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Iran and US State Terrorism



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You can't kill the national hero of a third country and get away with it. Especially not of an ancient and powerful country like Iran that threatens no one. Not only did the US strike kill the second most powerful man of Iran, beloved General Qassem Soleimani, chief of the Revolutionary Guards-Quds Force on the road to the Baghdad Airport. The US helicopter killed also Abu-Mahdi al-Muhandi, Deputy Head of Iraq's PMU, Popular Mobilization Units and seven others. Clearly an unprovoked act of state terrorism.

Persia, as Iran was once called, was one of the greatest empires of the ancient world. It is still distinct from the main body of the Islamic world in that it has maintained its

language, Farsi, or Persian, and is of the Shia strain of Islam as is the majority of the population of its neighbor, Iraq.

In 1979, Iran was the center of world attention when a popular revolution overthrew the American supported Pahlavi monarchy and a unique Islamic republic was declared. The clergy, headed by Ayatollah Khomeini, who returned from exile in Europe, took over political control.

The following period was unstable and bloody as the revolution devoured its own children, the same youth of various political shades who fought against the tyranny of the Shah and for a free Iran. That period included an eight-year war with its neighbor Iraq supported by—who else but the USA—which cost a million lives and in which Iran's oil wealth plummeted.

On Khomeini's death in 1989, Ayatollah Khameni was named Supreme Leader for life. As such he appoints the chief of the powerful judiciary, military and security leaders and media chiefs.

Then two decades after the 1979 revolution, Iran appeared to be entering an era of political and social transformation with the victory of liberal reformists over the clergy-backed conservative elite in parliamentary elections of 2000. The reformist President Mohammad Khatami's support for greater social and political freedoms made him popular with youth, who today make up half of Iran's population of 80 million. Azar Nafisi describes that moment well in her best-seller, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

But reformist ideas put the new President at odds with hardliners in the government and judiciary reluctant to lose sight of Islamic traditions. Khatami's reformist legislation was blocked, his supporters disqualified, and he isolated.

In June, 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Tehran's ultra-conservative mayor defeated former President Rafsanjani and became Iran's first non-cleric president in 24 years. The relatively free press under reformist Khatami was targeted by conservatives, pro-reform publications closed and reformist writers, journalists and editors jailed. The reform movement in the government was crushed though it apparently is still alive and strong among youth.

Promising a new era for Iran, an era of peace and progress, President Ahmadinejad vowed to plough ahead with Iran's controversial nuclear program. He also created a furor

in the world when he said that Israel should be wiped off the face of the map and that the holocaust was a myth.

Iran is a big Middle Eastern country, and like Israel non-Arab. The two countries will forever compete for leadership in the Middle East.

Though the gap between rich and poor remains, Iran has apparently made major social advances. Important sections of urban youth know English and are in contact with the world via millions of internet accesses, cell phones, texting and TV. But they too love their country.

Contemporary Iran needs nuclear energy. Europeans concede Iran the right to develop nuclear energy, aware that control is next to impossible. However, Washington charges that Iran in reality wants the bomb; therefore regime change is necessary. Still, Iran sees that many of its neighbors have nuclear weapons: Israel, India, Pakistan, China, Russia.

In the same way, Washington needs an enemy and in its language aims “at a regime change” in Iran. How that is to be achieved is the point. European observers warn that the USA cannot afford to err again as in Iraq, where, as Condoleeza Rice once admitted, “America has made thousands of mistakes.” Iran is simply too strong. Europe has recommended supporting youth and reformism and is today straining at the US leash over Iran and Russia.

Every thinking person knows that oil is the major factor in any assessment of the Middle Eastern crisis. The motives for western aggression in the Middle East has always had to do with oil. In 1944, US interests in oil output there was only 16%. In 1955, those interests had grown to 58%. Profits from Middle Eastern oil are greater than elsewhere because of low labor costs and the high productivity of the wells. The result is extremely high profits.

Western oilmen were shocked when in 1951 the reformist Iranian Premier Mohammad Mossadeq decided to nationalize its oil industry. When Great Britain retired from the scene, the USA stepped in. The coup d'état that overthrew Premier Mossadeq and re-installed the amenable Shah Pahlavi on the throne was one of the newly-founded CIA's first major actions. The justification of the then CIA Director Allen Douglas was: “Where there begins to be evidence that a country is slipping and Communist takeover is threatened (such was his English!) ... we can't wait for an engraved invitation to come and give aid.”

When I worked in Tehran during the year 1979, Western businessmen, when warned that revolution against “their government of Iran” was brewing and threatened their interests, answered with great assurance: “A regiment of US Marines will put things right.”