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Saudi Arabia and Israel Try To Derail Nuclear Negotiations With Iran by Terrorism

By Muhammad Sahimi

November 8, 2013

Ever since Hassan Rouhani was elected Iran's President on 14 June 2013 and promised that he will lead a government of "hope and prudence," the United States' most important allies in the Middle East – Saudi Arabia and Israel – and their lobbies here have been doing their best to prevent any agreement between Iran and the Obama administration regarding Iran's nuclear program. Israel and its lobby in the United States have succeeded in persuading Washington to impose the most crippling economic sanctions on Iran, disrupting and threatening the lives of tens of millions of ordinary Iranians. But that has not been enough for Israel. It wants Iran to surrender its national sovereignty and its rights under Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty that gives Iran the right to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Thus, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been on an increasingly desperate diplomatic offensive to "prove" that Iran is not sincere in its effort to reach a nuclear agreement. After cynically calling the efforts by Iran's new administration "a charm offensive;" referring to President Rouhani "a wolf in sheep's clothing;" mentioning Iran 70 times and Rouhani – not Mr. Rouhani or President Rouhani – 25 times in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly meeting (while barely mentioning Israel's war on the Palestinians); foolishly becoming an advocate of "democracy" for the Iranian people by declaring that if the Iranian youth were free, they would wear jeans and listen to Western music – which created a huge backlash by the

Iranians (see here, here, and here), telling Netanyahu to first address democracy for the Palestinian people – and repeating his absurd claim that "Iran is preparing for another Holocaust," Netanyahu threatened once again that if forced to, Israel will attack Iran alone.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has also let the world know that it is angry at the Obama administration for not attacking Syria, for imposing military sanctions on the military junta in Egypt even though they are insignificant, and for trying to reach a diplomatic resolution of the standoff over Iran's nuclear program. Never mind that Secretary of State John Kerry just said the other day that "Egyptians are following the right path." This is a path that was paved by the junta overthrowing Egypt's democratically-elected government and President Mohamed Morsi. Never mind that President Obama changed his mind about attacking Syria after the huge worldwide backlash against his threats of military attacks.

The opposition to U.S.-Iran rapprochement by Saudi Arabia and Israel, and the support of the former for the most extreme forces in Syria that have committed countless number of atrocities, have brought to the fore the real axis of evil consisting of Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the War Party in the United States, as opposed to George W. Bush's bogus "axis of evil." The same Saudi Arabia that has always supposedly been the grand marshal of defending the rights of the oppressed Palestinian people, has now made an "unholy alliance" with Israel, ignoring the fact that much of Israel's saber rattling over Iran's nonexistent nuclear weapon program is for distracting attention from the fact that it continues to devour the Palestinians' lands, water, and other natural resources, and has made practically impossible the two-state solution for the problem.

The second round of negotiations between Iran and P5+1 – the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany – began on Thursday November 7 in Geneva, and the initial reports have indicated that progress has been made. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has even declared that the main framework for a long-term agreement may be reached during the two days of negotiations between the two parties. That is not the news that Israel and Saudi Arabia want to hear.

Thus, in addition to pressuring the Obama administration through their lobbies in Washington, another way of derailing the negotiations and killing any potential agreement between Iran and the U.S. that the unholy alliance has put in place is provoking Iran's hardliners that are deeply suspicious of the West and oppose any rapprochement with the U.S. The hardliners have made their opposition clear, with the latest manifestation of which being the demonstrations that they staged in front of the former U.S. embassy in Tehran on Monday on the 34th anniversary of the hostage crisis. And the best way to provoke Iranian hardliners is by terrorist attacks inside Iran, although such attacks are nothing new.

The United States and its allies have been trying for decades to destabilize Iran by supporting small groups among Iran's ethnic minorities that have secessionist tendencies and have been carrying out terrorist attacks inside Iran. These groups include Jundallah, a Sunni extremist group that operated from Pakistan and for years carried out many terrorist attacks in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province on the border with Pakistan. Another group is the Kurdish Party of Free Life of Kurdistan, known as PJAK, the Iranian branch of the Kurdistan Workers Party –

usually referred to as PKK – in Turkey that has been listed as a terrorist group by both the European Union and the US PJAK is a secular group. A third group consists of Iranian Arabs in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan in southwest Iran, which is widely believed to be supported by Britain.

As the author described in detail in October 2009, Jundallah was supported for years by the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Then, in December 2009 Selig Harrison of Center for International Policy reported in the *New York Times* that the George W. Bush administration provided support to Jundallah through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate – the infamous ISI – and to PJAK through CIA and Israel's Mossad, which has had long-term relations with the Kurds in both Iraq and Iran. Documents released by WikiLeaks in November 2010 indicated that Israel has tried to use Kurdish dissidents against Iran. Then, in an important article in January 2012 Mark Perry described how Israeli Mossad agents posed as American spies to recruit members of the terrorist organization Jundallah to fight their covert war against Iran.

In February 2010, Iran arrested Jundallah's leader Abdolmalek Riggi, and executed him in June 2010. A month earlier, Iran had executed his brother, Abdolhamid Rigggi. The two executions were severe blow to Jundallah. Then, another Riggi, Abdolrauf Riggi, took over the leadership of Jundallah, but he was arrested by Pakistan in December 2010. Execution of the Riggis, the arrest of the third one, and lack of popular support due to ruthless tactics, such as beheading of Iran's border guards, and revelations about foreign support for the group, eventually led to the demise of Jundallah. But, while the Iranian branch of the group formally disappeared (its Pakistani branch still operates within Pakistan, attacking Shiites), its offshoots have emerged and are just as brutal and deadly, and supported by the same foreign powers. This became abundantly clear in the latest terrorist attacks on Iran.

The latest terrorist attacks on Iran occurred on October 25, perfectly timed in advance of the Geneva negotiations. The Sunni terrorist group, Jaish al-adl (army of justice), attacked Iran from Pakistan, killing 14 Iranian border guards (12 of whom were conscripts), wounding six, and taking three guards as hostage. Jaish al-adl is a Salafi group, of the same type as those fighting in Syria against Syrian government and supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In an apparent retaliation, Iran executed 16 prisoners, although the Iranian government claimed that the sixteen, at least half of whom were members of the terrorist groups, had already received death sentences, but their sentences had not been carried out under a deal whereby in return for not executing them, their groups will not carry out any terrorist operations. Jaish al-adl has carried out many attacks in Iran; see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). The statement that the group issued after its most recent attack has striking similarities with those of extremist Sunni group in Syria. In fact, in its statement Jaish al-adl declared that the attacks were in retaliation for alleged Iranian "massacre" in Syria and the "cruel treatment" of Sunnis in Iran. In addition, its flag and its style of attacks are very similar to those of al-Qaeda in Iraq, the terrorist group that is deeply involved in fighting in Syria. Similar to all other Sunni extremist groups, Jaish al-adl uses children in its operations, and carries out suicide bombing. Interestingly, no Western nation, including the United States, condemned the terrorist attacks. On November 7 the public prosecutor in city of Zabol in Sistan was assassinated, and for which Jaish al-adl took responsibility.

Jaish al-adl is led by Abdolrahim Mollazadeh, although he uses the pseudonym Salaheddin Faroughi. He was a prominent member of Jundallah. His brother, Abdolmalek Mollazadeh, was executed in January 2012 by the Iranian government, after he was arrested and charged with the assassination of a local Sunni leader, Molavi Mostafa Jangizehi, who had worked with the government and its paramilitary group, the Basij. After 12 other people were arrested in April 2012 in connection with the assassination, Mollazadeh fled Iran and moved to Pakistan, where he set up Jaish al-adl. Jaish al adl's spokesman is Mohsen Mohammadi. Its first terrorist operation occurred in August 2012.

Jaish al-adl operates in a far more sophisticated manner than did Jundallah. It has a Facebook page (although it was recently blocked), and issues its statements not just in Farsi, but also in Arabic, English and other languages, in an apparent effort to put itself within the global movement of the Sunni groups. It has three military branches, named after three of its prominent "martyrs," including Abdolmalek Mollazadeh. Based on its various statements since its first operation in 2012 and what has been reported in the Iranian press, it is estimated that Jaish al-adl has killed at least between 100-150 military personnel and policemen in Sistan and Baluchestan.

There is another Sunni terrorist group in Iran in the same province of Sistan and Baluchestan, called Harakat Ansar Iran (HAI). It too has carried out many terrorist attacks in Iran; see here and here, for example. HAI also works with a Sunni extremist group, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, which currently operates under a new name, Ahlesunnat wal Jamaat, an anti-Shiite group that has been waging a low-intensity war in Pakistan for decades, and has murdered thousands of Shiites.

Both Jaish al-adl and HAI are offshoots of Jundallah. Although its current leader is Abu Yasir Muskootani, HAI still considers Abdolmalek Riggi as its "Amir" (religious/political leader). As mentioned earlier, Mollazadeh was a prominent member of Jundallah. HAI has declared that its aim is to "liberate" Iran and set up a government run based on the Sharia. Its emblem has striking similarities with that of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Since August, PJAK has been attacking Iran's military, hence ending the unofficial ceasefire that it had with Iran for some time. After executing the sixteen prisoners in connection with Jaish al-adl attacks, Iran also executed two people that it had accused of membership in PJAK. The two had denied the allegation, although there is evidence that at least one of the two had received military training by PJAK. Both PJAK and Iran's military accuse the other side of breaking the ceasefire. PJAK's leader, Abdolrahman Haji-Ahmadi has taken the same position as Netanyahu's, warning the West that it should not be "fooled" by Rouhani.

In supporting such terrorist groups, Saudi Arabia and Israel pursue different, but complementary goals. Saudi Arabia's goal, first and foremost, is bringing the Shiite-Sunni sectarian war that it has been supporting in Syria to Iran, hence hitting it back for its support of Bashar al-Assad's regime that Saudi Arabia's-supported terrorist forces have not only not been able to topple, but are actually losing the war to. One goal of Israel is having allies that are willing to sabotage Iran's nuclear facilities, and assassinating its nuclear scientists.

Both Israel and Saudi Arabia seek to destabilize Iran and its government, keeping it tied up with internal problems. And, both hope that the terrorist attacks will provoke the hardliners in Tehran

to react strongly, retaliate militarily and, hence, not only give an excuse to the two countries and the United States to attack Iran, but also block any diplomatic resolution of the standoff over Iran's nuclear program. Thus, both President Rouhani and Obama must control their hardliners, and give diplomacy a chance.