

Elliott Abrams' Appointment as the Next U.S. Special Representative for Iran. Spells Disaster

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*The appointment of **Elliott Abrams** to replace Brian Hook as the next U.S. Special Representative for Iran is another low point for the Trump administration's disastrous policy towards Iran. The dangerous conflict resulting from Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement will be exacerbated by a man committed to Washington's failed policies of regime change, including in his present-day position as Trump's representative for Venezuela.*

Elliott Abrams has made a career of lying and committing criminal acts that have led to the death and suffering of innocent people from Guatemala to Iraq. He embraces militarism, covers up for gross human rights abuses, and has a history of supporting authoritarian regimes.

Abrams' resume includes:

- In the 1980s, he defended the infamous Guatemalan General Efraín Ríos Montt, whose violent crackdown on the indigenous Ixil Mayan people of Guatemala was so brutal that it was classified as genocide by the United Nations.
- He denied that the Salvadoran military was responsible for the devastating El Mozote massacre where, in 1981, a U.S.-trained battalion murdered more than 500 civilians, slitting the throats of children along the way. Not only did Abrams deny the massacre and push for continued US support for the notoriously brutal Salvadoran government, but he even claimed in a 1994 interview that "the U.S. administration's record in El Salvador is one of fabulous achievement."
- He is vehemently anti-Palestinian and shamelessly supports Israel. As George Bush's aide on the National Security Council, Abrams did everything he could to thwart peace negotiations. He repeatedly undercut any U.S. pressure on Israel to stop the building of settlements and cited the Holocaust as justification for Israel's killings of Palestinians (Jews are "a people who had learned from history what happens to Jews without security"). In 2015, he applauded then-Speaker John Boehner's decision to invite Netanyahu to address Congress without the approval of President Obama. He lauds Evangelical descriptions of Israel such as the belief that "Israel is connected to the idea that God favors and protects Americans."
- In 1991, Abrams pled guilty to withholding information from Congress related to his involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal, the secret and illegal scam in the 1980s to siphon profits from Iranian weapons sales to support the right-wing Contra rebels trying to overthrow the Sandinista government.
- Abrams was a key supporter of the disastrous invasion of Iraq. In 1998, he

submitted a letter to President Clinton encouraging him to depose Saddam Hussein. As Deputy National Security Advisor for Global Democracy Strategy during George W. Bush's second term, Abrams was in charge of promoting Bush's strategy of "advancing democracy abroad."

- Abrams championed the U.S. overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, echoing the tactics used by the neocons for intervention in Iraq.
- Abrams' opposition to the Iran Nuclear Deal is epitomized by his attempts to encourage Israel to bomb Iran's nuclear sites before negotiations became too serious. He expressed concern that Israel's capacity to impede the deal was "already being narrowed considerably by the diplomatic thaw, because it is one thing to bomb Iran when it appears hopelessly recalcitrant and isolated and quite another to bomb it when much of the world — especially the United States — is optimistic about the prospect of talks."
- In January 2019, Abrams was appointed to be the U.S. Special Representative for Venezuela, and used his position to support an attempted coup, quash diplomatic talks, and increase brutal sanctions, even during the pandemic.

Abrams has now been appointed as the U.S. envoy for Iran, managing a situation that is already a tinderbox, with the Iranian people suffering immensely from U.S. sanctions. Rather than receiving this new position, Elliott Abrams should be barred for life from government positions and recognized as the war criminal that he is.

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Michel Chossudovsky

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