

# ISIS Represents Neither Sunnis nor Islam

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Courtesy of Ambassador Hamid Bayat

H.E. Ambassador Hamid Bayat

**EIR:** Thank you very much for granting EIR this interview.

Lyndon LaRouche, and *EIR*, have been warning for some time, that as a result of the collapsing London-Wall Street-based financial system, what we call the modern British Empire—which has been working with the collusion of President Obama—is now pursuing a confrontation strategy against Russia and China, which can lead to nuclear war. We have been trying to prevent this, including, this weekend, the Schiller Institute held a conference celebrating its 30th anniversary, entitled, “Now Is the Time To Create a World Without War.” During the past couple of weeks, we have seen that the international conflict, with focus on Ukraine, has been augmented by the renewed conflict in Iraq, with the recent military victories of ISIS, or ISIL.

We see this as a continuation of the British strategy, first elaborated by Tony Blair in April 1999, to break up the nation-states of Eurasia and create the conditions for permanent warfare. Within the Islamic world, this has taken the form of promoting sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shi’a, which could lead to a multi-generational war, reminiscent of the Balkan Wars that the British manipulated soon after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

How are the two situations in Syria and Iraq interconnected, and how do you view this danger of the

British manipulating the current Iraq crisis into a trigger for such sectarian conflict that could be never-ending?

## Imperialism’s Hidden Agendas

**Amb. Hamid Bayat:** First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Schiller Institute and you too, personally, for taking the trouble to be here at the embassy today. First of all, I would like to say a few things regarding an analysis of the situation in the region. After the developments in recent years in the region, hopes among the people were raised for them to be able to get some form of democracy and self-rule, or rule of law in their countries. It was expected that after the fall of the dictatorial regimes, some form of government would come to power based on the voices of the people, through the ballot boxes.

Unfortunately, we have witnessed that some people do not see their interests compatible with the democratic process, and they don’t see their interests addressed by democracy in those regions. So, due to the interests of certain people, we now have a confrontation between what are, on the one hand, the people who

want anarchy and violence, and on the other, the people who are more interested in a democratic process. And this has resulted in the growth and the emergence of groups that are terroristic in their nature.

It has been proven, everywhere, that terrorism breeds on violence and instability, no matter where. The more unstable the situation, the more chances for them to flourish and to grow. And on the opposite side, what can contribute more to the process of democracy, and the establishment of peace and security, is the voice of democracy, and the process of democracy. What happened in that region over the past years, is that some countries of the region, and even some countries in the Western world, do not see their interest in the establishment of a democratic process in those countries. So, these extremist groups, terrorist groups, actually found new friends, or they found friends that could help them in their efforts to grow and to become stronger.

What we see today in Iraq, in the form of ISIS or ISIL, is not a new phenomenon. We have seen this taking shape over the years. We've seen them in Afghanistan. We've seen them even in some parts of Africa. This has been a process where they have grown and grown, and then they have become what we have today. From time to time, they might wind down a little bit, but then again, they re-emerge and take different shapes. But the fundamental thing is to know which actors contribute to the re-emergence of these groups, and what can be done to stop them.

If we want to look at what is happening in Iraq today, we have to first take a look at the events in Syria. As you mentioned, there is a very close connection between the developments in Syria, and what is happening today in Iraq. When the crisis in Syria began to unfold, we insisted all along, that this has to be resolved through dialogue. But, unfortunately, the funds, the weaponry that was sent to these groups in Syria, and the other help given to them, created the foundation for these groups to grow, and to spread, and to contribute to the development of the instability in the region. What these groups did in Syria, the atrocities they committed, and the destruction they brought upon the people and the country, united the people with the Syrian Army, and they were able to resist these groups in some ways. In a way, one could say that these groups were defeated on two fronts in Syria. One was the military front, and the other front was from the people, the civil front. The election that took place in Syria, and the re-election of President

Bashar al-Assad, showed that the majority of the Syrian people support Bashar al-Assad.

With the setbacks in Syria, they were after some new terrain for their activities. So, Iraq was the focus of attention. They saw that Iraq is a fertile ground for that, for different reasons. The first reason is that, unfortunately, over the past few years, Iraq has not been able to establish that level of security and stability that it should.

The second point, is the remnants of the former Iraqi Ba'ath Party, particularly the commanders of the former Iraqi Army, that have been giving help to these groups. The third point is the differences that remain in Iraq, particularly after the re-election of the al-Maliki government in the recent election—the differences between the factions there, were actually increased.

The next point, is the sectarian element, particularly the Shi'a-Sunni divide, and some people hide themselves behind this divide, and try to take advantage of this phenomenon, to advance their own cause. This has been no secret—that one of the hidden agendas of some imperialistic powers has been to use the Shi'a-Sunni divide to try to inflame this concept, to take advantage, for their own goals. The next thing, is to try to limit the power of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region, in order, in the same way, to increase the power of some regions, and to the benefit of some powers outside the region. And the next point, is the hesitation, by some countries that have influence and power in the region, their hesitation to help the Iraqis repel these movements, and to stop their advance in some parts of Iraq.

So, this is basically a very brief run-through of developments that have brought us to where we are today, with the ISIS taking control of some sectors of Iraq, and thereby posing a threat to the people of Iraq, and insecurity to the countries of the region, and countries outside of the region.

### **A U.S.-Iran Alliance?**

**EIR:** Right now, the Iranian government has come out and strongly supported the Iraqi government, in front of this danger. And, also, the United States is having a big discussion about what should be done, in order to avoid these anti-civilization forces taking over Iraq. The question is, what is then the attitude of the current Iranian government, and the Supreme Leader, towards a de facto military alliance with the United States to halt the violence in Iraq and defeat the

Dark Ages forces of ISIS? How do you envision such cooperation if you agree with the value of Iranian-American joint efforts? How would you avoid the danger of sectarian violence escalating under those conditions?

**Ambassador Bayat:** Let me address the second part of your question, about the sectarian divide. Iraq is made up of a diverse number of tribal societies. If we want to sum them up, Iraq is made up of groups of Shi'as, Sunnis, Kurds, and, also, Turkmens. The point is, that

differences among these various groups, are somewhat unavoidable. But the point about whether ISIS is a representative of the Sunni community, and whether this fight is actually a confrontation between, on the one hand, the ISIS, representing the Sunnis, with the Shi'as, is a totally wrong conception, and it is something to actually deflect attention from the main thing. For many years, Iraqi societies have been able to live, side by side, in peace. The spiritual leaders of the Sunnis, and the spiritual leaders of the Shi'as, have been living side by side, and they have never had any problems with each other.

The second point is that this extremist group, the ISIS, whenever they occupy a place, they don't even limit their violence and their atrocities just to the Shi'as. They actually attack the Sunnis as well, so much so, that the Sunnis, when these people come, actually flee, they try to leave the place, and the Christian community in the same way. They are destroying churches. They have special types of beliefs.

One of the fundamental things, one of the main reasons for the formation of these groups, for the emergence of these groups, and for the support these groups receive, is actually to show a very violent and unreal image of Islam to the world, and to show that Islam is a violent religion, and that Islam is an extremist religion. When people in other parts of the world, when a non-Muslim, particularly in the West, sees the footage, when they hear the news, the impression they get is, "This is Islam that we see," and this, of course, is a very, very



*In this video, posted by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an ISIS fighter is shown carrying out a mass execution in Iraq.*

ISIS

serious danger for the future of Islam. This will only bring about an Islamophobia in the Western countries, and the other countries, and this will also give a very negative image of Islam.

Whereas, on the contrary, true Islam is a religion of compassion, a religion of peace among nations. And when the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he was advent to the religion, he was given a mission of spreading compassion and kindness to the whole world. From the image that these groups are now creating of Islam, a non-believer would conclude that Islam is a religion of violence, and these groups, and their fight [with] the Shi'as, will actually strengthen this feeling that Islam is propagating division.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize, categorically, that what we see in Iraq, is that these groups are not representatives of Sunni Islam, and are not representative of Islam at all. And what is happening there, is not a war between the Shi'as and the Sunnis.

### **What Iran Can Do**

Now, coming to what the Islamic Republic of Iran can do to help solve this problem, I would like to point out a few things.

We have, all along, when the developments in Syria took place, even way before that, when things were happening in Afghanistan, when this crisis started, we have always warned against the danger of the growth and the spread of these groups and terrorists. We have always called on, we have always invited, the countries



Presidency of the Islamic Republic of Iran

*President Hassan Rouhani, at a recent UN General Assembly, proposed the idea of a world without violence and terrorism, said Ambassador Bayat, "and our expectation, from the rest of the world, is to cooperate, to try to stem the spread of these groups, and the growth of terrorism."*

of the region, and outside, for cooperation to confront these groups, and to prevent these groups from gaining strength. And for this reason, at the recent UN General Assembly, our President [Hassan Rouhani] proposed the idea of a world without violence and terrorism. Our expectation, from the rest of the world, is to cooperate, to try to stem the spread of these groups, and the growth of terrorism. We have condemned, at the highest level, the attack by these groups on Iraqi territory. We have announced our support for the government of Iraq, and to confront these groups; and we have emphasized the legitimate right of the government of Iraq, and the people of Iraq, to stand firm against these groups, and to defeat them.

We also emphasize the territorial integrity of Iraq, of a united Iraq. Before, and in the recent elections in Iraq, of course, there were groups and parties that were not satisfied. They were not happy with the outcome of the election. But the important thing is that there is no

doubt, that if these groups come together, they can defeat the voices of the extremists and what is happening in Iraq. And it is a known fact that if these extremist groups come to power in Iraq, of course, all groups, and all parties, people from all walks of life, will suffer as a result.

We believe the government of Iraq, and the people of Iraq, have the adequate potential to actually be able to confront these groups. Particularly the move by the people to confront these groups, following the call to arms from the religious leaders, particularly Ayatollah Sistani, and the people responding positively to that, is significant from our point of view. The point to mention here is that the role that these spiritual leaders play in the creation of unity among the various sections of Iraq is of significance.

Regarding the help from Iran, we believe that if the government of Iraq asks for help, within the framework of international law, and within the framework of the decisions made by the international community, Iran is ready to afford any help it can to the Iraqi government. Regarding cooperation between Iran and the United States, more than being anything of substance, it has been more speculation and rumors, advocated by, perhaps, some sectors of the media.

*There is no talk of any military cooperation between Iran and the United States on this at all.*

## **The Role of Saudi Arabia**

**EIR:** The mass media in most Gulf states have been describing the ISIS takeover in Mosul and Tikrit also as a "popular uprising," and have been attacking Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki for creating the conditions for this revolt; but, at the same time, there is also evidence that much of the initial money to launch ISIS came from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, even if not from official government channels. Prime Minister al-Maliki has cited some evidence of the Saudi support for ISIS, and denounced it as supporting terrorism.

It also appears that there is a genuine effort to avert the Sunni-versus-Shi'a conflict within the Islamic world, by attempting to improve relations with Saudi Arabia. Foreign Minister Zarif from the Islamic Republic of Iran had been invited to visit Riyadh, and there have been communications between Ayatollah Rafsanjani and Saudi King Abdullah.

What do you see as the merit and the prospects for such an improvement in relations, and how might this

impact the crisis now unfolding in Iraq?

**Ambassador Bayat:** There is no doubt that Saudi Arabia is an important and influential country in the region. Saudi Arabia might have differences of opinion with us on some issues in the region, including events in Syria and Iraq, but we have always emphasized that within the framework of negotiations, and within the framework of having relations, we can iron out differences through negotiations. We have always announced our readiness for constructive talks with the Saudi government.

We believe that the growth of these extremist groups and terrorism threatens the peace and security of all countries in the region. No country will be immune from the danger posed by these terrorist groups. I have to say that these people, these groups, are not, and will not be, the representative of the Sunni community. In fact, most of the religious leaders, most of the intellectuals in the Sunni community, have distanced themselves from the actions of these groups, actions that are terroristic in nature, and the atrocities that they commit against innocent civilians speak for themselves. The thoughts of these groups, and the violence and brutality of their behavior, is actually opposed by all the religious leaders, all intellectuals in societies, and by the public at large, including in the Muslim world. The era of changing the balance of power, through supporting these terrorist groups, is over, and supporting these terrorist groups, now, will impose heavy costs on the perpetrators.

### **Fighting Terrorism: An International Obligation**

**EIR:** We certainly hope so. One sign of it is the fact that, in Britain right now, Tony Blair is coming under very heavy attack—that impeachment proceedings have even begun in the British Parliament, to put him on trial for the crimes that he has committed, since the official Chilcot Inquiry [into Britain’s role in the Iraq War—ed.] has not yet come up with any proceedings, outside the fact that Blair misled Britain to go into the war in Iraq in the first place, and by him “sexing up” evidence, also got the United States to go into the war. If anything, one could say that the ISIS is the baby of Tony Blair.



*Tony Blair, shown here being grilled Feb. 3, 2010, by the parliamentary Chilcot Inquiry into his role in the fraudulent set-up for the war in Iraq, has called for an end to the Westphalian principle of national sovereignty.*

So, one would think that it’s time that certain consequences would ensue. The forces that have been supporting this “divide and conquer” or “divide and rule” policy, which was that of the Roman Empire and any empires before, but which, also, specifically, was the British Empire—that those days are over.

But within that, the question is therefore, also, what can Russia, China, the U.S., and regional powers like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and India, contribute to solving the crises in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, as the problem of sectarianism and terrorism seem to be interconnected in all these countries? What can, and what should these nations do?

**Ambassador Bayat:** There is no doubt, that confronting and fighting terrorism, is not the job of one, or a few nations. This is a world responsibility. This is an international obligation. Today, many, many nations are actually, in some ways, facing these threats, and they are involved in this. When we hear that thousands of residents of European nations, and from other parts of the world, are streaming into Syria and the region, to take part in these fights, the danger posed by these people, not only to the region there, but also back home, is something that cannot be ignored.

As I said earlier, the confrontation between the voices of democracy, on the one hand, and the voices of anarchy and violence, on the other, is now manifesting itself in the region of the Middle East. The countries, and the nations, must choose one of these two. We believe that it is the responsibility of the world community, to move in the direction of the part that is seeking democracy, to support that, to enable peace and stabil-

ity to return to the Middle East, and this will, in turn, benefit everybody in the world.

Some people might think that by supporting terrorists, or extremist groups, they might gain some advantages. In the short term, that might be, but the point is, those gains will not be permanent. That is the first thing. And the second thing, is that experience has shown that the terrorist groups do not remain loyal to the people who commission them, or the people who back them. The world community is now faced with this fact that it needs a determination to confront terrorism. So, we have said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with the international community, to confront, to defeat terrorism, and to work towards peace and security.

### Return to the Principle of Westphalia

**EIR:** It's almost like you can say today, that the whole world, right now, has to learn the same lesson that Europe learned in 1648, where after the Thirty Years War, which actually was 150 years of war, where everybody supported this religion against that religion, this army against that army, and the armies took over all of Europe, and threatened all of civilization to go under. And at that point, people came together at the Peace of Westphalia, to say, "Now we established the principle of sovereign nation-states. We will not allow interference in other countries. We might have disagreements, but if we support groups in other countries, against the nations, this just creates permanent chaos and war." And if Europe had not done that in 1648, Europe would have ceased to exist as a civilization.

Now, what we have seen since—you could say that Tony Blair was very specific in Chicago in 1999. Later, he was even more specific, in saying that we should move into the post-Westphalian world. We should no longer have respect for nation-states. We should have this "responsibility to protect," and other ways of saying that it is okay to intervene into other nations. And now we're seeing that if this principle is allowed to spread, from what we have seen now in the Middle East, and it spreads to the whole world, then all civilization will cease to exist.

So what you are basically saying is that we have to go back to what actually worked. This principle of sovereign nation-states that might have disagreements, but solve those disagreements, not through war, but

through discussions, through working together. Through having this respect for your fellow nations, and saying that the progress of the other, is also to my advantage, because if we have progress, if we have development, we can all prosper, but if we have war, we all go under.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

**Ambassador Bayat:** I think, as you said, the sovereignty of nations is a key element here. I think we have to respect the sovereignty of nations, and I think, unfortunately, we experience a lot of double standards in the world today, where, on the one hand, in some areas, they reject, or even oppose, democratic movements. They think that a gain for a certain country, would be a loss to them. But I think these thoughts have to be put aside, and I think that, in the long run, a strong determination must come into force, from all nations. We must do away with double standards, and we have to unite, and work toward establishing peace and security in the world, and a gain by one country, can be, in the end, a gain for the world community.

Thank you.

**EIR:** Thank you.



### The Al-Qaeda Executive

Financed and deployed by the British-Saudi Empire, al-Qaeda has been protected by the Obama Administration to accomplish the Empire's global war. In this feature [video](#), LaRouchePAC documents President Obama's use of the al-Qaeda networks to overthrow Qaddafi in Libya, and to carry out bloody regime-change against Assad in Syria, by the same forces who attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi.

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