

Iran: US Regime Change Project Is Immoral and Illegal

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Global Research, July 27, 2018

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

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Militarization and WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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"We're going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran." (US General Wesley Clark, former Supreme Commander of NATO)

Contemptuous of international law, the US makes no secret of its plots to overthrow the leaders of internationally recognized governments that reject the neoliberal New World Order. Iran is at the top of the US enemies list. The US has been at it since the 1979 Iran Revolution, when the Iranian people overthrew the US's "our boy", the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The Shah had become the US's "our boy" as CIA agent Kermit Roosevelt referred to him in 1953, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower overthrew the popular democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. Overthrowing governments is illegal according to US law and international law. It is also immoral if one believes in democracy, self-determination, and the sovereignty of nations, respect for human life, and the rule of law.

The Weaponization of Human Rights

The crushing economic sanctions now unilaterally imposed by the US on Iran are causing massive suffering and the deaths of thousands of Iranian civilians. The US response is glee that the sanctions are "working". This is nothing short of barbaric siege warfare to starve the Iranians out. Under international law the Iran sanctions may be illegal, since they are not authorized by the United Nations. The collective punishment of economic warfare is immoral, economic terrorism and a weapon of mass destruction. Secondary sanctions that impose sanctions on non-US and non-Iranian financial institutions that transact business with Iran amounts to blackmail, especially since it is the US that violated the Iran Nuclear Deal, and not Iran.

Weaponizing human rights is a most cynical tool of US imperialism, especially since the US has a very poor record on human rights at home. While holding itself out in biblical terms as a "city on a hill" (Matthew 5:14-16), the US is not a model of John Winthrop's [Christian Charity](#), as politicians such as Ronald Reagan have opined. The US is the only developed country that does not consider healthcare a universal human right, and it has been steadily

cutting FDR's New Deal social benefits, while the rich get richer from tax cuts. In 2008 the US bailed out the banks, while millions of homeowners lost their homes. Over 20% of US children live in poverty. Basic human services that are the responsibility of government have been turned into cash machines by privatizing.

George H. W. Bush's New World Order neoliberals and neocons despise any country that closes its doors to US corporate exploitation, and instead uses its own natural resources for the benefit of its own people. The US uses "human rights" to attack countries such as Venezuela, Libya, and Iran that consider economic freedom from need a human right.

One of the main reasons that Iran's moderate President Hassan Rouhani negotiated the Iran Nuclear Deal was so that the lifting of UN Security Council economic sanctions would give Iran the much needed ability to increase social spending for the Iranian people. Instead, the imposition of even harsher US unilateral sanctions by the Trump neocon stacked administration has dashed Rouhani's hopes, and makes the economic situation direr for the Iranian people. The nefarious purpose of sanctions is to make the Iranian people suffer so that they will become disgruntled and rebellious.

The [Foundation for the Defense of Democracy](#) (FDD) is a right wing [neocoon funded and infested](#) think tank that has been particularly rapacious in attacking Iran. FDD executive director Mark Dubowitz has been previously hailed as "the architect of many of the Iran sanctions", as reported by The Nation magazine, [How the Anti-Iran Lobby Machine Dominates Capitol Hill](#).

As Robert Fantina has [written](#) in Counterpunch, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy is intensively lobbying for the US to sanction Iran's "The Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order" (EIKO). One of EIKO's subsidiaries is the Barakat Foundation, which is a charitable foundation that is concerned with social programs for the people. The Ayatollah Khomeini has described it by saying,

"I'm concerned about solving problems of the deprived classes of the society. For instance, solve problems of 1000 villages completely. How good would it be if 1000 points of the country are solved or 1000 schools are built in the country."... [The Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order](#).

Targeting human rights organization to "promote human rights" is a cruel oxymoron. It is weaponizing human rights at its worst, and attacks the most vulnerable people in a society.

Liberals often consider economic sanctions an acceptable, even humane, alternative to force. Nothing could be further from the truth, and progressive people everywhere need to recognize it. Economic sanctions are violence. The Geneva Conventions recognize that siege warfare and collective punishment against civilians are war crimes. How could something that is illegal in wartime be legal in peacetime? The International Committee of the Red Cross has often [raised concerns](#) about economic sanctions, including UN authorized economic sanctions.

The United States of "Amnesia"

Gore Vidal was one of the great American intellectuals, writers, commentators and critics of US foreign policy, domestic politics and society. He coined a phrase to describe the US's memory loss of inconvenient truths: "The United States of Amnesia". Most Americans are

illiterate about US history. They cannot even remember recent events that happened in their lifetime. Today people barely remember what happened prior to the current 24 hour news cycle.

Now that the destruction of Iran is at the top of the to-do list, the people of the “United States of Amnesia” have forgotten all the countries that the US has destroyed in just the past quarter of a century. It has gone down the memory hole. Anything that happened in the 70’s, 80, and 90’s has been completely lost in the fog of amnesia. US victims are not so forgetful.

Afghanistan

The US is still deconstructing Afghanistan, after using it as a pawn in the Cold War. The evil masterminds of the invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970’s were Zbigniew Brzezinski and Jimmy “Mr. Human Rights” Carter. Together they snuffed out Afghanistan’s budding development and women’s emancipation, which was developing nicely under a communist government. Using Afghanistan’s development as a weapon, the US recruited the fanatical mujahideen to overthrow the communist government. Brzezinski and Carter were elated when the Soviets intervened to help their neighbor. It was Brzezinski’s plan, and the Afghan people, especially the women, paid the price. Millions of Afghans have died, and become widowed and orphaned, thanks to President Carter, and his successors.

In 2001 Bush’s re-invasion of Afghanistan was planned by the neocons of the Project for a New American Century ([PNAC](#)) even [before](#) the attacks of September 11, 2001. The casus belli was oil and gas pipelines, and not terrorism. The Afghanistan Taliban government was [told](#) that they could either accept Union Oil of California’s proposed “peace” pipeline with a “carpet of gold”, or else the US would give them a “carpet of bombs”. Osama bin Laden was not a priority.

The Taliban had [offered](#) before and after 9/11 to present Osama bin Laden for trial, but the US rejected the offer. They had no evidence against him. Once the Taliban government was ousted, then Bush became bored with Afghanistan. [According](#) to Bush’s Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld “there aren’t any good targets in Afghanistan, and there are lots of good targets in Iraq”.

Iraq

Bombing a country because it “has good targets” is an obvious war crime, and those responsible for doing it are insane war criminals. The Bush administration lied the US into the Iraq War with lies that Saddam Hussein had a nuclear bomb program. The mainstream propaganda media spread the lie, and cheered for war as it always does. It did not make any difference that the UN weapons inspectors [could find no](#) nuclear weapons. Of course it is impossible to prove a negative, that is, that one has no nuclear weapons, which should be a lesson for Iran and North Korea about trusting a deal with the US.

After the US invaded Iraq in 2003, 1625 weapons inspectors spent 2 years and \$1 billion trying unsuccessfully to find weapons of mass destruction. Still up to half of the American people still believe that Saddam Hussein had WMD’s, which goes to show how indelibly propaganda once learned sticks to the brain.

According to the IAEA and the US intelligence agencies, Iran has not had a nuclear program

to develop nuclear weapons [since 2003](#), but try convincing the mainstream media and the American people of that. It is another lesson for Iran and North Korea to remember.

Libya

Libya's people used to enjoy a high standard of living with food, shelter, education, employment and healthcare considered a human right. Now Libya is destroyed and in chaos and it will never return to its previous prosperity. It is all because Obama lied that Muammar Al Gaddafi was committing genocide against Libya's "Arab Spring" in 2011. We now know that there was no genocide. Obama lied the US into another war of aggression. Here is what he said on March 28, 2011:

"Of course, there is no question that Libya -- and the world -- would be better off with Qaddafi out of power. I, along with many other world leaders, have embraced that goal, and will actively pursue it through non-military means. But broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake. The task that I assigned our forces -to protect the Libyan people from immediate danger and to establish a no-fly zone -- carries with it a U.N. mandate and international support."



Of course it would be a "mistake" to broaden the military mission to a regime change, but that is what it was [from the start](#). The alleged genocide was a lie being [pushed](#) by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, along with Obama's National Security Advisor Susan Rice and former United Nations Ambassador Samantha "R2P" Power.

Instead of being a no-fly zone, the Libya mission carried out over 5,800 bombing sorties and 309 cruise missile strikes. That is not a no-fly zone. The US and its coalition were the air force for terrorists bent on destroying Libya's secular government.

Just like what would later happen in Syria, the "Arab Spring" that the US said it was protecting were terrorists [that belonged to](#) Ansar al-Shariah, Abu Obayda bin al-Jarah Brigade, Malik Brigade and The 17 February Brigade, which are all al Qaeda-type terrorist groups. They are the ones that later had a dispute with the CIA, and [attacked](#) their outpost in Benghazi, killing US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three CIA operatives, on September 11, 2012. What was the CIA doing in Benghazi, anyway?

Syria

Having turned the once prosperous Libya into a chaotic hell, the U.S. raided Qaddafi's arsenal of weapons and [sent](#) them via a CIA rat line that went through Turkey, and on to the Syrian anti-Assad "rebels".

Who are the so-called rebels in Syria? According to a Congressional Research report "[Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response](#)" (July 15, 2015) there were an estimated 1,500 different rebel groups in Syria, with as estimated 115,000 members total. The report concedes that if the Assad regime should collapse it would likely lead to chaos with rebel forces fighting for control among themselves.

In other words, the Congressional Research Report is saying that Syria would become another Libya. The Bashar al-Assad government is one of the last secular governments in the Middle East. There are no democratic moderates waiting in the wings to govern Syria if Assad should fall.

Iran

As General Wesley Clark told us, the coming war with Iran is part of a single plot from the 1990's by the Project for a New American Century (PNAC). In the 1990's President Bill Clinton cautiously embraced the neocon vision. Bush was fully on board with the PNAC philosophy, and in 2001 he filled his administration with its members, such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.

Regardless of the legality or not of economic sanctions, like those now being imposed by the US unilaterally on Iran, economic sanction are immoral weapons of mass destruction. The Clinton economic sanctions of the 1990's killed over 500,000 Iraqi children. According to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the Clinton administration thought it was "[worth it](#)".

The U.S. is now killing hundreds of thousands of Iranian children for the same nefarious reason that Iraqi children died. The U.S. has unilaterally reimposed sanctions of mass destruction against Iran, after the U.N. had lifted sanctions with Security Council [Resolution 2231 \(2015\)](#).

The resolution endorsed the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#) (i.e. the Iran Nuclear Deal) of July 14, 2015. It was agreed to by all the permanent members of the UN Security Council: China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; as well as the High Representative of the European Union, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The UN vote on the resolution was 15 to 0. Basically the Iran Deal was an agreement that Iran would restrict its nuclear enrichment program, allow the IAEA extensive inspections, and lift U.N. imposed economic sanctions.

While U.N. Security Council resolutions are binding on all member states, Resolution 2231 (2015) had enough loopholes that gave the U.S. technical grounds to virtually walk away from it. Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, Russia, China and anyone else doing business with the U.S. should always remember that the US can not be trusted to keep its word.

The US maintains that Iran has violated the spirit of the JCPOA on several grounds, although none of those issues were part of the JCPOA. According to the Trump administration the Iran Deal is "the worst deal ever" because it does not prevent Iran from testing ballistic missiles, supposedly Iran is the "number one" sponsor of state terrorism, and the US complains about Iran's alleged abuse of human rights. The real reason the US violated the Iran Nuclear Deal is that the US will be satisfied with nothing less than "taking out" Iran. That is what the US

has wanted to do since 1979, even before PNAC came along.

Let's review the US accusations against Iran

Firstly, it is not against international law for a country to have [ballistic missiles](#), much to the contrary of all the chest pounding by the US. If ballistic missiles were against international law then there should be economic sanctions against dozens of countries, including the US and Israel. Every country has an inalienable right to self-defense, including having ballistic missiles.

Iran has a right to prepare to defend itself. It is surrounded by hostile countries and constantly being threatened by the US and Israel. For years the US has threatened Iran overtly and covertly. Repeatedly the US says that "all options are on the table". It is against international law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for the US, a nuclear power, to threaten a non-nuclear power. It encourages proliferation. Iran has a legal basis for withdrawing from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and acquiring nuclear weapons to protect itself from the threats of the US, if it so chose. That is what North Korea did, but Iran has not chosen to do so yet.

Secondly, as for Iran being the "number one" sponsor of state terrorism, the accusation is ridiculous. The US and its coconspirators such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are by far the number one state sponsors of terrorism.

Since the end of the Second World War the US has used proxy armies to terrorize dozens of countries on all the corners of the planet, in Asia, Africa and South America. The US supported and encouraged radicalizing Islamic sects in order to combat 'atheist' communism during the Cold War, and now it arms and uses them to overthrow non-compliant resource rich countries.

It is the US that sponsored death squads throughout South America in the 1980's to back right wing dictators. The US created the Contras in Nicaragua after the Nicaraguan people had overthrown the hated US backed right wing dictator Anastasio Somoza. In 1986 Nicaragua even won a court case in the UN's International Court of Justice, [Nicaragua vs. the United States](#). The US thumbed its nose at the ICJ.

In 2002 the US was openly exposed in its unsuccessfully [coup](#) against democratically elected President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. In 2009 the US supported the military [coup](#) in Honduras that overthrew a democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. Afterward Honduras became the murder capital of the world for journalists. Indigenous native people are still being terrorized, and driven off their traditional land in favor of large corporate landowners.

The history of US terrorism is too long to even summarize in this short essay. Afghanistan was already mentioned above. The CIA backed and Saudi financed mujahideen have become a [plague](#) that has spread throughout South and South-west Asia, as well as Russia and China. The Saudis have provided much of the financing for US sponsored terrorists.

The US is openly backing the terrorist group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq ([MEK](#)) to infiltrate and terrorize Iran. The MEK was on the US State Department's list of designated [terrorist](#) organization until 2012, when Hillary Clinton had them removed. The MEK has killed Americans, "bombing the facilities of numerous U.S. companies and are killing innocent

Iranians”, according to an article in Politico. The MEK has [committed](#) acts of terrorism in Europe too.

Trump has openly bragged that the US is sponsoring MEK terrorists in Albania to infiltrate Iran. John McCain, who has never seen a US regime change project he did not like, has [praised](#) the MEK. John Bolton, Newt Gingrich, and Mitch McConnell among many [others](#) regularly show up as highly paid speakers at MEK events. The MEK is a weird and dangerous cult of personalities run by husband and wife Massoud and Maryam Rajavi.

They are “responsible for bombings, attempted plane hijackings, political assassinations, and indiscriminate killings of men, women and children”, according to an [article](#) in Politico.

Thirdly, as for human rights in Iran, the US has no moral authority left to judge anyone else on human rights. The US backs Saudi Arabia which is the most repressive regime in the world. The US is fully supporting from the rear the Saudi bombing of Yemen and the blockading of food, medicine and even water, putting 22 million people at dire risk. It is the worst humanitarian crisis in history.

It was Saudi Arabia that financed 9/11 and most of the hijackers were Saudis. Retired Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) who was the Co-Chair of the Joint Congressional Committee investigating 9/11 has called Saudi Arabia a [coconspirator](#) of the attacks of 9/11.



Israel is the US’s “cat’s paw” in the Middle East. The US supports Israel 100%. Israel’s illegal occupation of the West Bank and the building of illegal settlements deprive millions of Palestinians their civil, legal and human rights. Israel has turned Gaza into an unlivable concentration death camp for 2 million people. They have been deprived of basic services such as clean drinking water, electricity and medicine. When Gazans have peacefully protested, Israeli snipers have gunned them down by the hundreds during the “[Great March of Return](#)”.

Israel has now launched a massive attack on Gaza. Israeli Defense Minister Lieberman has said that Palestinian civilians will “pay the price”, and that the price will be “more painful than Operation Protective Edge”. The US taxpayers will be supplying the bombs, ammunitions, and money as they always do. The US is not hypocritical about human rights,

it just doesn't care and lies that it does when it serves US foreign policy purposes. US foreign policy serves US corporate interests, not the interests of people.

The US has killed millions of human beings, just in the 21st century, in its wars of aggression. Its drones vaporize wedding parties and funerals. The US abducts people arbitrarily and tortures them in black sites. The US backs [73%](#) of the world's fascistic dictators. With 5% of the world's population the US holds 25% of the world's prisoners in conditions that are for-profit and inhumane. The US is continuing its long history on the Southern border of locking [non-white](#) children in cages. The disgraceful Guantanamo Bay is still open despite Obama's 2008 promise to close it.

In conclusion, when somebody on the inside of the establishment like General Wesley Clark says, as he did in 2007, that the US had planned in 2001 to take out 7 countries in 5 years, then we should take them seriously. The US has invaded and attempted to take out most of the 7 countries on Clark's list. Stop believing the US lies every time the US decides to take out a regime based on nebulous humanitarian reasons, or because they are a so-called [axis of evil](#).

The US is militarily the most powerful country the world has ever seen. It is ridiculous when the US claims that its national security and the safety of the American people are being threatened by tiny countries like Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea. Iran poses no national security threat to the US or to its proxy Israel. Iran's aging air force is not a challenge to the US or the region, which is the reason that Iran has an interest in developing missile defense. Missiles are a less costly alternative for defense than maintaining a modern air force. The US objects to Iran's missiles, because it wants to keep Iran defenseless against US and Israeli aggression. Not because the US fears Iranian aggression.

The US military-industrial-banking-media monopolies want to keep the American people afraid. Iran has been made into a boogeyman, because it is an oil-rich nation that has closed its doors to neoliberal US corporate exploitation. The American people are being robbed of their economic security, universal healthcare, inexpensive higher education and badly needed infrastructure, because of constant warmongering.

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This article was originally published on [The Real News Network](#).

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[The Globalization of War: America's "Long War" against Humanity](#)

Michel Chossudovsky

The “globalization of war” is a hegemonic project. Major military and covert intelligence operations are being undertaken simultaneously in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and the Far East. The U.S. military agenda combines both major theater operations as well as covert actions geared towards destabilizing sovereign states.

ISBN Number: 978-0-9737147-6-0

Year: 2015

Pages: 240 Pages

List Price: \$22.95

Special Price: \$15.00

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