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**The resistance speaks
Nicola Nasser**

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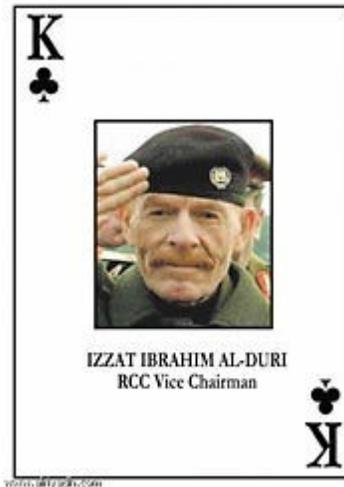
Nicola Nasser* reviews the recent words of the highest commander of the Iraqi resistance, confident in the defeat of the US occupation



Nicola Nasser

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More important, it adapted the Iraqi environment to serve the people's war. Through practice, it has developed the rules [of people's war] very much, 'to move quickly' so as to ensure 'all the land is ours and all the time is ours,' and to be up to date to what is new from the enemy in order to confront it with innovative new [tactics] of our own'

Izzat Ibrahim Al-Douri, deputy of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's late president executed by the US occupation in Iraq in 2006, has surfaced despite a \$10 million bounty on his head. In a lengthy interview published last month with Abdel-Azim Manaf, editor-in-chief of the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Manqif Al-Arabi*, Al-Douri laid out the strategy and tactics of the Iraqi resistance led by the former ruling Baath Party. Al-Douri's reappearance and the patriotic Iraqi resistance constitute a direct challenge to the US-led occupation.

Manaf told the Associated Press (AP) that he interviewed Al-Douri "on the battlefield". The "dialogue" was conducted "with a commander in his lion's den and among his soldiers", and on the "combat field while weapons were talking", Manaf said in his introduction. Al-Douri spoke in his capacity as "the supreme commander of the Jihad and Liberation Front, the pan-Arab secretary-general of the Baath Arab Socialist Party and secretary of the Iraq region," the Egyptian editor added.

The AP reported that, "Al-Douri is believed to play an important role in financing" the resistance, "though little is known about how directly he leads fighters on the ground". The United States as occupying power, as well as Iran and the Iranian-allied regime Washington installed in Baghdad after occupation, have been keen to downplay the role played by Al-Douri and the Baath Party in the national resistance, instead highlighting the marginal role played by Al-Qaeda, which was brought into Iraq thanks to the United States.

If history illuminates current events, what Al-Douri refers to as a "blackout" media policy is echoed in the precedent of US-British planning for the coup that brought down Iranian leader Mohamed Musaddiq's government in August 1953 and which installed the shah in power.

From Mark Curtis's *Web of Deceit* : "One key aspect of the plot was to portray the demonstrating mobs [against Musaddiq, which was 'a mercenary mob. It had no ideology. The mob was paid for by American dollars'] as supporters of the Iranian Communist Party -- Tudeh... As in every other British and US military intervention

until the collapse of the USSR, the 'communist threat' scenario was deployed as the official story... The real threat of nationalism [and dirtier aims like protecting oil profits] were downplayed or removed from the picture presented to the public."

In Iraq, the US propaganda machine has replaced the "communist threat" with that of Al-Qaeda.

Manaf, in his introduction, noted how much Al-Douri was a dedicated religious man, very well versed in Islamic theology and Arab history, and familiar with Sufism. His Arab and Islamic culture was reflected extensively in his answers, which were full of quotations from the Holy Quran and the sayings of historic Arab and Muslim leaders, a fact that makes the translation of his interview into English an impossible mission at times.

Al-Douri identified the Baath Party as a "revolutionary organisation, a brave and innovative leadership, an armed revolutionary jihadist organisation; it represents a fearless army and glorious armed forces."

Denying media reports about his ill health (Al-Douri was born 1 July 1942), the resistance commander confirmed, "I am in good health and at the height of the jihad spirit," adding that he is "garrisoned for God and for His Sake" until "either victory or martyrdom".

THREE CHAPTERS OF RESISTANCE: "Our resistance and battle with the [US] occupier is not new," Al-Douri said. "It started during the early years of the Baath Party's formation to expanded and deepen after the glorious Tammuz [July] revolution of 1968... Prior to 2003, the imperialist enemy used local forces from Iraq, and the [Arab] nation sometimes; other times it used regional powers to fight us on its behalf. When its local and regional instruments failed to stop the pan-Arab renaissance march of Iraq, the US enemy directly entered the field of struggle and combat, amassed great powers, and led the invasion and occupation by itself."

Al-Douri identified three stages of the Iraqi resistance to the US-led invasion and occupation. "The first chapter was the official showdown, when the regular formations of the brave armed forces stood up to the US invasion; then the launch of the popular confrontation against the invasion, which intertwined with this chapter. The popular, official and military integration occurred immediately and the people's

war of liberation started during the first week of the invasion, as was planned by the leadership and according to its strategy."

During this second chapter of the resistance, formations from the civil organisations of the party, the Fedayeen Saddam and volunteers, took part in carrying out "martyrdom operations". The "glorious women of Iraq participated in the first formations of the popular resistance". Some of those women carried out martyrdom operations, "the first of which was the heroic operation carried out by two women in Baghdad on the third day of the occupation; another operation was carried out by a glorious Iraqi woman in Al-Nassiriyah south of Iraq."

The third chapter of the Iraqi resistance "is sustaining the resistance and continuing the battle until the liberation of Iraq".

Al-Douri said that during the occupation more than 1.3 million Iraqis fell as martyrs, and "so far the number of Al-Baath martyrs in this battle amounts to 120,000." He sees "this historic decisive showdown", which he described as "the holy battle", as the "fate and the responsibility of Al-Baath as much as it is the responsibility of the great people of Iraq and its jihadist national, pan- Arab and Islamic powers, and the free people of our [Arab] nation and humanity as a whole," all who were "targeted by the invasion".

DEFEATED OCCUPATION: Al-Douri is confident of victory and reiterated that the US-led occupation is already defeated and "in despair is looking for an exit". The Iraqi resistance "has destroyed the alliance of evil, the parties of which are escaping one after another. Only [US President George W] Bush remains blundering in his debacle," he said.

Replying to questions about the truth of media reports that there were "contacts between you and the Americans", whether Al-Douri made any "direct or indirect contact with official US authorities", whether Al-Douri is "willing to negotiate with the Americans", and if the answer is affirmative what the "negotiating terms" would be; "would you lead the negotiations personally" or authorise others to negotiate; would such negotiations be bilateral (between the Baath Party and the US) or in the name of the "resistance front", and whether Al-Douri was sure that the yield of negotiations would correspond to the real weight of the resistance on the ground, Al-

Douri responded, "As the saying goes, you cannot reach at the negotiating table farther than your artillery can reach."

Al-Douri added: "Friends and foes are very well aware of our strategy [programme of resistance and liberation], which was made public via the media. The Baath Party doesn't negotiate with anybody at all if they don't recognise this strategy beforehand, and will negotiate neither with America nor with intermediaries or friends except on this basis. If the enemy recognises this strategy we will sit with them directly, negotiate with them, and help them exit our country without losing face and will facilitate their exit. Prior to this recognition, there are no negotiations with the occupying enemy."

"The Baath Party will meet with whoever it decides to meet, except with the Zionist entity [Israel] and the government of collaborators in the Green Zone... We will be happy when the enemy is convinced of its defeat, accepts our strategy, sits with us to negotiate a programme for its implementation," he added. Al-Douri detailed this strategy, indicating, "any negotiations with the invaders without it represents a desertion and treason and is refused by all national, pan-Arab and Islamic factions of the resistance."

According to the strategy and programme of the Iraqi resistance, the following is demanded of the US-led occupation:

- Official and pronounced recognition of the armed and unarmed national resistance - including all its factions and (political) parties -- as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Iraq.
- An official declaration of unconditional withdrawal from Iraq by the US leadership.
- Declaring null and void all the political and legislative institutions, as well as all the laws and legislation issued by them, since the onset of occupation, with the de-Baathification law at the forefront, and compensating all who were adversely affected by them.
- A stop to raids, prosecutions, arrests, killings and displacement.
- Release of all prisoners of war (POWs) and detainees without exception, and compensating all for their physical and psychological damage.

- Reinstating the army and the national security forces in accordance with pre-occupation laws and regulations, and compensating all who were adversely affected by dissolving them.

- A pledge to compensate Iraq for all material and moral losses incurred because of the invasion and occupation.

GUERRILLA WAR, PEOPLE'S WAR: Al-Douri detailed his concept of "the people's war of liberation and guerrilla war" and advised resistance fighters to "adhere to the principles and rules" of this kind of war, listing the 15 "most effective" tactics to hurt the enemy. First, he said, "appear quickly behind, in front and on the sides of the enemy as dictated by the nature of the place, time, climate of the operation, and the type and nature of the target, then hit quickly and disappear quickly before the enemy has time to react."

Second, "In planning, implementing and selecting the target, take care to secure a kill in the enemy."

Third, "Your weapon is your life, so take care to keep it always ready and away from the eyes of the enemy and its spies."

Fourth, "Protect the security of information... as a red line or a holy matter" and trust nobody "because trust is endless in society".

Fifth, "The enemy is blind without spies, so exert all efforts to disclose and liquidate them."

Sixth, "Don't be carried away by your successive victories" or drawn to "showing off", or lose your self-control by praising your heroic acts, boasting of your success, "noting that the enemy is hunting you at all times, so keep discreet, disguised and vigilant".

Seventh, "Inflict the biggest losses in the ranks of the enemy and decrease to the minimum your own losses."

Eighth, "Make your hands heavy on the enemy during their rest hours" and make "no place safe" for them and give them "no time to recover".

Ninth, "the supply lines are the enemy's lifeline," so "concentrate on and cut" these lines.

Tenth, "concentrate on the enemy's bases, camps and headquarters day and night" to "break its morale".

Eleventh, "take your time to deal with extreme accuracy with traitors and spies to avoid hurting innocents."

Twelfth, "expand the circle of monitoring, following up and hunting the enemy... so it doesn't surprise us."

Thirteenth, "sustain your traditional ties with your relatives, neighbours, neighbourhood and friends and make these ties deeper and more intimate, but don't make any of them feel you have a mission they don't understand" and "help them to overcome the details of daily life hardships, which are so many nowadays" so they will protect you when in trouble; they are "your safe armour and honest cover".

Fourteenth, "let belief in God... be our strong starting point."

Fifteenth, "fight for the sake of God the enemies of God... until the tyrant... invaders are defeated, until the clear-cut victory, the liberation of the homeland, and raising the flag of 'There Is No God but The God' and bringing back the 'Flag of God Is the Greatest' to fly in Iraq skies".

Unswerving resistance

What follows are select excerpts from Al-Douri's interview with *Al-Manqif Al-Arabi*.

The Iraqi resistance started immediately after the desecration of Iraqi land by US forces. How could the resistance have started and grown so quickly?

The Baath Arab Socialist Party is the party of Iraq and the Arab nation... It did not lay arms or stop fighting even for an hour during day and night and its jihadist march did not stop at any time... It wasn't surprised by what happened, but increased... its determination not to be exhausted; to relentlessly fight the invaders, their stooges and spies whatever the sacrifices are and regardless of how long it would take until full victory and the liberation of Iraq.

What role have officers and the ranks of the Iraqi armed forces played in the resistance?

They have played a heroic and decisive role in the march of the resistance. In addition to their jihadist fighting role through their own formations... under the flag of the General Command of the Armed Forces, they are, in accordance with the guidance of the [Baath] party's leadership and the General Command of the Armed Forces, dispersed into other jihad factions where they act as field commanders, planners, technicians, makers and developers of most of the various weapons of the resistance. They represent the soul of the resistance and the secret of its innovations, accurate performance and victories.

What distinguishes the Iraqi resistance? How was it able to fight the occupier in open areas?

The resistance depended on the rules and principles of people's wars and guerrilla war, after developing its fighting methods and tactics, and was innovative in its logistic and special operations. More important, it adapted the Iraqi environment to serve the people's war. Through practice, it has developed the rules [of people's war] very much, 'to move quickly' so as to ensure 'all the land is ours and all the time is ours,' and to be up to date to what is new from the enemy in order to confront it with innovative new [tactics] of our own.

We have made and innovated new ways and methods unprecedented in people's wars of liberation, or even in the intelligence sciences ... I cannot go into more details for security reasons. This is what kept the resistance and its leadership a mysterious secret, humiliating the enemy, its collaborators and spies.

Do your resistance formations disperse equally to cover the area of Iraq, or they are concentrated in certain areas and governorates?

The [Baath] party is more than half a century old in Iraq... the organisation of Al-Baath today... is stronger many times than it was before the occupation... [I will not elaborate] for reasons Baath will speak out on in time. Today the party [is] in all the cities, villages, plains, mountains and deserts of Iraq. Outside Iraq it also [finds roots] among Iraqis wherever they are in every Arab or foreign country.

After the occupation, despite strict conditions for joining the party and the de-Baathification campaign, thousands joined the party, mostly young people aged between 16 and 25. Tens of thousands of other Iraqis joined the resistance factions

led by Baath. In the end, the National, pan-Arab and Islamic Front emerged; Baath is one of its basic pillars.

The Iraqi resistance is unique in the fact that it has no Arab, regional or international benefactor or support. How can Baath sustain a resistance so strong and escalating?

Our resistance... not only has no incubator outside the borders of its country, but what is worse -- and more bitter -- is that 99 per cent of the influential world powers are either directly involved with the enemy against it or sympathise with the enemy; the one per cent, which sympathises with the resistance, turned its back to it fearing its enemies, but God provided for it and made it in no need of them. The people of Iraq have provided their money and offspring; it is an inexhaustible source.

Some say the role of Baath in resistance is limited. What is the size of the Baath-led resistance?

The occupying enemy and its regional and local partners have launched genocide against Baathists, their families, supporters and sympathisers. The collaborators' constitution, which was prepared by the CIA, includes a Nazi racist article stipulating the liquidation of Baath as an organisation, thought and as persons. They targeted by physical liquidation, destruction and displacement the society of the party.

One of the most important and dangerous de- Baathification methods, after assassinations and physical liquidation of Baathists, is the attempt to completely censor the role of Baath on the field as a resisting party and an armed resistance, and to smear its image and role.

Had Baath not been the initiator of resistance since the first day of the invasion and occupation, and had it not acted as if the battle is its own and the cause its own cause, the world could not have seen the emergence of the strongest national resistance immediately following the invasion.

The other jihad factions emerged after the resistance was deeply rooted in confronting the occupier and undermining its strategy; some of them were formed and started to act three years after the occupation.

The backbone of the wide and strong base of jihad today is the resistance of Baath and the national, pan-Arab and Islamic forces, with those members of the Higher Command of Jihad and Liberation in the forefront, who cover the whole area of Iraq,

from Um Qasr in the south to Zakho in the north and from Al-Qaem in the west to Khanqeen and Mandali in the east.

This resistance is targeted by imposing a media, economic and political siege on it, to black out its military operations, political activities and its destructive physical and psychological influence on the soldiers of the occupying power and its forces in Iraq.

Don't you see how the invaders, collaborators, traitors, spies, renegades... despite their differences on many other things, have agreed to censor its role and action and instead inflated... the claim that it [the resistance] is terrorism?

I have documented over the past five years on CDs thousands of operations against the enemy... while the enemy is highlighting the role of other groups, some of which were directly formed or via intermediaries by the occupation itself, and some others were formed by foreign powers hostile to Iraq... who kill the people on the basis of their IDs.

How do you perceive the ongoing political process in Iraq? What is your comment on reported reconciliation conferences under the auspices of the Arab League?

No truce with those... and [we'll] resist whatever entity is established under occupation and in its service, first among them the traitors' government in the Green Zone.

Do you have a strategy to administer Iraq after liberation?

Since the first day of the occupation Baath called for "the unity of the resistance as a historical necessity". With endeavour and persistence the party succeeded in forming the National, pan-Arab and Islamic Front in 2005, then the Jihad and Liberation Front for armed factions (33 armed resistance factions according to Al-Douri) on the field in September 2007. Both fronts are open to all anti- occupation armed and political forces, to achieve more unity during the liberation and post- liberation.

Baath has never adopted a one-party stance; it doesn't believe in and refuses the one party theory. However, in the past, and for objective circumstances, it offered the theory of the leading party.

Baath deeply and principally believes in the creation of a pluralistic national democratic system in which power is democratically rotated on the basis of ballot boxes through free, transparent and fair elections. Every deviation from this in the past falls within the context of the mistakes of the Baath march.

What is your programme to deal with the Kurdish question after liberation?

We are confident that our Kurdish people will not get their national and cultural rights... except within the unity of... a free, liberated, independent and prosperous Iraq... Baath Party will remain committed to the historical March 1970 statement and the 1974 law of autonomy as the basis for dealing with the national, cultural and political rights of our Kurdish people in Iraq.

Recently the anti-US occupation "Freedom and Justice Party of Kurdistan" was publicly founded. What role do you expect this party to play in Kurdistan?

Two Kurdish parties were founded in the name of the Freedom and Justice Party of Kurdistan, one chaired by Johar Al-Hirki, the son of a prominent Iraqi Kurdish family, which is loyal to the people of Iraq, and the other chaired by brother-in-arms Arshad Zibari. Both have made a lot of sacrifices from their families and tribes against the occupation and in defence of Iraqi freedom and independence.

The birth of both parties will contribute to strengthening and expanding the Kurdish national movement against the occupation and its stooges.

** The writer is a veteran Arab journalist based in Birzeit on the West Bank of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.*

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