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The Israeli-Jihadist Alliance

By Justin Raimondo

May 5, 2013

It's seems counterintuitive, to say the least. Indeed, it seems quite mad. And yet we now have all the evidence we need to point to a de facto Israeli alliance with Al Qaeda. The bombing of Damascus suburbs by Israeli jets – purportedly in order to prevent the Syrians from supplying Hezbollah with long range missiles – at precisely the moment when the Syrian “rebels” are demanding Western intervention on their behalf highlights one of the most bizarre alliances in history.

Bizarre, yes, but inexplicable? Not at all.

The Syrian government is claiming the Israelis “coordinated” their attack with the rebels, but this seems problematic – and is largely irrelevant. Yes, a rebel spokesman “blessed” the Israeli strike, but I rather doubt there’s ongoing communication between the rebel leadership and Tel Aviv. It’s simply not necessary: after all, their goals in the region are complementary, if not identical. The Sunni extremists who comprise Al Qaeda have been in the front lines in the battle against Bashar al-Assad, and are also bitterly hostile to the mullahs of Tehran, whom they consider heretics: Israel, for its part, has launched its own holy war against Iran for quite different reasons, and is eager to take out Assad: regardless of motives their goals do coincide. Both want chaos in Syria – the Israelis, in order to eliminate a longstanding thorn in their side, and the jihadists because they thrive in failed states, like Lebanon.

Why would the Israelis aid a “rebel” army made up almost exclusively of hardened jihadists who supposedly hate Israel and want to see its non-Arab inhabitants driven into the sea? For the same

reason they initially nurtured Hamas – because they believe it serves their long range purposes. The reason the Israelis granted official legal status to the group that eventually morphed into one of the Jewish state’s most implacable enemies was simple: to divide the Palestinian resistance, and therefore weaken it. At the time, Fatah, the largest component of the secular Palestinian Liberation Organization, was the most effective opposition to the Israeli occupation. The Israelis thought aiding an Islamist competitor would achieve certain desired ends: the decline of the PLO’s influence, the alienation of Arab governments from the Palestinian cause, and the marginalization of that cause in Western eyes. All three goals have since been achieved.

The Israelis are assisting the Syrian jihadists for similar reasons: because it fits in rather neatly with their long-range goals. For a look at those goals, all you have to do is peruse a 1996 document prepared for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by leading neoconservatives, proposing a radical new Israeli “defense” strategy. Reading “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm” is like reading a timeline of events in the Middle East for the past ten years. As I wrote in October of 2003, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Yom Kippur War – a day when Israel bombed alleged “terrorist camps” in Syria:

“The paper, co-authored by Richard Perle, James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., Douglas Feith, Robert Loewenberg, David Wurmser, and Meyrav Wurmser, portrayed Syria as the main enemy of Israel, but maintained the road to Damascus had to first pass through Baghdad:

“Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq – an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right – as a means of foiling Syria’s regional ambitions. Jordan has challenged Syria’s regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq.”

Well, we didn’t get the Hashemites – but Maliki will do. Or, rather, near complete chaos will suffice, as the religious civil war wracking the Muslim world takes another potential enemy out of contention. Now that Iraq lies bleeding by the wayside, King Bibi is speeding down that “Clean Break” highway, eager to turn two more regional rivals into roadkill.

As I have written before, Syria is our Spain – a proxy war prefiguring a much larger conflict, with the US, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, and Al Qaeda (in the guise of the “Al Nusra Front”) versus the Syrian Ba’athists, Hezbollah, and – standing behind them – Iran.

Israel’s role in this is key. It isn’t just Israeli jets providing air cover for the jihadists in Syria: the Israel lobby has been going full tilt in a push to drag the US into the conflict. And they don’t care how they do it. The other day, in a debate on intervention in Syria on NPR, a representative of WINEP, the “educational” arm of AIPAC, accused anti-interventionist Joshua Landis of “dual loyalty” because his wife is an Alawite! Of course, the Israel lobby isn’t guilty of dual loyalty – their one and only loyalty is to the state of Israel, nothing dual about it.

The “chemical weapons” hoax topped the long list of similar scams set up by the Syrian rebels and their Western supporters in its brazen effrontery: not since the “Niger uranium” papers have we seen such a downright sloppy scheme to lie us into war. Samples taken from rebel sources

tested positive for sarin – and the administration was supposed to accept that at face value? Back to the drawing board, and the same old question: how do we drag a reluctant US President into an open military confrontation with Iran?

Only a few years ago it would've been hard to believe the Americans weren't clued in beforehand that Israeli jets would soon be pounding Damascus. However, given the relations between this administration and the Netanyahu government, one is hardly shocked to learn it came as a surprise. The War Party is playing its trump card – and we'll see if the President has anything up his sleeve to beat it.

In an effort to stay out of a major mess that could get far messier, the White House is up against not only the Israel lobby, the McCain brigade, and powerful members of his own party, he's also swimming against the foreign policy current that dominated the previous administration – and also his own.

It was during the Bush regime's effort to save face by proclaiming “victory” at the end of the Iraq “surge” that the US decided to play the Sunni card and forge a regional coalition to block Iranian dominance of the region. That this turn ended up with the US and Al Qaeda on the same side in the Syrian trenches is hardly surprising – or unprecedented. Bin Laden's legions fought in the Kosovo war on the side of their Kosovar Muslim brothers and NATO: many present day jihadists are veterans of that conflict, just as they are veterans of Afghanistan, Libya, and Chechnya – all regions where the jihadists and the Americans are de facto allies. In the Balkans, we used them to block Russian influence in Europe: in Syria, we are using them to run interference with the Iranians. In resisting – at least publicly – the call to intervene more visibly, this President is contravening the trajectory of American policy in the region – and the US ship of state, an enormous and therefore unwieldy vessel, is not so easily turned around. It has a momentum all its own.

The White House has been besieged by the “humanitarian” interventionist crowd – by Democrats, including, in Congress, Carl Levin, Robert Menendez, and Dianne Feinstein – to “do something” in Syria, while the Republican hawks swirling around John McCain have been howling for a “no fly zone” and military aid to the rebels. Of course, the American people oppose us getting involved in the Syrian imbroglio, but they don't count: the gaggle of foreign lobbyists and laptop bombardiers who rule Washington are, as usual, the only voices being heard.

Who will channel the populist wisdom of the war-weary and too-often-lied-to American people? While the warlords of Washington are merrily planning yet another war to benefit Israel based on lying “evidence” of WMD, where are all these supposed Republican “isolationists” we've been hearing so much about? Put up, or shut up, fellas.