

Get Out of Iraq

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

I was very much in favor of going into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein and his nest of sadistic, genocidal, lunatics. Not because of his pathological hatred for Israel, but simply for humanitarian reasons, because of the way he was decimating Marsh Arabs, Kurds and Shiites, not to mention Iranians. At the time I was strongly against the Coalition tactics of trying to go through the United Nations, which as you may know I consider an organization more dangerous than helpful. Because the UN did not allow regime change as a legitimate basis for invasion, the Coalition went down the disastrous Weapons of Mass Destruction route. I think Blair's urging Bush to try the UN was a mistake, a legacy of a distorted Left Wing worship of the UN as an ideal. They were never going to get agreement. Just look at how they have failed over Darfur. Besides the French and the Russians and those other petty states which had supported a regime they were milking corruptly for all they were worth were always going to block any progress in removing it from power.

After the invasion it soon became clear that the Americans were ill prepared. The looting and chaos proved that. Very few now remember that in the early days the American administration tried to foist a new flag on Iraq in the colors of blue and white. No doubt they thought this would help create a more pro-Israel climate. Nothing could have been more symptomatic of American ignorance of the history of Iraq.

Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire and, as such, pro-German during the First World War. Then it became a British protectorate and an independent state in 1932. From the beginning its ideologues were anti-Western, anti-Semitic fascists of various hues, and the government of Rashid Ali was fiercely pro-Nazi. Britain reoccupied Iraq during the WWII and effectively ruled it with a Hashemite monarchy until a military coup in 1957. The new military leaders were all a bunch of thugs. In 1968 the secular Baathist party took over, and although initially Saddam Hussein was antireligious, he soon smelt the wind in the Muslim world and converted, at least outwardly. The Baathist ideologues were Nazi sympathizers and anti-Western. Only the Kurds in the North have been more favorably inclined towards the West. How the Coalition could have thought they'd be welcomed by nearly everyone, or that any Iraqi government might be pro-Israel, is as ridiculous as supposing that Khomeini was a closet Yankee.

From the disastrous disbanding of the army, the more the American administration got involved the less it achieved, for very obvious reasons. Iraq is a nation cobbled together artificially, that really ought not to exist, any more than Yugoslavia does today. It should be divided into three separate states—Kurd, Sunni and Shia—and after a little bit of ethnic re-arranging, that is, in fact, going on any way at this moment, they should be left to get on with running their own lives. Actually the Kurds seem to be doing pretty well at this already. All the rest of the world needs to do is to ensure some reasonably fair distribution of the oil and then leave them

alone to sink or swim. The Americans and their allies should then get either get out or restrict their activity to bases freely negotiated with whoever wants them. Why feel the need to maintain an artificial political entity foisted by Western Imperialists on an unwilling, fractious mob divided by its own religion? If the Western powers sensibly decided not to do this in Yugoslavia, why not in Iraq? Frankly that's also what ought to happen throughout much of Africa where the Imperial legacy is still the cause of much innocent blood.

When the current Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, came to the United States, he first went to the United Nations, where he declared that Iraq supported Hezbollah against the Zionist enemy and would immediately send millions of dollars in aid. This so incensed many American Congressmen and Senators that they threatened to boycott his address in Washington. His advisors obviously had a word, as when he addressed Congress he was careful not to repeat his mistakes (or to be more accurate, to state his real mind). Who needs people like him and his cronies?

The many Palestinians brought by Saddam to Iraq and given privileged status are now being victimized. As we know, Christian Arabs from Iraq to Bethlehem are being bullied into leaving by Muslim fanatics, and now more Palestinians are being killed by Palestinians than by anyone else. Of course Iran is helping the Shia, and Syria is helping the Incursionists, just as Saudi has declared it will help the Sunni. The illusion of non-interference has been shattered. Who is being fooled any longer? The whole Muslim world is so fraught with internecine conflict and self-directed hatred that I think we are best leaving them to solve their own problems, perhaps in the ways they know best.

I am no politician, but it seems to me that the two friends of Israel and supporters of its right to defend itself, Tony Blair and George Bush, are suffering politically, to no purpose any more, from their involvement in Iraq.

I believe their intentions were right and good. They did their, best but you cannot help someone who does not want to or cannot be helped. I thought Margaret Thatcher, whom I disliked politically, was a good friend of Israel. But Tony Blair has to be the most gutsy, supportive British Prime Minister that Israel and the Jews ever had. He has defied most of his own party, huge swathes of the electorate and the BBC. He is the only one who actually seems to see the nexus of terror. Everyone else pretends its not there. Britain has spawned a generation of Chamberlain's children.

I say to Blair and Bush, you did your job. You went in and removed the most odious of dictators and his pathological sons. You tried your best to give the Iraqis a chance to run their own affairs as a united country. It didn't work. It could never have worked. Get out! Now! And let them get on with whatever they choose to. Political memories are short, not long. A week in politics is a very long time. You will be thanked for bringing home the troops. And you will be free to concentrate your energies and manpower dealing with the much bigger problem of Iran.

I wrote most of this several months ago. It seems even more relevant today as Bush is considering sending even more troops in and I am beginning to wonder whether the arms traders and the arms industries aren't the ones who are really benefiting from this prolonged agony. It's the Fast of Tevet on Sunday that records the start of the events that finally led to the total destruction of two Jewish States. Then, on both occasions, had wiser council prevailed the disasters could have been avoided.

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