

ParsBrief

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Six Camp Liberty residents escaped the cult

Nejat Society, October 2, 2014

6 individuals ran away Temporary Transit Location during past three months.

These six survivors managed to release themselves from the bars of the Rajavi cult and stepped in a life of free will.

One of these newly defectors returned to his family and now lives near his beloved ones.

We hope all MKO hostages to be liberated and experience free life among their families.

America supports terrorism (Including Mojahedin Khalq, MEK, MKO, Rajavi cult)

Sam Hillestad, The Brown Daily Herald, September 13, 2014

In 1998, five Cuban counterterrorism agents were arrested in Miami and held in solitary confinement for 17 months. Then — after a dubious seven-month-long trial in which no hard evidence was ever presented — the group was convicted and given the equivalent of more than four life sentences.

The agents were then shipped off to five different maximum-security prisons spread across the United States so as to eliminate any possibility for communication.

What did these five Cubans do to deserve this sentence?

The Cuban Five, as they have become known, were in pursuit of known terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who was responsible for the 1997 hotel bombings in Havana.

But as it turned out, Posada was a CIA operative. In order to protect its valuable asset and cover up the job, the U.S. government arrested the Cuban Five and denounced them as spies.

Exiled Cubans like Posada have a long and bloody history of terrorism against Cuba. Likewise, America has a long and bloody history of actively supporting those terrorist attacks.

After Posada escaped from Cuba, the CIA trained him in explosives and sabotage. He remained a CIA operative for many years, even helping to organize the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.

Posada is also widely assumed to be the mastermind behind the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner. Seventy-three civilian passengers died on that plane. Posada was eventually allowed to walk free.

Meanwhile, three of the five Cubans who were trying to catch Posada remain locked in maximum-security prisons.

None of this guarantees that the Cuban Five weren't spies. It's possible that their imprisonment was entirely justified, and that the sensitive nature of the case warranted classifying the incriminating evidence.

But the more likely explanation is that since the United States had an economic and political interest in toppling the Castro regime, and since terrorism from Cuban exiles advances that goal, the U.S. government had made it a priority to thwart Cuban counterterrorism agents at any cost.

And so it goes for U.S. foreign policy around the world. America picks and chooses which terrorists to condemn and which to support, often wavering between the two depending on the prevailing incentives.

The case of the Cuban Five was not an isolated incident. The United States supports terrorism wherever and whenever it's strategic to do so.

Back in 1959, some sources say, the CIA hired a young Iraqi assassin to eliminate Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim. The assassin was a then-unknown thug named Saddam Hussein. When Hussein botched the job, the United States supposedly set him up with money and protection within the Ba'ath Party. Then in 1963, the Ba'ath Party organized a CIA-backed military coup that would eventually place Hussein in power. At the time, America sought to bolster its position in the Cold War by exerting control over Iraq, even if it may have meant forging an alliance with Hussein, a known terrorist and newly established dictator.

America was consistently one of the staunchest supporters of the Hussein regime, even going so far as to provide Iraq with vital military intelligence that was used to administer chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War. Not only did the U.S. government know Hussein was using lethal chemical weapons like nerve gas and sarin, we actively supported him.

With the help of American intelligence, Hussein's wanton usage of chemical weaponry killed thousands and won the war for Iraq.

The alliance with Hussein ended abruptly once he invaded Kuwait. Hussein became more useful as an enemy than an ally, so the American propaganda machine took Hussein and turned him into the terrorist and dictator we know him as today. Though America's aim in aiding terrorist activity is often regime change or political upheaval, U.S. politicians are sometimes willing to support terrorism just for the extra campaign money.

Iranian terrorist group Mojahedin-e-Khalq has largely been beyond reproach from American politicians, despite the widely held belief that the group was responsible for the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists. A host of top-ranking U.S. officials, including the likes of Rudy Giuliani, Frances Townsend and Howard Dean, have all publicly defended MEK. Why? MEK has been funneling tens of thousands of dollars into their pockets in exchange for their support. And following America's lead on the issue, Israel's secret service has also provided MEK with extensive financing, training and weapons.

Which leads me to what is perhaps the most well-documented and notorious case of U.S.-sponsored terrorism: funding for Israel's military.

By America's own definition, Israel is perpetrating acts of terrorism against Palestine. Israeli airstrikes have purposefully targeted Palestinian hospitals and schools in a crusade to crush the Palestinian people in a barbaric war of expansion. This is "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets," as the U.S. State Department defines terrorism.

While there is no doubt that Palestine also commits acts of terrorism, as Noam Chomsky has put it, Palestinian terrorism is "very small as compared with the U.S.-backed Israeli terrorism. Quite typically, violence reflects the means of violence. It's not unusual. State terror is almost always much more extreme than retail terror, and this is no exception."

To date, Israel's aggressive invasion of the Gaza Strip has killed more than 2,100 Palestinians — around 75 percent of whom were civilians — while fewer than 80 Israelis have died.

And behind the scenes is America: Israel's generous benefactor who watches from the sidelines as Palestinian women and children are brutally murdered.

In 2013 alone, the United States gave a whopping \$3.1 billion in military aid to Israel. That amounts to nearly a quarter of Israel's entire defense spending, which includes F-16 fighter jets, smart bombs, Apache helicopters and white phosphorous munitions.

America has no moral justification for this, only a political motivation. Simply put, American politicians support Israeli terrorism because American voters are overwhelmingly pro-Israel.

These examples are by no means the only instances of U.S.-backed terrorism. If the price is right, the United States has shown that it will support any amount of terrorism, anywhere in the world. But it doesn't have to be that way. In America, it's not dictators and tyrants that are supporting terrorism. It's elected officials, and their power is vulnerable every election year. So while they're the ones bankrolling terrorism, we're the ones keeping them in office. But, as of right now, the evidence is undeniable: America supports terrorists. Unless we do something about it, America will continue to support terrorists. And at some point, the lines start to blur, and if you squint just right, it starts to look an awful lot like America itself is the terrorist.

Sam Hillestad '15 is squinting just right. He can be reached at samuel_hillestad@brown.edu.

France strategy to be nice to terrorists French Case Against Iran Opposition Group Dropped

ELAINE GANLEY, Associated Press , Sep 17, 2014

French judges have thrown out terrorism-linked charges against nine members of an exiled Iranian opposition group, closing the last part of a case that began 11 years ago with mass arrests that provoked several deaths by protesters setting themselves afire.

The Paris prosecutor's office confirmed Wednesday the case against the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq was closed.

The co-leader of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, Maryam Rajavi said the decision was a "victory of justice and resistance over collaboration" between France and Iran.

Rajavi was among more than 150 detained in a sweep in 2003 around the group's headquarters in Auvers-Sur-Oise, outside Paris. She and 16 others were charged on suspicion of planning terrorist acts and terror financing. Rajavi was later released, and charges against her dropped.

An investigation for "financial infractions" was then opened against nine group members, but those charges were thrown out due to insufficient evidence, according to a statement by seven top lawyers handling the case.

"The justice (system) was manipulated by political and commercial considerations," said William Bourdon, one of the lawyers. "This case never should have existed."

France's counterintelligence chief at the time of the arrests, Pierre de Bousquet de Florian, said the crackdown was aimed at preventing attacks on Iranian diplomatic missions in Europe and elsewhere. He said the Mujahedeen were transforming their compound in Auvers-Sur-Oise into "an operational center for terrorism," after losing firepower in Iraq when the U.S. disarmed them. The group had mounted attacks from a camp in Iraq against neighboring Iran.

The arrest and jailing of Rajavi led to protests by Mujahedeen supporters around Europe, several of whom set themselves afire. Two died and six others were injured.

The lawyers claimed the French government mounted the charges as part of a "strategy of manipulation led by the mullahs in power in Tehran."

The Mujahedeen have been removed from both European and U.S. terror lists.

Pro-Israeli American Billionaires Helped by the White House "Make War on Iran", Law Suit Reveals

Philip Giraldi, Global Research, August 31, 2014

There is a group of Jewish American billionaires who are apparently doing their best to make sure that negotiations with Iran go nowhere in the mistaken belief that they are doing what is best for Israel. And they would also appear to be assisted in their efforts by the White House, which is at the same time claiming that it wants the talks to be successful. The odd relationship is currently playing out in a Manhattan courtroom where the Justice Department is seeking to squash a lawsuit that it fears might expose the extent to which the government has hypocritically played fast and loose with classified information while simultaneously sending journalists and whistleblowers to jail over allegations that they have done the same. The power and wealth of the anti-Iran groups as well as their unrivalled access to the United States government means that a policy of détente with Iran, which would be a no brainer based on both American and Iranian interests, only proceeds by fits and starts with the US Congress and much of the media lined up solidly to stop the effort. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and its affiliated educational foundation, which have focused on the "Iranian threat" over the past three years, have a combined budget of more than \$90 million while AIPAC's spin-off the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) has \$8.7 million.

The American Enterprise Institute's (AEI) efforts are more diversified but uniformly hawkish when it comes to the Middle East. It has a budget of \$45 million. Identified multi-million dollar donor/supporters of AIPAC, AEI, and WINEP include Sheldon Adelson of Las Vegas Sands, Paul Singer of Elliot Management hedge fund and Bernard Marcus of Home Depot.

Other right wing think tanks including Heritage and Hudson in Washington also support unrelenting pressure directed against Iran. Even the more centrist Brookings Institute is hard core when it comes to Middle Eastern politics by virtue of its Saban Institute funded by Israeli-American billionaire Haim Saban. And then there are the mainstream Jewish organizations to include the Anti Defamation League, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and the American Jewish Congress, all of which have vast resources and unparalleled access to the White House, Congress and the media.

All the pro-Israel anti-Iran groups engage in pressure tactics on Capitol Hill and have been effective in dominating the political debate. Of thirty-six outside witnesses brought in to testify at seven Senate hearings on Iran since 2012 only one might be characterized as sensitive to Iranian concerns. The enormous lobbying effort enables the anti-Iran groups to define the actual policies, move their drafts of legislation through congress, and eventually see their bills pass with overwhelming majorities in both the House and Senate. It is democracy in action if one accepts that popular rule ought to be guided by money and pressure groups rather than by national interests.

Less well known is United Against Nuclear Iran, which has a budget just shy of \$2 million. UANI is involved in the New York lawsuit. The group, which has somehow obtained a 501[c]3 "educational" tax status that inter alia allows it to conceal its donors, has offices in Rockefeller Center in New York City. It is active on Capitol Hill providing "expert testimony" on Iran for congressional committees, to include "help" in drafting legislation. At a July Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Iran all three outside witnesses were from UANI. It is also active in the media but is perhaps best known for its "name and shame" initiatives in which it exposes companies that it claims are doing business with Tehran in violation of US sanctions.

UANI is being sued by a Greek billionaire Victor Restis whom it had outed in 2013. Restis, claiming the exposure was fraudulent and carried out to damage his business, has filed suit demanding that UANI and billionaire Thomas Kaplan turn over documents and details of relationships regarding UANI donors who it is claimed are linked to the case. Kaplan, a New York City resident, made his initial fortune on energy exploration and development. More recently he has been involved in commodities trading in precious metals. His wife Daphne is Israeli and his involvement in various Jewish philanthropies both in the US and in Israel

have invited comparison with controversial deceased commodities trader Marc Rich, who reportedly worked closely with the Israeli government on a number of projects.

The Justice department would like to see the UANI lawsuit go away as it is aware that what is being described as “law enforcement” documents would include both privileged and classified Treasury Department work product relating to individuals and companies that it has investigated for sanctions busting. Passing either intelligence related or law enforcement documents to a private organization is illegal but the Justice Department’s only apparent concern is that the activity might be exposed. There is no indication that it would go after UANI for having acquired the information and it perhaps should be presumed that the source of the leak is the Treasury Department itself.

Who or what provided the documents to a private advocacy group that is also a tax exempt foundation supported by prominent businessmen with interests in the Middle East is consequently not completely clear but Restis is assuming that the truth will out if he can get hold of the evidence. The lawsuit claims that UANI intimidates its targets by defaming their business practices as well as by demanding both examination of their books and an audit carried out by one of its own accountants followed by review from an “independent counsel.”

Kaplan is named in the suit as he appears to be the gray eminence behind UANI. He once boasted “we’ve (UANI) done more to bring Iran to heel than any other private sector initiative.” Kaplan also employs as a director or officer in six of his companies the Executive Director of UANI Mark Wallace and reportedly arranged the awarding of the Executive Director position at Harvard’s Belfer Center to its President Gary Samore.

Kaplan is a business competitor to Restis, whose lawyers are apparently seeking to demonstrate two things: first, that the US government has been feeding sometimes only partially vetted information to UANI to help in its “name and shame” program and second, that UANI is itself supported by partisan business interests like Kaplan as well as by foreign sources, which apparently is meant to imply Israel. Or even the Israeli intelligence service Mossad. Meir Dagan, former head of Mossad, is on the UANI advisory board, which also includes ex-Senator Joseph Lieberman and former Senior Diplomat Dennis Ross, both of whom have frequently been accused of favoring Israeli interests and both of whom might well have easy access to US government generated information.

And then there is the Muhadedin-e-Khalq, the Iranian terrorist group that has assassinated at least six Americans and is now assisting the Israeli government in killing Iranian scientists, a prima facie definition of what constitutes terrorism. The group was on the State Department terrorist list from 1997 until 2012, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton de-listed it in response to demands coming from friends of Israel in Congress as well as from a

large group of ex government officials, many of whom were paid large honoraria by the group to serve as advocates. The paid American skills included former CIA Directors James Woolsey and Porter Goss, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Louis Freeh and former United Nations Ambassador John Bolton. The promoters of MEK in congress and elsewhere claimed to be primarily motivated by MEK's being an enemy of the current regime in Tehran, though its virulent anti-Americanism and terrorist history make it a somewhat unlikely poster child for the "Iranian resistance."

Supporters of MEK also ignore the fact that the group is run like a cult, routinely executes internal dissidents, and has virtually no political support within Iran. But such are the ways of the corrupt Washington punditocracy, lionizing an organization that it should be shunning. MEK's political arm is located in Paris and it has long been assumed that it is funded by the Israeli government and by at least some of the same gaggle of billionaires, possibly including their Israeli counterparts, who support the anti-Iranian agenda in the United States.

Iranian negotiators have accepted that their country should have only limited uranium enrichment capabilities coupled with a rigorous inspection regime but the talks in Geneva drag on and on as the United States continues to hesitate, raising new objections regularly in spite of claims that it operates in good faith and seeks a settlement. That an agreement is within reach is undoubtedly true and it would even be good for Israel as it would remove the regional nuclear option while making much less likely another pointless and devastating war. But the men who write the checks do not see it that way and, unfortunately, they are the ones who all too often both pay the piper and call the tune.

Hoaxes, Hype, and Hysteria The War Party never takes a holiday

by Justin Raimondo, Antiwar, September 01, 2014

While Americans were barbecuing over the Labor Day weekend, the Usual Suspects were busy cooking up new wars, from Iraq to Ukraine. While this is nothing new – after all, evil never sleeps – one thing I did notice: the stunning lack of imagination on their part. It was, in effect, the equivalent of a bunch of summer reruns: tired formulaic retreads that weren't all that convincing in the first place.

Take the latest war propaganda centered on the alleged "threat" to our precious bodily fluids supposedly posed by ISIS, the War Party's latest bogeyman. As polls showed a stubborn reluctance on the part of the American people to re-invade Iraq, the neocons came up with a not-so-new one: they claim a laptop computer ostensibly captured from ISIS by the "good" jihadists – the so-called Free Syrian Army, which is armed and trained by the US – contains plans for constructing "weapons of mass destruction," i.e. biological weapons. They're even calling it the "laptop of death" – a phrase that ought to ring a bell for those who follow these sorts of things.

That's the same phrase used to describe yet another purloined laptop, this one supplied by the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, an Iranian terrorist group that, for years, has been feeding the War Party bogus "intelligence" about Tehran's nonexistent nuclear weapons program. That tall tale was debunked in 2011 – yet another case of MEK cobbling together old outdated data, adding a dash of forgery, and shaking well enough to fool the credulous.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks, but what if the dog can pass off an old hoax as a new one? And that's why I'm here: to remind you.

Speaking of America's Good Jihadists, a.k.a. the Syrian Free Army, I was struck by this nugget from an account of the killing of Douglas McAuthur McCain, an American fighting for ISIS in Syria, in the New York Times:

"The rebels who killed him were fighting for the Free Syrian Army, a rival group backed by the United States, and they went on to behead six ISIS fighters – but not Mr. McCain – and then posted the photographs on Facebook."

Yes, these are the "moderate" Syrian rebels, backed by your tax dollars and the prestige of the United States government. Oh, but don't worry, kids: they're our barbarians – so beheading is okay, even praiseworthy, since they're doing it on behalf of spreading "freedom" and "democracy."

And speaking of hoaxes, here's a biggie: they're telling us that the long-awaited Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine has finally arrived! Yay! You can almost hear the sigh of relief all the way from Washington. The War Party's journalistic camarilla – which has been telling us for the past six months or so that Putin's move was "imminent" – yelped "we told you so!" in unison. Neocon hysteric Anne Applebaum screeched that this proved that we have to prepare for "total war" with nuclear-armed Russia – which, she claims, is planning to "use nuclear weapons to bomb Poland and the Baltic countries."

There's just one problem with this alleged "invasion" – there's zero evidence for it. Normally when one country invades another, troops pour over the border, missiles strike their targets, and the invaders proclaim their victory. So where are the Russian tanks, the missiles raining

down death, the tens of thousands of troops marching in to take possession of their newly-conquered territory?

They're nowhere to be seen. The best NATO could come up with was a series of murky satellite photos showing a column of military vehicles going somewhere from some place else – and that's it. Apparently the Ukrainian army is so under-equipped that the poor things don't even have a single cell phone camera to take a quick shot of the invading hordes. (This just proves they need more American aid!) Washington avers that one thousand Russian troops are now in Ukraine – but why would Putin send in such a paltry "army" and risk defeat? Why not just send in the troops, as he did in Crimea, and be done with it?

Oh, but the new cold warriors have a ready answer for the absence of solid evidence: this, we're told, is no regular old-fashioned conquest. In this case, it's a "new" kind of invasion – a "stealth invasion." Which just goes to show that words can be twisted to mean their exact opposite.

Yet this "stealth" angle elides an important element of any invasion plan: the political benefits to be had at home. These are, by the way, the only benefits to be had if Putin decided to annex ramshackle east Ukraine, with its profitless Soviet-era industries and desperately poor populace. So why isn't he up there beating his chest and scoring points by telling the Russian people he's the kind of strong leader who can stand up to the West?

The War Party has sunk to a new low: they're stealing from Hollywood! If this isn't outright plagiarism of the plot of "Wag the Dog," then it's damned close. If I were the producers of that movie, I'd sue – but that's just me.

While our war propagandists lack originality, you have to give them credit for persistence: these guys never give up. When one lie is exposed, another quickly takes center stage – and if the War Party does this in the belief that the memory of the American people is lamentably short, then who can fault their logic?

That's why Antiwar.com is a vitally important resource for those of us who want to put an end to our foreign policy of global intervention. Our online archives are a detailed record of the War Party's now-debunked fabrications, a charge sheet stretching all the way back to the mid-1990s.

And our readers apparently realize the value of this resource – because, unlike the War Party's bought-and-paid-for "journalists," we depend on a growing base of grassroots supporters to keep this operation afloat and expanding.

Amid all the navel-gazing discussion by "mainstream" scribes about how to sustain a news operation in the face of a technology that has changed the face of journalism, Antiwar.com's success in building a new model has gone largely unremarked. As mainline journalists

bemoan the decline of their industry, Antiwar.com has pointed the way forward for new media by building a news organization that abandons the old subscriber-advertiser-dependent revenue stream and bases itself, instead, on reader donations.

Of course, bloggers have been doing this, with the by-now-traditional "tip jar," for years, but I believe we were among the first to apply it to a broader-based news-and-opinion site – and make it work.

It has worked for over fifteen years. Every time we pass the goal in our quarterly fundraising drives I feel an immense satisfaction in the fact that our readers have given us yet another vote of confidence.

From where I sit, it looks as though our late summer fundraising drive is very close to the goalpost. My thanks to all who gave: I can't even begin to express the depth of my gratitude. And I want to point out that none of us here at Antiwar.com take your support for granted: we work overtime to earn your support by reporting the facts as we understand them and never failing to question the "conventional wisdom" – no matter where it takes us.

The March to War: Fighting ISIL is a Smokescreen for US Mobilization against Syria, Iran

By Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, Global Research, September 26, 2014

The ISIL or IS threat is a smokescreen. The strength of the ISIL has deliberately been inflated to get public support for the Pentagon and to justify the illegal bombing of Syria. It has also been used to justify the mobilization of what is looking more and more like a large-scale US-led military buildup in the Middle East. The firepower and military assets being committed go beyond what is needed for merely fighting the ISIL death squads.

While the US has assured its citizens and the world that troops will not be sent on the ground, this is very unlikely. In the first instance, it is unlikely because boots on the ground are needed to monitor and select targets. Moreover, Washington sees the campaign against the ISIL fighters as something that will take years. This is doublespeak. What is being described is a permanent military deployment or, in the case of Iraq, redeployment. This force could eventually morph into a broader assault force threatening Syria, Iran, and Lebanon.

US-Syrian and US-Iranian Security Dialogue?

Before the US-led bombings in Syria started there were unverified reports being circulated that Washington had started a dialogue with Damascus through Russian and Iraqi channels to discuss military coordination and the Pentagon bombing campaign in Syria. There was

something very off though. Agents of confusion were at work in an attempt to legitimize the bombardment of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The claims of US-Syrian cooperation via Russian and Iraqi channels are part of a sinister series of misinformation and disinformation. Before the claims about US cooperation with Syria, similar claims were being made about US-Iranian cooperation in Iraq.

Earlier, Washington and the US media tried to give the impression that an agreement on military cooperation was made between itself and Tehran to fight ISIL and to cooperate inside Iraq. This was widely refuted in the harshest of words by numerous members of the Iranian political establishment and high-ranking Iranian military commanders as disinformation.

After the Iranians clearly indicated that Washington's claims were fiction, the US claimed that it would not be appropriate for Iran to join its anti-ISIL coalition. Iran rebutted. Washington was dishonestly misrepresenting the facts, because US officials had asked Tehran to join the anti-ISIL coalition several times.

Before he was discharged from the hospital after a prostate surgery, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the highest ranking official in Iran, told Iranian television on September 9, 2014, that the US had requested that Tehran and Washington cooperate together inside Iraq on three different occasions. He explained that the US ambassador to Iraq had relayed a message to the Iranian ambassador to Iraq to join the US, then, in his own words, «the same [John Kerry] — who had said in front of the camera and in front of the eyes of all the world that they do not want Iran to cooperate with them — requested [from] Dr. Zarif that Iran cooperate with them on this issue, but Dr. Zarif turned this [request] down.» The third request was made by US Undersecretary Wendy Sherman to Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Khamenei additionally made it clear that he categorically ruled out any cooperation with Washington on the issue. «On this issue, we will not cooperate with America particularly because their hands are dirty,» he publicly confirmed while explaining that Washington had ill intentions and nefarious designs in Iraq and Syria.

Like Russia, Iran has been supporting Syria and Iraq against ISIL. Also like Moscow, Tehran is committed to fighting it, but will not join Washington's anti-ISIL coalition.

New Invasion(s) and Regime Change Project(s) in the Pipeline?

As was pointed out on June 20, 2014, in Washington's eyes Nouri Al-Malaki's federal government in Baghdad had to be removed for refusing to join the US siege against the Syrians, being aligned to Iran, selling oil to the Chinese, and buying weapons from the Russian Federation. Iraq's decision to be part of an Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline also undermined

the objectives of the US and its allies to control the flow of energy in the Middle East and to obstruct Eurasian integration. [1]

There were also two other unforgivable cardinal sins that Al-Malaki's government in Baghdad committed in Washington's eye. These offenses, however, should be put into geopolitical context first.

Remember the post-September 11, 2001 (post-9/11) catchphrase of the Bush II Administration during the start of its serial wars? It went like this: «Anyone can go to Baghdad, but real men go to Tehran!» The point of this warmongering catchphrase is that Baghdad and Damascus have been viewed as pathways for the Pentagon towards Tehran.

[2]

Like Syria, Al-Malaki government's cardinal sins were tied to blocking the pathway to Tehran. Firstly, the Iraqi government evicted the Pentagon from Iraq at the end of 2011, which removed US troops stationed directly on Iran's western border. Secondly, the Iraqi federal government was working to expel anti-government Iranian militants from Iraq and to close Camp Ashraf, which could be used in a war or regime change operations against Iran. Ashraf was a base for the military wing of the Iraqi-based Mujahidin-e-Khalq (MEK/MOK/MKO). The MEK is an anti-government Iranian organization that is bent on regime change in Tehran. It has even openly endorsed US-led attacks on Iran and Syria.

Although the US government itself considers the MEK a terrorist organization, Washington began to deepen its ties with the MEK when it and its staunch British allies invaded Iraq. Disingenuously and ironically, the US and Britain used Saddam Hussein's support for the MEK to justify labeling Iraq as a state-sponsor of terrorism and to also justify the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. Since then the US has been nurturing the MEK.

Since 2003, the US has been funding the MEK. Washington has been protecting the MEK, because it wants to keep them on a leash as either leverage against Tehran or to have the option of one day installing the MEK into power in Tehran as part of a regime change operation against Iran. The MEK has literally become incorporated into the Pentagon and CIA toolboxes against Tehran. Even when the US transferred control of Camp Ashraf to Baghdad, the Pentagon kept forces inside the MEK camp.

Eventually the MEK forces would mostly be relocated in 2012 to the former US base known as Camp Liberty. Camp Liberty is now called by an Arabic name, Camp Hurriya.

The Istanbul bureau chief of the Christian Science Monitor, Scott Peterson described how US officials began to really put their weight behind the MEK during the start of the Arab Spring in 2011. This is tied to Washington's regime change dreams. Peterson wrote that US officials «rarely mention the MEK's violent and anti-American past, and portray the group

not as terrorists but as freedom fighters with 'values just like us,' as democrats-in-waiting ready to serve as a vanguard of regime change in Iran.» [3]

Washington Has Not Abandoned Dreams of Regime Change in Tehran

Washington has not abandoned its dreams for regime change in Tehran. Is it a coincidence that the US and EU support for the MEK is increasing, especially when the ISIL threat in Iraq began to be noticed publicly?

Six hundred parliamentarians and politicians from mostly NATO countries were flown in for a large MEK gathering in the Parisian northeastern suburb of Villepinte that called for regime change in Iran on June 27, 2014. Warmongers and morally bankrupt figures like former US senator Joseph Lieberman, Israeli mouthpiece and apologist Alan Dershowitz, former Bush II official and Fox News pundit John Bolton, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani, and French former minister and United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) chief Bernard Kouchner all met the MEK to promote regime change and war. According to the MEK, over 80, 000 people attended the regime change rally. Supporters of the insurgencies in Iraq and Syria were also present at the Villepinte gathering calling for regime change in Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

The irony is that the money for the event most probably came from the US government itself. US allies probably contributed too. This money has gone to the MEK's lobbying initiatives with the US Congress and US Department of State, which in effect is recycling US funding. People like Rudy Giuliani — probably one of the most hated mayors in the history of New York City until he took advantage of the tragic events of 9/11 — are now effectively lobbyists for the MEK. «Many of these former high-ranking US officials — who represent the full political spectrum — have been paid tens of thousands of dollars to speak in support of the MEK,» according to the Christian Science Monitor. [4]

Giuliani has been speaking at MEK events at least as far back as 2010. In 2011, he publicly pushed for regime change in Tehran and Damascus at a MEK gathering. «How about we follow an Arab Spring with a Persian Summer?» he rhetorically declared. [5] Giuliani's next sentence revealed just how much of a scion of US foreign policy the initiative to support the MEK truly is: «We need regime change in Iran, more than we do in Egypt or Libya, and just as we need it in Syria.» [6]

Joseph Lieberman's friend and fellow war advocate Senator John McCain was unable to make the trip to the Parisian suburb in Seine-Saint-Denis, but addressed the regime change gathering via video. Congressman Edward Royce, the chair of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee, also showed his support for regime change in Iran through a video message. So did Senator Carl Levin and Senator Robert Menendez.

Large delegations from the US, France, Spain, Canada, and Albania were present. Aside from the aforementioned individuals, other notable American attendees to the June 27, 2014 event included the following:

1. Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the lower chamber (House of Representatives) in the bicameral US Congress;
2. John Dennis Hastert; another former speaker of the House of Representatives;
3. George William Casey Jr., who commanded the multinational military force that invaded and occupied Iraq;
4. Hugh Shelton, a computer software executive and former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff;
5. James Conway, the former chief of the US Marine Corps
6. Louis Freeh, the former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
7. Lloyd Poe, the US Representative who sits on (1) the US House Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats and chairs (2) the US House Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Trade;
8. Daniel Davis, a US Representative from Illinois;
9. Loretta Sánchez, a US Representative from California;
10. Michael B. Mukasey, a former attorney-general of the US;
11. Howard Dean, the former governor of Vermont;
12. William Richardson, the former secretary of the US Department of Energy;
13. Robert Torricelli, a former legislator in the US House of Representatives and the US Senate senator who is the legally representative of the MEK in Iraq;
14. Francis Townsend, former Homeland Security advisor to George W. Bush Jr.;
15. Linda Chavez, a former chief White House director;
16. Robert Joseph, the former US undersecretary that ran the (1) Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, (2) the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, and the (3) Bureau of Political-Military Affairs;
17. Philip Crowley, the former assistant-secretary of state responsible for public affairs;
18. David Phillips, the military police commander who restructured the Iraqi police and was responsible for guarding Camp Ashraf and Saddam Hussein as a prisoner;
19. Marc Ginsberg, the senior vice-president of the public relations firm APCO Worldwide and former US ambassador and US presidential adviser for Middle East policy.

Like the US presence, the French presence included officials. Aside from Bernard Kouchner, from France some of the notable attendees were the following individuals:

1. Michèle Alliot-Marie, a French politician who among her cabinet portfolios was responsible for the military and foreign affairs at different times;
2. Rama Yade, vice president of the conservative Radical Party of France;
3. Gilbert Mitterrand, the president of the human rights foundation France Libertés, which has focused on ethnic groups such as Kurds, Chechens, and Tibetans;
4. Martin Vallton, the mayor of Villepinte.

From Spain the notable attendees were the following:

1. Pedro Agramunt Font de Mora, the Spanish chair of the European People's Party (EPP) and its allies in the Council of Europe;
2. Jordi Xucla, the Spanish chair of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Group in the Council of Europe;
3. Alejo Vidal-Quadras, a Spanish politician and one of the fourteen vice-presidents of the European Union's European Parliament;
4. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the former prime minister of Spain (who was also visibly accompanied by his wife Sonsoles Espinosa Díaz).

Other notable attendees from other Euro-Atlantic countries included:

1. Pandli Majko, the former prime minister of Albania;
2. Kim Campbell, the former prime minister of Canada
3. Geir Haarde, the former prime minister of Iceland;
4. Ingrid Betancourt, a former Colombian senator;
5. Alexander Carile, a member of the British House of Lords, the upper house of the British Parliament
6. Giulio Maria Terzi, the former foreign minister of Italy;
7. Adrianus Melkert, a former Dutch cabinet minister, a former World Bank executive, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's former special envoy to Iraq.

Not only regime change was talked about, but the cross-border crisis in Iraq and Syria was a major subject. Fox News gave the event special coverage. Just in July, the MEK's leadership had condemned Iranian support to the Iraqi federal government in its fight against the ISIL, yet since the US had begun to nominally fight the ISIL the MEK has begun to hold its tongue.

Before the regime change gathering, the MEK's leader Maryam Rajavi — who the MEK has designated as the president of Iran since 1993 — even meet with the puppet Syrian National Council's leader Ahmed Jarba in Paris to discuss cooperation on May 23, 2014.

MEK leader Maryam Rajavi and SNC leader Ahmed Jarba meet to discuss cooperating for regime change in Tehran and Damascus.

Regime Change in Damascus through Mission Creep in Syria

The bombing campaign that the US has started in Syria is illegal and a violation of the UN Charter. This is why the Pentagon took the step of claiming that the US-led bombing campaign was prompted by the threat of an «imminent» attack that was being planned against the territory of the US. This allegation was made to give legal cover to the bombardment of Syrian territory through a warped argument under Article 51 of the UN Charter that allows a UN member to legally attack another country if an imminent attack by the said country is about to take place on the UN member.

Barack Obama and the US government have done their best to confuse and blur reality through a series of different steps they have taken to claim legitimacy for violating international law by bombing Syria without the authorization of Damascus. Although US Ambassador Samantha Powers informed Syria's permanent representative to the UN that US-led attacks would be launched on Al-Raqqa Governate, informing Bashar Al-Jaafari through a formal unilateral notification does not amount to being given the legal consent of Syria.

The US-led attacks on Syria do not have the backing of the UN Security Council either. The US government, however, has tried to spin the September 19, 2014, meeting of the UN Security Council that John Kerry chaired as a sign that the UN Security Council and international community are backing its bombing campaign.

Nor is it a coincidence that just when the US assembled its multinational coalition to fight the ISIL and its pseudo-caliphate, that John Kerry conveniently mentions that Syria has violated the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). While admitting that Syria did not use any material prohibited by the CWC, Kerry told US legislators that Damascus had breached its commitments to the CWC on September 18, 2014. In other words, Washington intends to go after Syria and pursue regime change in Damascus. If this does not make it clear, then the fact that the US will use Saudi Arabia to train more anti-government forces should. [7]

A US brinkmanship strategy to justify a US-led bombing campaign against Syria has been put into action with the intent of creating a pretext for expanding the illegal US-led airstrikes in Syria that started on September 22, 2014.

What the US envisions is a long-term bombing campaign, which also threatens Lebanon and Iran. According to Ali Khamenei, the US wants to bomb both Iraq and Syria using ISIL as a smokescreen on the basis of the model in Pakistan. More correctly, the situation should be compared to the AfPak (Af-Pak) model. The US has used the spillover of instability from Afghanistan into Pakistan and the spread of the Taliban as a pretext for bombing Pakistan.

Iraq and Syria have been merged as one conflict zone, which Ibrahim Al-Marashi, using a neologism, has described as the rise of «Syrac.»

The Broader Objective: Disrupting Eurasian Integration

While the US has been pretending to fight the same terrorist and death squads that it has created, the Chinese and their partners have been busy working to integrate Eurasia. America's «Global War on Terror» has been paralleled with the rebuilding of the Silk Road. This is the real story and motivation for Washington's insistence to fight and remobilize in the Middle East. It is also the reason why the US has been pushing Ukraine to confront Russia and the EU to sanction the Russian Federation.

America wants to disrupt the reemerging Silk Road and its expanding trade network. While Kerry has been busy frightening audiences about the ISIL and its atrocities, the Chinese have been busy sweeping the map by making deals across Asia and the Indian Ocean. This is part of the westward march of the Chinese dragon.

Parallel to Kerry's travels, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Sri Lanka and went to the Maldives. Sri Lanka is already part of China's Maritime Silk Road project. The Maldivians are newer entries; agreements have been reached to include the island-nation into the Maritime Silk Road network and infrastructure that China is busy constructing to expand maritime trade between East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Nor is it a coincidence that two Chinese destroyers docked at the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf to conduct joint drills with Iranian warships in the Persian Gulf.

Parallel to east-west trade, a north-south trade and transport network is being developed. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was in Kazakhstan recently where he and his Kazakhstani counterpart, President Nursultan Nazarbayev, confirmed that trade was due to see manifold increases. The completion of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway, which will create a north-south transit route, is being awaited. Cooperation between Tehran and the Eurasian Union was also discussed by the two presidents. On the other western side of the Caspian Sea, a parallel north-south corridor running from Russia to Iran through the Republic of Azerbaijan has been in the works.

The anti-Russia sanctions are beginning to cause uneasiness in the European Union. The real losers in the sanctions in Russia are the members of the European Union. Russia has demonstrated that it has options. Moscow has already launched the construction of its mega natural gas Yakutia–Khabarovsk–Vladivostok pipeline (also known as the Power of Siberia pipeline) to deliver gas to China while BRICS partner South Africa has signed a historic deal on nuclear energy with Rosatom.

Moscow's influence on the world stage is very clear. Its influence has been on the rise in the Middle East and Latin America. Even in NATO-garrisoned Afghanistan, Russian influence is on the rise. The Russian government has recently compiled a list of over one hundred old Soviet construction projects that it would like to recuperate.

An alternative to US and EU sanctions is beginning to emerge in Eurasia. Aside from the oil-for-goods deal that Tehran and Moscow signed, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak announced that Iran and Russia had made several new agreements worth seventy billion euro. Sanctions will soon merely isolate the US and the EU. The Iranians have also announced that they are working with their Chinese and Russian partners to overcome the US and EU sanctions regime.

America is being rolled back. It cannot pivot to the Asia-Pacific until matters are settled in the Middle East and Eastern Europe against the Russian, Iranians, Syrians, and their allies. That is why Washington is doing its best to disrupt, divide, redraw, bargain and co-opt. When it comes down to it, the US is not concerned about fighting the ISIL, which has been serving Washington's interests in the Middle East. America's main concern is about preserving its crumbling empire and preventing Eurasian integration.

Notes

[1] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, «America pursuing regime change in Iraq again,» RT, June 20, 2014.

[2] Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, «The Syria Endgame: Strategic Stage in the Pentagon's Covert War on Iran,» Global Research, January 07, 2013.

[3] Scott Peterson, «Iranian group's big-money push to get off US terrorist list,» Christian Science Monitor, August 8, 2011.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Matt Spetalnick, Jeff Mason and Julia Edwards, «Saudi Arabia agrees to host training of moderate Syria rebels», Caren Bohan, Grant McCool, and Eric Walsh eds. Reuters, September 10, 2014.