

# Drugs, Guns and Nukes: Iran as the New ‘Dope, Incorporated’

By [Tom Burghardt](#)

Global Research, March 18, 2012

[Antifascist Calling...](#) 18 March 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

How many memes does it take to stitch-up a war?

As Israel, the United States and their NATO allies set their sights on the “prize,” Iran’s vast petrochemical wealth, multiple themes have been floated by corporate media to make the case for war.

Since the 1980s, nuclear proliferation, terrorism and now, according to the Treasury Department, Iran’s alleged [links](#) to global narcotrafficking networks have all been evoked as clarion calls for “regime change.” It would serve us well however, to explore the recent history of the secret state’s reliance upon the illicit trade and how such dalliances advance America’s wider geopolitical goals.

## **Contras and Kosovars: CIA Shadow Wars**

In the 1980s, it was the Sandinistas and “Castro-Communism” who did nicely for the Reagan administration. As money and weapons flowed to “our boys,” the Contras, they repaid the favor by massacring Nicaraguans by the tens of thousands for Uncle Sam while generously providing cocaine *by the ton*, to party-happy Americans during that “go-go” decade.

Indeed, when Colombian drug lords Jorge Ochoa and Pablo Escobar began their profitable partnership, they did so alongside dope-dealing Bolivian fascists and Argentine neo-Nazi generals with long-standing ties to the CIA. As [Consortium News](#) revealed: “The putsch, which became known as the Cocaine Coup, installed [Luis] García Meza and other drug-connected military officers who promptly turned Bolivia into South America’s first modern narco-state. The secure supply of Bolivian cocaine was important to the development of the Medellín cartel in the early 1980s.”

In fact, it was Bolivian drug lord Roberto Suárez Gómez who financed the coup. With close ties to Pinochet’s regime in Chile and Argentina’s death squad generals, Suárez was a fixture amongst far-right international circles who generously distributed funds to South American affiliates of the Nazi-tainted World Anti-Communist League (WACL).

When WACL was founded in 1966 in Taipei as the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League (APACL), it first functioned as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the governments of Taiwan under dictator Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist narcocracy and the Republic of Korea, then under the iron rule of American ally, Park Chung Hee.

Amongst other notable members who founded WACL were Yoshio Kodama and Ryiochi Sasakawa, Class-A Japanese war criminals and fascists who were top leaders of post-war

*yakuza* crime syndicates. Both men were billionaires whose wealth derived from control over Asian drug, gambling and prostitution rackets. Imprisoned in 1945 for war crimes Sasakawa, along with Kodama and future Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, was saved from the gallows and released from prison in 1948, a result of his OSS-CIA connections. He once proudly stated: "I am the world's richest fascist." Both Kodama and Sasakawa operated alongside old "China hands" such as Paul Helliwell, who created CIA front companies linked to the drug traffic, Bangkok-based Sea Supply Corporation and the Taiwanese airline Civil Air Transport.

Indeed, it was none other than Sasakawa, the power behind the throne of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, who provided major funding for Reverend Sun Myung Moon's intelligence-connected [Unification Church](#), and WACL, key actors in Bolivia's Cocaine Coup, facts you're not likely to read in the Moon-owned *Washington Times*.

As analyst Peter Dale Scott wrote for [Variant](#) magazine, "In the post-war years, when the drug-financed China Lobby was strong in Washington, and the U.S. shipped arms and Chinese Nationalist troops into eastern Burma, opium production in that remote region increased almost five-fold in fifteen years, from less than 80 to 300-400 tons a year. Production doubled again in the 1960s, the heyday of the Kuomintang-CIA alliance in Southeast Asia." In his most recent book, Scott noted:

The members of Helliwell's small OSS detachment in Kunming (Helliwell, [E. Howard] Hunt, Ray Cline, Lucien Conein, and Mitchell WerBell) cast a long shadow over both postwar intelligence-drug triarchies and the WACL's history. In addition to Helliwell's support for KMT drug traffickers in Burma and Hunt's contribution in Mexico, APACL's formation is said to have owed a large debt to Ray Cline. In the late 1970s John Singlaub, another veteran of Kunming, took over the WACL. Lucien Conein became a case officer of the Vietnamese officials overseeing anticommunist drug networks, first Ngo Dinh Nhu and later police chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan. Mitchell WerBell, who went on to develop small arms for intelligence services like the [Mexican] DFS, was also involved with WACL death squad patrons ... and was eventually indicted himself on drug charges. (Peter Dale Scott, [American War Machine](#), Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, pp. 52-53)

Shortly after WACL's formation, the organization was joined by representatives of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, an unsavory cabal of war criminals and Nazi collaborators led by Yaroslav Stetsko. When German armies invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Stetsko, then the leader of the collaborationist Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists proclaimed the founding of a Ukrainian quisling state allied with the Third Reich. In the "Act of Proclamation of Ukrainian Statehood," Stetsko declared that Ukraine "will closely cooperate with the National-Socialist Greater Germany, under the leadership of its leader Adolf Hitler which is forming a new order in Europe and the world." After the war, Stetsko and his cohorts fled Europe along the Vatican's infamous "ratlines" and took up the anticommunist cudgel for the United States while working alongside European and Latin American fascists connected to global drug networks.

As the corrupt García Meza regime consolidated power, they butchered leftists, peasants and union organizers and were assisted by Argentine "dirty war" specialists, CIA asset and escaped Nazi war criminal, Klaus Barbie and a motley crew of far-right terrorists. It was a thoroughly international affair. Fresh from fomenting bloodshed in Italy, Stefano Delle Chiaie, the architect of the 1980 Bologna railway station bombing which killed 85, a hard core Nazi with operational links to both the CIA and NATO's Gladio network, put his unique

“skills” to use building up the global drug trade and exporting terror into Central America. As left-wing researcher Stuart Christie documented:

One of the Delle Chiaie organisers in Latin America, West German Joachim Fiebelkorn (born 1947), a Paladin and Kampfbund Deutscher Soldaten veteran, as well as a Frankfurt pimp, who had worked with Delle Chiaie in Bolivia, stated later to the West German police that Delle Chiaie was the number one international middleman between the Sicilian Mafia and the Latin American cocaine producers. Based in a police barracks next to the West German Embassy in the capital, La Paz, the Delle Chiaie men, Los Novios de la Muerte-‘The Fiancés of Death’-as they called themselves, were contracted as security guards and enforcers for the multinational drug empire of Roberto Suárez, described as the ‘King of Coca,’ overseeing the production, transportation, distribution and marketing of cocaine. (Stuart Christie, [Stefano Delle Chiaie: Portrait of a Black Terrorist](#), London, Anarchy Magazine/Refract Publications, 1984)

Investigative journalists Marta Gurvich and Robert Parry reported that “many of the Argentine intelligence officers who assisted in the Cocaine Coup followed up their victory in Bolivia by moving northward into Central America to train a ragtag force of Nicaraguan contras.” By “1981,” Gurvich and Parry wrote, “President Reagan formally authorized the CIA to collaborate with the Argentine intelligence services in building up the contra army.”

Under the stewardship of CIA Director William Casey, the Company did more than just watch from the sidelines. With a wink-and-a-nod from the Reagan White House, they concluded that the Medellín Cartel, as they had earlier with Asian drug mafias, could be used to help defeat communism in Latin America. Together with the far-larger Cali Cartel, run by the enterprising Rodríguez Orejuela brothers, they did just that. It was estimated at the time that the CIA’s underworld “friends” made up to \$60 million per month; chump change by today’s standards, but with the Sandinistas out of power by 1990, relations with Pablo Escobar soured.

In fact, as the *National Security Archive* revealed in previously [classified documents](#), when Escobar was run to ground “key evidence” linked “the U.S.-Colombia task force charged with tracking down [the] fugitive ... to one of Colombia’s most notorious paramilitary chiefs.” According to the *Archive*, “The affair sparked a special CIA investigation into whether U.S. intelligence was shared with Colombian terrorists and narcotraffickers every bit as dangerous as Escobar himself.” They had; a pattern that persists today as can readily be seen in the U.S. “war” against Mexico’s powerful Cartels.

As we now know, this great drug war “victory” in practice favored one corrupt Colombian faction over another with no discernible effects on the ground. Indeed, as [Narco News](#) reported, a leaked [classified document](#) written by Department of Justice attorney Thomas M. Kent “claims that federal agents with the Drug Enforcement Administration’s office in Bogotá, Colombia, are the corrupt players in the war on drugs.”

“Kent’s memorandum,” journalist Bill Conroy disclosed, “contains some of the most serious allegations ever raised against U.S. antinarcotics officers: that DEA agents on the front lines of the drug war in Colombia are on drug traffickers’ payrolls, complicit in the murders of informants who knew too much, and, most startlingly, directly involved in helping Colombia’s infamous rightwing paramilitary death squads to launder drug money.”

“The memo further claims that, rather than being simply a few ‘bad apples’ who need to be

reported to their superiors, these allegedly dirty agents are being protected by an ongoing cover-up orchestrated by ‘watchdog’ agencies within the Justice Department,” Conroy wrote.

This was hardly an aberration but rather, emblematic of the corrupt nature of official U.S. policies going back decades. As we learned in the late 1990s, largely as a result of public outrage generated by the late Gary Webb’s [Dark Alliance](#) series, a secret [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between Reagan’s Justice Department and the Agency came to light. That 1982 memo legally freed the CIA from reporting drug smuggling and other crimes committed by their assets; a point to keep in mind when we explore U.S. allegations of corruption by top Iranian officials below.

Were these Cold War anomalies? Hardly.

When the “Great Triangulator” Bill Clinton took the helm in 1993, it was Slobodan Milošević who reprised the role of the century as Europe’s “new Hitler.” With the Cold War over, the Soviet “menace” a fleeting image in the rearview mirror, and with neoliberal economic “reforms” all the rage, America began its eastward expansion of NATO into the former Eastern Bloc. Yugoslavia, deemed an historical anachronism had to go, and so it did.

Never mind that before occupying the Oval Office, when he was governor of Arkansas Clinton deep-sixed investigations into illicit operations by legendary CIA drug pilot and DEA snitch [Barry Seal](#). Indeed, Seal and his cohorts, as well-documented, flew vast quantities of drugs into Mena Airport for the Medellín Cartel in “protected” drug operations that helped fund the Nicaraguan Contras, as investigative journalist Daniel Hopsicker reported for [The Washington Weekly](#) back in 1997.

Recapitulating a modus operandi which the secret state has relied upon since the end of World War Two, first in Asia and then globally, far-right political and religious extremists and drug trafficking organizations with ties to Western intelligence began working their magic in the Balkans.

Across the Atlantic, while the media obsessed over stains on Monica Lewinsky’s infamous blue dress, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia was in full-swing. America and Germany’s close allies, the secessionist Bosnian government under Alija Izetbegović, a darling of Western “humanitarian interventionists,” an Islamist fraudster who had expressed sympathies for the 13th Waffen SS Handschar Division during the war, which earned him a stint in a Yugoslav prison, provided thousands of veteran Afghan-Arab fighters passports and guns to help “liberate” Bosnia. As with NATO’s current “regime change” ops in Libya and Syria, Salafist jihadis aligned with a CIA shadow army which morphed into Al Qaeda, the “database,” poured into the region.

While Osama Bin Laden’s minions wrecked havoc in Bosnia, merrily butchering Jews, Roma and Serbs whilst establishing Saudi-financed Wahhabist “charities,” later in the decade they gained *entrée* into Kosovo where they joined NATO’s newest “best friends forever,” the Kosovo Liberation Army. Ruled with iron fists by gangsters Hashim Thaçi, Agim Çeku and Ramush Haradinaj, the KLA, aligned with Italian Mafiosi and Turkish crime bosses and ran highly-profitable heroin and prostitution rackets across Europe.

In 1999, [The Montreal Gazette](#) published an exposé reporting that “Kosovar Albanian rebels were linked to drugs by narcotics experts in Europe as early as 1994, while U.S. authorities

warned in 1996 that Kosovars were smuggling large amounts of weapons and drugs. Police in various Western nations also noted the rising proportion of heroin being shipped to their countries through the Balkans, and the rise in crime and overdose deaths that accompanied the drug.”

Michael Levine, a 25-year DEA veteran and whistleblower who currently co-hosts [The Expert Witness Radio Show](#), told the *Gazette* there was “no question” that American secret state agencies knew about the KLA’s drug ties.

“They (the CIA) protected them (the KLA) in every way they could,” Levine said. “As long as the CIA is protecting the KLA, you’ve got major drug pipelines protected from any police investigation.”

Writing for the [Covert Action Quarterly](#), analyst Michel Chossudovsky reported that “While KLA leaders were shaking hands with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at Rambouillet, Europol (the European Police Organization based in The Hague) was ‘preparing a report for European interior and justice ministers on a connection between the KLA and Albanian drug gangs’.”

“In order to thrive,” Chossudovsky averred, “the criminal syndicates involved in the Balkans narcotics trade need friends in high places. Smuggling rings with alleged links to the Turkish State are said to control the trafficking of heroin through the Balkans ‘cooperating closely with other groups with which they have political or religious ties’ including criminal groups in Albanian and Kosovo. In this new global financial environment, powerful undercover political lobbies connected to organized crime cultivate links to prominent political figures and officials of the military and intelligence establishment.”

Following NATO’s 78-day bombing campaign, a template for today’s State Department-fomented “humanitarian interventions,” the former socialist Yugoslavia lay in ruins, the KLA had their narco-state and the Pentagon had Camp Bondsteel. By 2000, Thaçi’s “boys” had pushed aside Turkish and Italian mobsters and took control of the lucrative [Balkan heroin pipeline](#) and [harvested human organs](#) for sale on the international black market.

It was a victory all around.

We should keep Chossudovsky’s point in mind today, as “undercover political lobbies” such as the terrorist Mojahedin e-Khalq (MEK) and their various fronts such as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) “cultivate links to prominent political figures and officials of the military and intelligence establishment,” showering U.S. politicians and military elites with millions of dollars in “speaking fees” from unknown sources as [The Christian Science Monitor](#) exposed.

### **The New ‘Heroin Connection’**

If the prospect of a “nuclear-armed” Iran isn’t enough to send red-blooded, God-fearin’ Americans into a tizzy, then consider this zinger from [RFE/RL](#): “U.S. Says Iranian General Instrumental In Afghan Drug Traffic.”

That’s right, the CIA’s former propaganda mouthpiece Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, smelling blood in the water and itching for a fight, informed us last week that the Obama administration “has named a general in Iran’s elite Al-Quds force as a key figure in

trafficking heroin from Afghanistan.”

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, “General General Gholamreza Baghbani, who runs the Revolutionary Guards’ Quds Force office in Zahedan,” has been designated a “narcotics kingpin.”

We’re told that Baghbani has been accused “of aiding Afghan drug runners in moving opiates into and through Iran, as well helping send weapons to the Taliban.”

Guns in, drugs out; while it has a familiar ring to it, are we talking about Iran or NATO’s Central Asian outpost, Afghanistan?

According to a 1998 timeline inserted into the [Congressional Record](#) during the mark-up for the 1999 Intelligence Authorization Act we read the following:

Soviet-backed coup in Afghanistan sets stage for explosive growth in Southwest Asian heroin trade. New Marxist regime undertakes vigorous anti-narcotics campaign aimed at suppressing poppy production, triggering a revolt by semi-autonomous tribal groups that traditionally raised opium for export. The CIA-supported rebel Mujahedeen begins expanding production to finance their insurgency. Between 1982 and 1989, during which time the CIA ships billions of dollars in weapons and other aid to guerrilla forces, annual opium production in Afghanistan increases to about 800 tons from 250 tons. By 1986, the State Department admits that Afghanistan is ‘probably the world’s largest producer of opium for export’ and ‘the poppy source for a majority of the Southwest Asian heroin found in the United States.’ U.S. officials, however, fail to take action to curb production. Their silence not only serves to maintain public support for the Mujahedeen, it also smooths relations with Pakistan, whose leaders, deeply implicated in the heroin trade, help channel CIA support to the Afghan rebels.

Since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion that pattern has been repeated. Afghan opium and heroin production has skyrocketed, primarily because NATO forces have aligned themselves, and propped up, those responsible for the dramatic rise in poppy cultivation: Hamid Karzai’s warlord-infested narco-state. But rather than pointing a finger at the source of what amount to *protected* drug rackets—the CIA and NATO-RFE/RL and their media accomplices are stitching-up the Islamic Republic for a fall. One more reason then, for launching a preemptive war.

But Iranian officials have charged that opium and heroin production in Afghanistan have had a severe impact inside Iran and, like Russia, have accused the U.S. of turning a blind eye when it comes to fighting opium production. Indeed, Sergei Blagov reported for [ISN Security Watch](#) that “Russia’s top officials have described the situation as ‘narco-aggression’ against Russia and a new ‘opium war’.”

“The Russian press,” Blagov wrote, “has been even less diplomatic, claiming that US and NATO forces were directly involved in the drug trade. Russian media outlets allege that the bulk of the drugs produced in Afghanistan’s southern and western provinces are shipped abroad on US planes.”

Commenting on the “creative destruction” wrought by NATO, former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, wrote in [The Daily Mail](#) that the West’s “economic achievement in Afghanistan goes well beyond the simple production of raw opium. In fact Afghanistan no

longer exports much raw opium at all. It has succeeded in what our international aid efforts urge every developing country to do. Afghanistan has gone into manufacturing and 'value-added' operations."

According to Murray, facts clearly established by multiple law enforcement agencies, Afghanistan "now exports not opium, but heroin. Opium is converted into heroin on an industrial scale, not in kitchens but in factories. Millions of gallons of the chemicals needed for this process are shipped into Afghanistan by tanker. The tankers and bulk opium lorries on the way to the factories share the roads, improved by American aid, with Nato troops."

"How can this have happened, and on this scale?" Murray wonders. "The answer is simple. The four largest players in the heroin business are all senior members of the Afghan government—the government that our soldiers are fighting and dying to protect."

But let's not let anything as inconvenient as facts get in the way of stopping Qom's "new Hitlers"!

Far from being complicit in the drug trade, as [Reuters](#) reported, while Iran "is a main transit route for bringing heroin and opium to Western markets from Asia ... the United Nations' top anti-drugs official in Tehran praised the country for its efforts in stopping traffickers and seizing narcotics."

"Definitely drug control is one of the positive stories (from Iran)," said Roberto Arbitrio, representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)."

"This is the first country in the world in terms of opiate seizures," he told the news agency in an interview, referring to opium, morphine and heroin. "Last year it was 300 tons."

If ubiquitous facts on the ground speak volumes then, as *Reuters* disclosed, "Iran's campaign was showing results with the country seizing an estimated 20-40 percent of trafficked volumes, as compared to 5-10 percent in the United States and Europe;" a telling statistic not likely to be repeated by war-hungry media in the West.

Indeed, [UNODC](#) reported last November that Iran, along with Afghanistan and Pakistan have entered into an agreement "designed to strengthen drug control among the three countries most seriously affected by Afghan opium. The initiative promotes information exchange and intelligence-led operations targeting the major transnational networks."

"All three parties," UNODC's Executive Director Yury Fedotov averred, have launched a "Triangular Initiative" that has already boosted "their cross-border counter-narcotics capacities." Tellingly, a "joint planning cell has been established in *Tehran* to enhance analytical and operational capacity and to launch joint operations." (emphasis added)

According to Fedotov, the planning and operational cell "has notched up successes. Since 2009, 12 drug control operations coordinated by the joint planning cell have resulted in the seizures of several tons of illicit drugs and the arrest of many drug traffickers."

This is certainly not the message that war planners in Washington care to hear. But what can we learn closer to home where the Obama administration has the media's ear and can exert influence over own America's benighted "War on Drugs"?

When two planes filled with nearly *ten tons* of coke were seized in Mexico, in commercial jets tricked-out to resemble those flown by the Department of Homeland Security (see Daniel Hopsicker's eye-opening [archive](#) on the story) or when the fourth largest U.S. bank, [Wachovia](#), pled guilty to laundering \$378.4 billion in drug money for Mexican drug cartels and got off with a slap on the wrist, or when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms let guns "walk" across the border, right into the hands of the CIA's favorite narco-trafficking gang, the Sinaloa Cartel as Bill Conroy over at *Narco News* exposed (see the archive [here](#)), corporate media responded with a collective yawn.

In fact, [Narco News](#) revealed in December that in an upcoming trial in Chicago of one of the Sinaloa cartel's top leaders, Jesus Vicente Zambada Niebla, federal prosecutors are seeking to bar defense evidence that U.S. government agencies, including the CIA and the DEA, had "entered into a pact with the leadership of the Mexican Sinaloa narco-trafficking organization that supposedly provide its chief narcos with immunity in exchange for them providing US authorities with information that could be used to target other narco-trafficking organizations."

Conroy disclosed that "US prosecutors do confirm in court filings that another high-level Sinaloa 'Cartel' member, Mexican attorney Loya Castro, has worked as a DEA cooperating source for some 10 years (and as recently as this year) while also working for the Sinaloa organization."

"Loya Castro, *Narco News* revealed, "acted as the intermediary representing the Sinaloa organization in its quid pro quo arrangement with the US government, Zambada Niebla's court pleadings allege." Indeed, to protect their dirty deals with Mexico's largest drug gang, a multibillion dollar enterprise whose tentacles stretch across the Americas, the "US government, in court pleadings filed in September, lodged a motion in the case seeking to invoke the Classified Information Procedures Act, or CIPA, a measure designed to assure national security information does not become public during court proceedings."

What might threaten America's "national security," pray tell?

As Daniel Hopsicker [disclosed](#) last summer, when "embattled" acting ATF director Kenneth Melson testified before Congress he refused "to go down for a program [Fast and Furious] which he had little or nothing to do with originating."

Pointing a finger at U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Melson told congressional grifters that "the evidence we have gathered raises the disturbing possibility that the Justice Department not only allowed criminals to smuggle weapons but that taxpayer dollars from other agencies may have financed those engaging in such activities."

As Hopsicker pointed out, those "shadowy other government agencies" is "the very definition of the CIA."

Hopsicker asked: "If the CIA is arming Mexican drug cartels, might they not also have been behind the otherwise-puzzling effort to supply these same drug lords with top-quality American-registered airplanes and jets?"

"Were the two now-infamous American-registered planes busted in Mexico's Yucatan carrying almost ten tons of cocaine part of this same so-far unnamed Operation behind the ATF's Operation Gunwalker?"



As we now know, at least one of the drug planes, “a Gulfstream business jet (N987SA)” Hopsicker [revealed](#), were part of a fleet of *fifty planes* purchased through money laundered by Wachovia Bank as both [Bloomberg Markets Magazine](#) and [The Observer](#) reported, at least one of which were used to transport kidnapped “terrorist” suspects on CIA “ghost flights.”

But that’s all the past, we should “look forward, not backward.” Why bother with “ancient history” when there’s a new war to gin-up?

According to the Treasury Department [press release](#), “The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force (IRGC-QF) General Gholamreza Baghbani as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). This is the first use of the Kingpin Act against an Iranian official.”

“Today’s action exposes IRGC-QF involvement in trafficking narcotics, made doubly reprehensible here because it is done as part of a broader scheme to support terrorism. Treasury will continue exposing narcotics traffickers and terrorist supporters wherever they operate,” said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen.

If Treasury Department allegations can be believed, and given Cohen’s role as Obama’s point-man for enforcing Iran sanctions the charges reek to high-heaven. “General Baghbani,” we’re told, “allowed Afghan narcotics traffickers to smuggle opiates through Iran in return for assistance. For example, Afghan narcotics traffickers moved weapons to the Taliban on behalf of Baghbani. In return, General Baghbani has helped facilitate the smuggling of heroin precursor chemicals through the Iranian border. He also helped facilitate shipments of opium into Iran.”

Jumping feet first into the fray, the right-wing [Long War Journal](#), charge that “Al Qaeda is also known to facilitate travel for its operatives moving into Afghanistan from Mashad. Al Qaeda additionally uses the eastern [Iranian] cities of Tayyebat and Zahedan to funnel its operatives into Afghanistan.”

We’re told that “several [unnamed] Taliban commanders based in western Afghanistan have stated that they have received weapons, cash, and training from Iranian forces. Taliban commanders and units train inside Iran to conduct attacks against NATO and Afghan forces. In addition, al Qaeda operatives are also known to receive support from the Ansar Corps; Mashad is a transit point for al Qaeda operatives en route to Afghanistan.”

*LWJ*’s “proof”? Why none other than a 2010 statement from disgraced ISAF commander General Stanley McCrystal, who said that “Iran is training Taliban fighters and providing them with weapons”! Case closed, right?

But as with last year’s discredited Iranian “Qods Force” plot to assassinate Saudi ambassador Adel al-Jubeir in an upscale Washington restaurant, evidence has since emerged that a key figure named in the conspiracy by failed Texas used-car salesman, Manssor Arbabsiar, alleged Iranian Revolutionary Guard officer Gholam Shakuri, has been fingered by Iranian officials and Interpol as a member of the Mojahedin e-Khalq (MEK), according to [Tehran Times](#).

[Mehr News Agency](#) reported that “Interpol has found new evidence showing that the

number two suspect in connection with the alleged Iranian government's involvement in a plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to Washington is a key member of the terrorist Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO)."

According to *Mehr*, "Gholam Shakuri was last seen in Washington and Camp Ashraf in Iraq where MKO members are based."

Citing an Interpol report, the news agency alleged that "the person in question has been travelling to different countries under the names of Ali Shakuri/Gholam Shakuri/Gholam-Hossein Shakuri by using fake passports including forged Iranian passports. One passport used by the person was issued on 30/11/2006 in Washington. The passport number was K10295631."

As with the now-discredited plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador, allegedly to be carried out in cahoots with a member of Mexico's violence-prone Zetas Cartel, who turned out to be a DEA informant, Treasury Department charges against General Gholamreza Baghbani should be taken with a grain of salt.

As journalist Gareth Porter [noted](#) in his investigation of the Arbabsiar plot, "the allegations that the Iranian-American used car salesman wanted to 'attack' the Saudi embassy and other targets rest entirely upon the testimony of the DEA informant with whom he was meeting. The informant is a drug dealer who had been indicted for a narcotics violation in a US state but had the charges dropped 'in exchange for cooperation in various drug investigations,' according to the FBI account. The informant is not an independent source of information, but someone paid to help pursue FBI objectives."

Coming just days before the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), bowing to U.S. pressure, cut off 30 Iranian financial institutions, including its Central Bank, from its network in a bid to cripple Iran economically, the allegations against Baghbani should be viewed as another psychological component of America's shadow war.

With lurid tales of Iranian involvement with the Taliban and the drug trade front and center, expect a new round of alarmist reports from Western media while the same punditocracy do their best to bury evidence of U.S. secret state complicity in the global drug scourge.

And why not? As Antonio Maria Costa, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime told [The Observer](#) in 2009, "he has seen evidence that the proceeds of organised crime were 'the only liquid investment capital' available to some banks on the brink of collapse last year. He said that a majority of the \$352bn (£216bn) of drugs profits was absorbed into the economic system as a result."

After all, \$352 billion buys a lot of *omertà*.

**Tom Burghardt** is a researcher and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to publishing in *Covert Action Quarterly* and [Global Research](#), he is a Contributing Editor with [Cyrano's Journal Today](#). His articles can be read on [Dissident Voice](#), [Pacific Free Press](#), [Uncommon Thought Journal](#), and the whistleblowing website [WikiLeaks](#). He is the editor of *Police State America: U.S. Military "Civil Disturbance" Planning*, distributed by [AK Press](#) and has contributed to the new book from [Global Research](#), *The Global Economic Crisis: The Great Depression of the XXI Century*.

The original source of this article is [Antifascist Calling...](#)  
Copyright © [Tom Burghardt](#), [Antifascist Calling...](#), 2012

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **Tom Burghardt**  
<http://antifascist-calling.blogspot.com/>

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)