

# Iranian Protests: U.S. Meddling and the Deep State's Unfinished Business

By [Tony Cartalucci](#)

Global Research, January 04, 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)  
In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

*Protests have been reported across several cities in Iran over the last several days of December 2017. Protesters allegedly decry Iran's economy as well as the nation's involvement in nearby Syria.*

The Western media has attempted to cultivate two narratives - one focused on portraying the protests as widespread, spontaneous, and having focused first on "economic grievances" before becoming political - another narrative openly admitting to US involvement and praising US President Donald Trump for "standing up" to the "Iranian regime."

Of course, neither narrative is even remotely grounded in reality.

## US Meddling in Iran Stretches Back Decades

US regime-change operations targeting Iran stretch back decades and have continued within a singular geopolitical strategy, regardless of who has occupied the White House, including under the more recent US administrations of George Bush, Barack Obama, and now Donald Trump.

While pro-war circles in the US claim the 1979 Iranian Revolution was an instance of Iran drawing first blood, the revolution was in fact a direct response to then already decades of US meddling in Iran stretching back as early as 1953 with the US Central Intelligence Agency's Operation AJAX.

Regarding Operation AJAX, in an entry on the CIA's own website titled, "[All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror](#)," it admits (emphasis added):

The target was not an oppressive Soviet puppet but a democratically elected government whose populist ideology and nationalist fervor threatened Western economic and geopolitical interests. **The CIA's covert intervention—codenamed TPAJAX—preserved the Shah's power and protected Western control of a hugely lucrative oil infrastructure.** It also transformed a turbulent constitutional monarchy into an absolutist kingship and induced a succession of unintended consequences at least as far ahead as the Islamic revolution of 1979—and, Kinzer argues in his breezily written, well-researched popular history, perhaps to today.

The article - a review by the CIA's own history staff of a book regarding Operation AJAX -

admits that US policy regarding Iran merely picked up where the British Empire left off in an effort to reassert rapidly-slipping Western control over the globe. In no way was US efforts to undermine and control the government of Iran described in terms of protecting US national security or promoting democracy - and in fact was characterized instead as undermining Iranian self-determination.



It is this admission that reveals the core truth of today's tensions between Iran and the United States. The West still seeks to reassert itself and its economic interests in the Middle East. Notions of "freedom," "democracy," as well as threats of "terrorism," "nuclear holocaust," and even the ongoing conflict with nearby Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other Persian Gulf States are but facades behind which this self-serving neo-imperial agenda is pursued.

Today's Protests Openly Plotted by US Policymakers for Years

The Brookings Institution in its 2009 "[Which Path to Persia? Options for a New American Strategy toward Iran](#)," report dedicated an entire chapter to plotting the overthrow of the Iranian government.

Titled, "THE VELVET REVOLUTION: Supporting a Popular Uprising," the policy paper lays out (emphasis added):

Because the Iranian regime is widely disliked by many Iranians, the most obvious and palatable method of bringing about its demise would be to help foster a popular revolution along the lines of the "velvet revolutions" that toppled many communist governments in Eastern Europe beginning in 1989. For many proponents of regime change, it seems self-evident that **the United States should encourage the Iranian people to take power in their own name, and that this would be the most legitimate method of regime change.** After all, what Iranian or foreigner could object to helping the Iranian people fulfill their own desires?

The paper then admits:

The true objective of this policy option is to overthrow the clerical regime in Tehran and see it replaced, hopefully, by one whose views would be more compatible with U.S. interests in the region.

In essence, Brookings quickly admits that its “velvet revolution” would be the fulfillment of Washington’s desires, not the Iranian people’s – pursued merely under the guise of helping Iranians fulfill their own desires. As the CIA itself admits in its own historical records that US “interests in the region” are based on economic exploitation and the enrichment of Wall Street and Washington, not lifting up, empowering, or enriching the Iranian people.

It is an open admission regarding US designs for Iran demonstrated on multiple occasions elsewhere from Iraq to Libya to Syria to Ukraine and Yemen – what is promoted as progressive political revolution supported by the “democratic” West is in fact the destruction and subjugation of a nation, its people, and its resources at the cost of global peace and prosperity.

Creating an Opposition from Whole Cloth

The Brookings paper openly states (emphasis added):

The United States could play multiple roles in facilitating a revolution. **By funding and helping organize domestic rivals of the regime, the United States could create an alternative leadership to seize power.** As Raymond Tanter of the Iran Policy Committee argues, students and other groups “need covert backing for their demonstrations. They need fax machines. They need Internet access, funds to duplicate materials, and funds to keep vigilantes from beating them up.” Beyond this, U.S.-backed media outlets could highlight regime shortcomings and make otherwise obscure critics more prominent. **The United States already supports Persian language satellite television (Voice of America Persian) and radio (Radio Farda) that bring unfiltered news to Iranians (in recent years, these have taken the lion’s share of overt U.S. funding for promoting democracy in Iran). U.S. economic pressure (and perhaps military pressure as well) can discredit the regime, making the population hungry for a rival leadership.**

It should be noted that economic and military pressure were both cited by the BBC and other Western news sources as “grievances” by the so-called “opposition” amid Iran’s most recent protests.

Brookings lists “intellectuals,” “students, labor, and civil society organizations” under a subsection of the chapter titled, “Finding the Right Proxies.”

Under a subsection titled, “Military Intervention,” Brookings admits:

...if the United States ever succeeds in sparking a revolt against the clerical regime, Washington may have to consider whether to provide it with some form of military support to prevent Tehran from crushing it.

The report continues by stating:

...if the United States is to pursue this policy, Washington must take this possibility into consideration. It adds some very important requirements to the list: either the policy must include ways to weaken the Iranian military or weaken the willingness of the regime's leaders to call on the military, or else the United States must be ready to intervene to defeat it.

Armed with this knowledge, Iranian protests quickly turning violent due to mysterious gunmen and nebulous armed groups that suddenly appear can be viewed instead through the more realistic prism of pre-positioned US-armed gangs rolled out to expand unrest and hinder security operations aimed at pacifying US-organized mobs.

## Step 2: Armed Insurrection

Considering Brookings' realization that any mob the US stirs up in Iran is likely to be simply swept off the streets – it followed its “Velvet Revolution” chapter with one titled, “INSPIRING AN INSURGENCY: Supporting Iranian Minority and Opposition Groups.”

Here, an important admission is openly made and extensively built upon – the arming and backing of terrorist organizations with American blood on their hands – a causal “option” shamelessly considered by American policymakers in 2009 that would become a matter of fact during the 2011 “Arab Spring” and the subsequent US-fueled wars from Libya and Syria fought via Al Qaeda and the myriad of franchises it inspired.

Brookings unabashedly admits:

As much as many Americans might like to help the Iranian people rise up and take their destiny in their own hands, the evidence suggests that its likelihood is low—and that American assistance could well make it less likely rather than more. Consequently, some who favor fomenting regime change in Iran argue that it is utopian to hold out hope for a velvet revolution; instead, they contend that **the United States should turn to Iranian opposition groups that already exist, that already have demonstrated a desire to fight the regime, and who appear willing to accept U.S. assistance.**

Among the groups considered, Brookings admits:

Perhaps the most prominent (and certainly the most controversial) opposition group that has attracted attention as a potential U.S. proxy is the NCRI (National Council of Resistance of Iran), the political movement established by the MEK (Mujahedin-e Khalq).

Of the MEK, Brookings admits (emphasis added):

**...the MEK remains on the U.S. government list of foreign terrorist organizations.** In the 1970s, **the group killed three U.S. officers and three civilian contractors in Iran.** During the 1979-1980 hostage crisis, the group praised the decision to take American hostages and Elaine Sciolino reported that while group leaders publicly condemned the 9/11 attacks, within the group celebrations were widespread. **Undeniably, the group has conducted terrorist attacks**—often excused by the MEK's advocates because they are directed against the Iranian government. For example, in 1981, the group bombed the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party, which

was then the clerical leadership's main political organization, killing an estimated 70 senior officials. More recently, the group has claimed credit for over a dozen mortar attacks, assassinations, and other assaults on Iranian civilian and military targets between 1998 and 2001. At the very least, to work more closely with the group (at least in an overt manner), **Washington would need to remove it from the list of foreign terrorist organizations.**

It was no coincidence that while Brookings penned its 2009 report, efforts were already well underway to remove MEK from the US State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations - and was fully removed from the list by 2012, [according to the US State Department itself](#).



Many of President Donald Trump's political supporters played a direct role in lobbying to get terrorist organization MEK off the US State Department's FTO list. Their work began under Bush and continued under Obama. It was in fact under Obama's administration when MEK was finally delisted.

It is telling that MEK only found itself removed from a list of terrorist organizations because the US required it for a terror campaign of its own design against Tehran - the organization itself having reformed itself in no shape, form, or way and intent - by Brookings and other US policymakers' own admissions - to carry on further atrocities - simply in the name of US regime change in Iran.

MEK is joined by other terrorist organizations the US has cultivated along Iran's peripheries since 2011 and America's multiple proxy wars in the region. These include Al Qaeda, Kurdish militias, and the so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS).

Brookings lays out under a subsection titled, "Finding a Conduit and Safe Haven," that:

Of equal importance (and potential difficulty) will be finding a neighboring country willing to serve as the conduit for U.S. aid to the insurgent group, as well as to provide a safe haven where the group can train, plan, organize, heal, and resupply...

...without such a partner, it would be far more difficult for the United States to support an insurgency. One thing that the United States would have in its favor when searching for a state to play this role is that many of Iran's neighbors dislike and fear the Islamic Republic.

Since 2009, the US has secured for itself multiple conduits and safe havens - which has been the primary reason Iran has been involved so deeply in Syria since the 2011 war erupted. Western Syria now hosts multiple US military bases as well as a large proxy contingent made up of Kurdish militias and extremists from Al Qaeda/ISIS being retrained by the US for redeployment in continued proxy wars across the region.

Had Iran failed to prevent the entire overthrow of the Syrian state, the nation would have been transformed into a single springboard for Al Qaeda, ISIS, and Kurdish militants to invade and decimate Iran before moving on to southern Russia.

It should be noted that Brookings - among its conclusions regarding the creation of an "insurgency" against Iran - states:

Properly executed, covert support to an insurgency would provide the United States with "plausible deniability." As a result, the diplomatic and political backlash would likely be much less than if the United States were to mount a direct military action.

Of course, Brookings' own publicly-published conspiracy coupled together with the US' demonstrated use of proxies in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and now Iran, lays bare this strategy and mitigates whatever "plausible deniability" Washington hoped to maintain.

Regardless, the West, through its formidable influence in the media, will attempt to maintain plausible deniability regarding US involvement in Iranian unrest until the last possible moment - not unlike how it hid its role in executing the so-called "Arab Spring" during its opening phases despite plotting and organizing the mayhem years in advance.

US Hopes to Break Iran, Would Settle for Setting it Back

Just as the US hoped for speedy regime change in Syria in 2011, but settled for the destruction of the nation, the division of its territory, and the weakening of the Syrian military, the US likewise has primary and secondary goals already laid out for regime change plans versus Iran.

The Brookings report admits:

...even if U.S. support for an insurgency failed to produce the overthrow of the regime, it could still place Tehran under considerable pressure, which might either prevent the regime from making mischief abroad or persuade it to make concessions on issues of importance to the United States (such as its nuclear program and support to Hamas, Hizballah, and the Taliban). Indeed, Washington might decide that this second objective is a more compelling rationale for supporting an insurgency than the (much less likely) goal of actually overthrowing the regime.

In other words, US regime change again is openly admitted as an act of geopolitical coercion, not self-defense. The strategy laid out by Brookings is more than mere "suggestions." It is an enumerated list of prescribed actions that have demonstrably been executed since in Syria, Libya, and Yemen and are now manifesting themselves in nearby Iran.

In the world of geopolitical analysis, it is not often that a signed and dated confession can be cited when describing conspiracies against another nation-state. In the case of US meddling in Iran, Brookings provides just such evidence – nearly 200 pages long – detailing everything from fabricated opposition, US sponsorship of terrorism, and [even engineered provocations by the US and Israel](#) to trigger a full-scale war.

As the West probes Iran and stories of “unrest” make headlines, looking past the Western media’s diversions, excuses, and outright lies, toward the engineered nature of this conflict helps quickly decipher the truth, assign blame, and reveal deceivers and collaborators in yet another campaign of Western aggression thousands of miles from American shores to be fought with US taxpayers’ money and perhaps even the blood of US soldiers.

\*

*Tony Cartalucci is a Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine [“New Eastern Outlook”](#) where this article was originally published.*

*All images in this article are from the author.*

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Tony Cartalucci](#), Global Research, 2018

---

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

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Tony Cartalucci](#)

**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)