**omen) demanding that the girls get their share of the military glory; and *insisted* on rubbing the Saudi's noses in the fact that *OUR* girls could thumb their noses at Muslim tradition and Sharia Law! *NOW's* machinations irritated many of the lil' old Muslims who had nothing to lose and sat in back alleys in such places as Jeddah, plotting a way to get revenge on "The Great Satan"... Only the Royal Family really got the full benefits of our military intervention, and "The Monarchy" had traditionally kept the price of oil down (by leaning on OPEC) to keep the United States in their hip pocket if the unthinkable should happen!

Others who had gotten rich without dipping into the Royal Oil fortune, began to consider... Enter Osama bin Laden who had always been on the outs even within his own rather large family! He saw a way to run the Infidels off, and become a hero within the Muslim world! Guess what?

Make no mistake, Saddam *WAS* planning on invading Saudi Arabia – not for the oil, but rather for control of Mecca and Medina (and of course, the Hajj)! These two holy shrines have a much greater significance to the Muslim World than we can imagine! Several groups (even in recent times) have tried to "take over" the Kabba (the Big Black Rock) in Mecca during "Hajj" when all Muslims MUST be allowed access to satisfy Muhammad's instructions transcribed in the Koran! All Muslims must make this pilgrimage at least once during their lifetime if they are physically and financially able! The Muslim Country that has control of Mecca is the big fish in the pond, make no mistake!

The significance of the Holy Mosque in Mecca is beyond the concept of the average Westerner, or any individual not of the Muslim Faith! The closest parallel in Christianity that comes to mind are the Crusades mounted out with the blessings of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages to retake the "Holy Land" from the Muslim Saracens. Among other things, besides occupying the traditional home of Christianity, during this occupation, the Muslims had done the "unthinkable" and built a Mosque over (Jewish) King Solomon's Temple! The 1st Crusade successfully took back Jerusalem in 1099 after a long and time-consuming march (years actually). The Christians were eventually thrown out once again, but came back two more times.

Most of those who are not students of history fail to realize that the Christians[3] were just as bloody as the Muslims had been. When quarried as to know which individuals were fair game (Infidel vs. Christian) while marching towards and conquering the City of Jerusalem, the Pope is reputed to have said, ***"kill them all, God will know his own!"***

Such "carte blanche" permission to kill anyone thwarting Christian efforts essentially meant that anyone in the way became fair game for the Crusader's sword! As a result of the Pope's

tender guidance, the initial re-conquering of Jerusalem became a blood-bath. Some historical accounts actually speak of the “Holy Conquerors” wading ankle deep in the blood and entrails of their victims! Most of those who died during the short siege had done nothing more evil than being born in and having lived in the city.

Back to the current Problem – Is a Civil War being fought (or in *danger* of being fought) in Iraq?

- **Putting it in another perspective, think of it this way:**

Consider our own civil war (Late War of Northern Aggression, heh, heh, heh...).

What if, *just what if*, the Brits had noticed that their supply of cotton, essential to the (then new) Industrial Revolution, was being threatened by the North's attempts to gain control of the cotton supply (the North ***too*** was in need of the South's cotton supply since the Industrial Revolution was in full swing on both sides of the Atlantic). The South was selling their cotton to the highest bidder (i.e. the Brits), and weren't willing to take less from the North.

The North thought that the cotton should be sold to brethren in our own country (the United States), and of course they took umbrage at having to meet the maximum available market price! The North of course was outraged that the South was able to produce the much desired cotton cheaper due to the "cotton pickers" (both slaves and poor white farmers) working for less money. The Civil War then raging was interrupting the Brit's cotton supply, and the damned colonials were fighting among themselves, thus screwing up the shipping of cotton with their blockade.

Say that finally the Brits decided to break up this squabble (in the humanitarian guise of saving lives by keeping the colonials from killing each other of course!). No mention is made of personal British gain of cheap and available cotton to keep their mills at full production of course. The squabbling colonials wouldn't have been able to fend off an invasion since all of their war making resources were being squandered trying to come out on top in the raging war at home!

The Brits decide to step in, stop the war, and kept everyone at bay. Initially, the two sides would have resisted, but now having to fight on two fronts (the Brits and the South, AND/OR conversely, the Brits and the North - although the South might have seen the advantage of having their main market place purchasers on THEIR side). The war would have subsided, although some individual acts of aggression against the Brits might well have been manifested against Mother England due to a long memory of previous wars against "Queen/King and Country"... Together (the North combined with the South) they might well have been able to kick out the Brits since fighting an overseas war requiring constant sea power and resupply problems would have been a bit vexing. This wasn't going to happen however, as the squabbling between the Yanks and the Rebs would have prevented a concerted effort necessary to get rid of the now unwelcome presence of their old enemy.

However, the taxation of the citizens of the British Empire to keep “Red Coats” on foreign soil might well have started to turn the people of Mother England against such a continuing and expensive endeavor even though it may well have ensured the temporary supply of relatively cheap cotton!

Politics would have entered the picture, and there would have been a scream to bring the troops home - after all what would happen if the Frogs noted the military efforts of the Brits on another continent might well give them a military advantage and they decided to flex their "froggie muscles"... The Brits would have withdrawn from the colonial's bickering (after extracting promises to supply them [the Brits] with cotton at reasonable prices). ...And after a small respite in their previous hostilities, guess what would have happened? If one were to substitute "oil" for "cotton" one with a vivid imagination might begin to see something of a parallel?

A British solution to the “unpopular American problem” circa 1863?

How about installing a "Strong Man" (closely controlled by Mother England of course) to oversee the unruly former colonies, and act as an arbitrator in any future squabbling with a promise to let North America return to managing their own affairs sometime in an unspecified future? Hummm...

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Back to our problems in Iraq...

Those politicians (currently) in our own government need some sage advice! I wonder how you go about getting a job like that? Am I bored? Yep, that I am, but the government thinks they have the solution worked out! Yeah, right! Hell, I'm available, and I couldn't give 'em any worse advice than what they already have!

We had the right idea in Iran with the Shah (a strong man essentially controlled by the United States), but Jimmy (the Wimp) Carter screwed that up big time, and set the stage on which we are still arm-wrestling almost 30-years later. They brought in the Ayatollah (safely stashed in France - are we our own worst enemies?) and established a Theocracy (GREAT move Jimmy!) and allowed the “bearded-one” to hold our Embassy (along with our people) hostage for over a year! Arrrgggg... The Iranians (had) loved the freedom to act and function like westerners under the Shah, but rapidly caved to the Ayatollah and his successors when the penalty for disobeying the Sharia Law (reinstituted by the Ayatollah) was death (everything from stoning to beheading)! There are just too many crazies in the Muslim society to prevent this from happening - after all, they're doing this for *Gawd*! Egad! With a western controlled strong-man with his hand firmly around the Mullah’s necks, a semblance of freedom can be maintained, but if you let the religious crazies run the asylum you are in deep doo-doo! Saddam Hussein would have been the perfect answer if we could have kept that douche-bag under (our) control... We need a *Western controlled* Mad-Man in charge! Heh, heh, heh...

Remember:

"Keep your nose in the wind, and your eyes on the skyline Pilgrim!
You've done well to keep so much hair when so many wanted it!"

Gray Rebel Hotel Six... Out!

End Notes:

[1] If you have ever wondered about why our forefathers were adamant about the separation of church and state, I recommend a bit or research on *Sharia* Law. In the case of Sharia Law, there is a lack of preciseness that acts to prevent an evenhanded approach to punishment, or for that matter, what constitutes legal satisfaction of the law. Even when a Muslim Community exists within a Democratic Society, the Imams of the Muslim Community wish to superimpose their religious laws over any secular jurisprudence. Without making a book out of this aspect of the problems of Iraq, if we are going to demand a Democratic Legal System, believe me when I tell you, such a system will last as long as someone has a dagger at their throats! When the United States and the Coalition troops clear Iraq air space, a Theocracy *WILL* be imposed under Sharia Law… Simply put, it is ***THEIR*** way and the Imams will ensure that it occurs and stays that way – the sword is ***sometimes*** mightier than the pen! The only thing that will prevent this is the imposition of a strong-man (much as the former Shah of Iran, or even a benign Saddam Hussein). Unfortunately we (the United States) feel that the entire World is foaming at the mouth to embrace Democracy (most especially a Democratic Republic). We are about to make the same mistake in the Mid-East we made in Vietnam, that is, the imposition of a Democratic Society on a culture that has no Democratic cultural background. The RVN types (simply stated), were rice farmers, their Great Grandfathers had been rice farmers, their Grandfathers had been rice farmers, their Fathers had been rice farmers, ***they*** were rice farmers, and their children were rice farmers, ad nauseum! Just because Democracy has been ***our*** heritage, you cannot assume that the entire world will embrace it because ***WE*** are the "enlightened ones"! We did well deposing Saddam, but when the Shiites who had been an oppressed majority, were now in a position of "ruling over" a Sunni minority, an attempt at retribution is bound to occur – trust me on this one!

[2] The Bedouins are the desert tribes on the Arabian Peninsula, and are fiercely independent. In order to get the Bedouins to cooperate, Abdul Aziz had to be grant the Bedouin tribes special privileges, specifically instant access to the King (Abdul Aziz), and their women would be allowed to be "less protected" i.e. without the constant wearing of "discrete" clothing at the direction of the tribal elders. These tribes still have special privileges in Saudi. One morning we came to work on the Naval Base in Jeddah only to find that a Bedouin tribe had moved aboard the base within our training area, and essentially had free access to anything they desired, and they could not be controlled by the Naval Personnel. The Saudis take great pride in having a Bedouin in their background (much as many Americans claim an Indian ancestor). The Bedouins usually have less formal education, but take great pride in their hunting skills, with the elders often "flying" hawks, and using the traditional Saudi Hunting Dogs (more "civilized" Saudis consider dogs to be "unclean" although not forbidden in the manner of porcine animals). Some of the less "politically correct" observers consider the Bedouins to be "Arabic Hillbillies", but as in any society a bit of cultural jealously might be present in this assessment.

[3] When dealing with any group that considers themselves to be doing the will of GAWD (or whoever they perceive to be GAWD or his prophet), true rational thought often is put aside in favor religious fervor. How would you like to have some of our more "enlightened" religious leaders put in charge of political machinations in this country (for instance some of those who "handle snakes" to prove their faith that "the Almighty" would not allow a true believer to be harmed, scary, huh…)?