

Demonizing Iran: Mainstream Media Madness and US-Israeli-Saudi ‘Behavior’ Problems

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There is a madness in how the mainstream U.S. media presents the world to the American people, a delusional perspective that arguably creates an existential threat to humanity’s survival. We have seen this pattern in the biased depiction of [the Ukraine crisis](#) and now in how Official Washington is framing the debate over the Iranian nuclear agreement.

In this American land of make-believe, Iran is assailed as the chief instigator of instability in the Middle East. Yet, any sane and informed person would dispute that assessment, noting the far greater contributions made by Israel, Saudi Arabia and, indeed, the United States.

Israel’s belligerence, including frequently attacking its Arab neighbors and brutally repressing the Palestinians, has roiled the region for almost 70 years. Not to mention that Israel is a rogue nuclear state that has been hiding a sophisticated atomic-bomb arsenal.

An objective observer also would note that Saudi Arabia has been investing its oil wealth for generations to advance the fundamentalist Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam, which has inspired terrorist groups from Al Qaeda to the Islamic State. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 were identified as Saudis and the U.S. government is still concealing those 28 pages of the congressional 9/11 inquiry regarding Saudi financing of Al Qaeda terrorists.

The Saudis also have participated directly and indirectly in regional wars, including encouragement of Iraq’s invasion of Iran in 1980, support for Al Qaeda-affiliate Nusra Front’s subversion of Syria, and the current Saudi bombardment of Yemen, killing hundreds of civilians, touching off a humanitarian crisis and helping Al Qaeda’s Yemeni affiliate expand its territory.

U.S. Meddling

Then there’s the United States, which has been meddling in the Middle East overtly and covertly for a very long time, including one of the CIA’s first covert operations, the overthrow of Iran’s elected government in 1953, and one of U.S. foreign policy’s biggest overt blunders, President George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The Iran coup engendered a deep-seated hatred and suspicion of the U.S. government among Iranians that extends to the present day. And, the Iraq invasion not only spread death and destruction across Iraq but has spilled over into Syria, where U.S. “allies” – Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Israel – have been seeking another “regime change” that is

being spearheaded by Sunni terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda's Nusra Front and the Islamic State.

The U.S. government has further aided in the destabilization of the region by flooding U.S. "allies" with powerful military equipment, including aircraft that both Israel and Saudi Arabia have used to bomb neighboring countries.

Yet, in the fantasy land that is Official Washington, the politicians and pundits decry "Iranian aggression," [parroted the propaganda theme](#) dictated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he spoke before an adoring audience of senators and congressmen at a joint session of Congress on March 3.

This Iranian "bad behavior" includes helping the Iraqi government withstand brutal attacks by the Islamic State and assisting the Syrian government in blocking a major victory for Islamic terrorism that would follow the fall of Damascus. Iran is also being blamed for the Houthi uprising in Yemen although most informed observers believe the Iranian influence and assistance are minimal.

In other words, the neoconservatives who dominate Official Washington's "group think" may detest Iran's regional activities since they are not in line with Israeli (and Saudi) desires, but less ideological analysts might conclude that - on balance - Iran is contributing to the stability of the region or at least helping to avert the worst outcomes.

A Lost Mind

The question becomes: Has Official Washington so lost its collective mind that it actually favors Al Qaeda or the Islamic State raising the black flag of Islamic terrorism over Damascus and even Baghdad? Is Iranian assistance in averting such a calamity such a terrible thing?

Apparently yes. Here's how The Washington Post's foreign affairs honcho David Ignatius - in a column entitled "Will Tehran Behave?" - [describes](#) the geopolitical situation following Tuesday's signing of a deal to tightly constrain Iran's nuclear program in exchange for lifting sanctions:

"The problem isn't the agreement but Iran itself. Its behavior remains defiantly belligerent, even as it signs an accord pledging to be peaceful. Its operatives subvert neighboring regimes, even as their front companies are about to be removed from the sanctions lists. The agreement welcomes Iran to the community of nations, even though its leader proclaims that Iran is a revolutionary cause.

"Obama argues that dealing with a menacing Iran will be easier if the nuclear issue is off the table for the next 10 years. He's probably right, but the Iran problem won't vanish with this accord. Iranian behavior in the region becomes the core issue. Having played the dealmaker, Obama must now press Iran to become a more responsible neighbor."

By the way, I always thought that the United States proclaimed itself "a revolutionary cause." But here is Ignatius, who is regarded as a "big thinker," setting the parameters of the acceptable debate about the Iran nuclear deal. It's all about Iran's "behavior."

Ignatius even quotes Netanyahu decrying the danger that, after 10 years, the agreement will give Iran “a sure path to nuclear weapons.” Of course, Ignatius doesn’t bother to note that Israel already has taken its own path to nuclear weapons. That context is almost never mentioned.

Nor does Ignatius admit how he and many of his fellow pundits supported Bush’s invasion of Iraq, which in a normal, parallel universe would disqualify Ignatius and his friends from lecturing anyone about how to “behave.” But in today’s Official Washington, a pre-war endorsement of the Iraq disaster is not a disqualifier but a prerequisite for being taken seriously.

Similarly, The Washington Post’s editorial page, which in 2002-03 eagerly backed Bush’s invasion and routinely asserted as flat fact that Iraq possessed hidden WMD stockpiles, now [says](#) the real risk in the Iran deal is, you guessed it, “Iranian behavior.”

The Post says the deal could unleash “a dangerous threshold nuclear state that poses a major threat to the United States and its allies.” And, the Post warns that Iran’s “leaders will probably use” the money from the sanctions relief “to finance wars and terrorist groups in Iraq, Syria, the Gaza Strip, Yemen and elsewhere.”

Step into Crazy Land

Again, to appreciate the Post’s thinking, you have to step into crazy land. In the real Iraq and the real Syria, the Iranians are supporting internationally recognized governments battling *against* terrorist groups, Al Qaeda’s affiliate and the Islamic State.

In Yemen, Iranian involvement is probably minor at most. Plus, the Houthis are not a terrorist group, but rather an indigenous popular movement that has been fighting Al Qaeda’s terrorist affiliate in Yemen.

While it’s not clear what the Post thinks that Iran is doing in the Gaza Strip, which is under a tight Israeli military blockade, only fully committed neocons would think that the long-suffering people of the Gaza Strip don’t deserve some outside help.

Still, the larger issue for the American people is what to do with this insane political-media system that dominates Official Washington. Either these powers-that-be are detached from reality or they are deceitful propagandists who think they can manipulate us with lies and distortions.

Yet, by creating a false reality, whether from madness or cynicism, this system guides the nation into terrible decision-making. And, given the immense military power of the United States, this long national detour into a dark psychosis of delusion must be addressed or the future of humankind will be put into serious jeopardy.

Investigative reporter Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories for The Associated Press and Newsweek in the 1980s. You can buy his latest book, America’s Stolen Narrative, either in [print here](#) or as an e-book (from [Amazon](#) and [barnesandnoble.com](#)). You also can order Robert Parry’s trilogy on the Bush Family and its connections to various right-wing operatives for only \$34. The trilogy includes America’s Stolen Narrative. For details on this offer, [click here](#).

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