

## WHEN RELIGIOUS DIVIDE FAILS

FOR WORSE THE POLICY OF “divide and rule” has rendered many a post-colonial society virtually unrecognisable. It worked wonder for the British in India. And it continues to work wonder for those who have inherited the New Delhi mantle. For last two decades or so the American administration has been utilising this policy extensively and aggressively throughout the world whenever it faces difficulty to get ‘the American world order’ implemented. They have divided the Balkan region beyond recognition to destroy old nation states. Right now they are planning to execute the idea of carpet-bombing of what is called Waziristion along Pakistan-Afghanistan border apparently to deny the al-Qaeda a safe haven they have been using for so long, particularly since the collapse of Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Maybe, an independent buffer zone much in line with Kosovo, seems to be taking shape. Whether it can stabilise the region, particularly Pakistan’s fragile polity is another matter.

But the success of divide and rule policy is not that encouraging for Bush and his men in Iraq. Much to their dismay the Iraqi resistance against American occupation is not falling apart despite their systematic efforts to sharpen the Shia-Sunni divide.

The Arab Shiite Ayatollahs continue to advocate national unity and oppose American presence on Iraq. Iraq’s Diale province illustrates a classic example of how Shia-Sunni divide fails to deliver desired results for the Americans. The area is composed of 50 percent Shias and 50 percent Sunnis and at the same time it is a strong base of the resistance.

When America started the political process it eventually came to the benefit of al-Qaeda. Those joining the political process argued that otherwise the Iranians would take over and in this way they would only co-operate for a short period and then could kick the Americans out as well. Of course they failed. Al Qaeda argued in a very principled way that only protracted armed struggle will advance their cause and reality confirmed their way of thinking, their trend. □□□