

Kenyan False Flag Bomb Plot Aimed At Tightening Sanctions Noose On Iran

Islamic Republic Falls Foul in African Cradle of America's 'War on Terror'

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An alleged spectacular Iranian bomb plot uncovered in Kenya this week has all the hallmarks of a Western intelligence "false flag" operation - with the aim of tightening international oil sanctions even further on Iran.

Two men alleged to be Iranian nationals and members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps appeared in court in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, earlier this week on terrorism charges. Media reports on 2 July said the men are accused of planning to blow up American, British, Saudi and Israeli targets in Kenya, including the British High Commission office, a chain of hotels and a synagogue.

Then, two days later, on 4 July, the Kenyan government made a surprise announcement that it was cancelling a fresh oil deal that it had signed with Iran. The purchase agreement had been struck with the Islamic Republic only a few weeks ago. The deal would have involved the supply of 80,000 barrels per day (b/d) of Iranian crude to the East African country.

Kenya is East Africa's largest economy and the new partnership was seen as a welcome opportunity by Iran to open up other African oil export markets in the wake of tough American and European sanctions that came into effect on 28 June and 1 July, respectively. The 27-member EU bloc was a mainstay of Iranian oil exports, representing about 500,000 b/d, or 20 per cent of Iran's global total.

While the Kenyan deal in itself would have only gone a small way towards compensating for the loss of the EU market, nevertheless it held the promise of a wider regional destination for further Iranian exports. There were reports of similar transactions in the pipeline with Tanzania and Zimbabwe among others.

Only a day before the Kenyan cancellation, the director of the National Iranian Oil Company, Mohsen Ghamsari, spoke to Iranian media in an upbeat tone about the Kenyan contract and how this signified new export markets in Africa circumventing the loss of European markets.

"Under the current conditions, despite the oil exports' halt to Europe, new contracts with other customer countries have been signed," said Ghamsari. "One of the new markets for exports of Iran's oil is that of the African countries," he added, confirming that Kenya was one of them. "Soon, more details about new Iran oil export contracts to new countries will be announced."

That promising African development for Iran now seems to have foundered, adding to an already bleak outlook for Iran's economy following the closure of European oil markets and, even worse, cancellations by major Asian buyers. Some 60 per cent of Iran's crude exports had until recently been destined for Asia, including China, India, Japan and South Korea. But, despite earlier defiant talk, these buyers have recently balked at Iranian orders so as to avoid American and European financial penalties against banks and shipping insurance companies dealing with Iran.

The upshot is that Iranian oil exports have crashed from 2.5 million b/d last year to about 1.5 million b/d currently – a drop of 40 per cent, representing a loss of \$3 billion every month to the Iranian economy. Over the year, that translates into a 10 per cent contraction in Iran's oil-based national economy, according to World Bank data. This, in turn, is having a drastic impact on social conditions in Iran, with the purchasing power of the currency, the rial, plummeting, and inflation and unemployment spiralling.

Kenya's oil ministry claims that revoking the Iranian contract was not related to the alleged bomb plot. The ministry says it was merely complying with American warnings of sanctions' penalties being enforced if it went ahead with the oil deal.

But it seems likely that the suspected terror attacks – reported widely in lurid detail – may have been aimed at making the abrupt scuppering of the Iranian oil purchase more politically acceptable, not just in Kenya, but elsewhere in Africa. Local and international media reports immediately connected the Kenyan bomb scare with other alleged Iranian terror plots over the past year, including the plan to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in Washington DC, and a string of explosions in Thailand, India, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Iran has strenuously denied any sinister involvement in Kenya or the other countries mentioned. No evidence has been produced to substantiate the high-flown accusations made against Iran, yet Western mainstream media continue to run with such claims months after the alleged incidents have faded into oblivion.

As if on cue, as soon as the news broke about the latest bomb plot in Kenya, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, accused the Iranian government of “a terrorist attack in Africa”.

Netanyahu asserted: “After Iran sent its agents to murder the Saudi ambassador on US soil, the country has engaged in attacks in Azerbaijan, Bangkok, in Tbilisi, in New Delhi, and now we have just discovered a plot for a terrorist attack in Africa. Iranian terrorism knows no borders. The international community must fight against this major player in the world of terrorism.”

Apart from Netanyahu's scripted, ready response to a breaking news story, there are other aspects about the alleged Kenyan bomb plot that indicate there is far more to it than meets the eye.

The two suspects, named as Ahmad Abolfathi Mohammad and Sayed Mansour Mousavi, are widely reported to belong to the crack Al Quds division of Iran's revolutionary guards. But their appearance in the Nairobi court showed men who were well over middle age, with slightly disheveled figures, lacking the killer, athletic physiques that one would expect of elite commandos.

Secondly, it was reported that as soon as the men were arrested on 19 June, they voluntarily led police to a warehouse in the coastal city of Mombasa to recover 15 kilos of RDX plastic explosive. That readiness to cooperate with police in locating explosives does not sound like the behaviour of highly trained, elite commandos.

Thirdly, when the men appeared in court this week they denied the charges of a terror conspiracy. That contradicts the above claim that the suspects led police to their bomb store.

Fourthly, Kenyan police were reported in local and international media saying that they believed the alleged terror duo were planning to use 15 kilos of explosive to attack up to 30 high-profile targets.

Now, while RDX (a component of Semtex) is a powerful explosive, a blitz on 30 targets with a total cache of 15 kilos would appear to spread the demolition material a bit thin (0.5 kilo per hit), which seems an unlikely bomb ration if one was indeed planning to carry out terror attacks on embassies, government buildings, hotels, a city centre shopping mall, and a synagogue.

A fifth anomaly in the official story is the allegation that all this synchronized destruction and mayhem was to be carried out by only two men. Given the necessary logistics, surveillance, transport, not to mention the time required to execute such a complex plot, the huge task would be physically impossible for two individuals to pull off - even if they were top-notch Iranian commandos, which the two hapless suspects are clearly not.

One further question mark over the latest supposed Iranian terror plot in Kenya is the shadowy involvement of Western and Israeli intelligence in the former British colony. For several months now the US embassy has been issuing unspecified terror warnings to the public. On 23 April, a Kenya news agency reported: "An advisory from the [US] embassy said the timing of the attacks was unclear, but intelligence information showed the planning was in the final stages." In a statement, the US embassy said then: "The embassy informs US citizens residing in or visiting Kenya that the US embassy in Nairobi has received credible information regarding a possible attack on Nairobi hotels and prominent Kenyan government buildings."

Since Kenyan troops invaded neighbouring Somalia at the end of 2011, there have been a series of grenade attacks in Nairobi that have claimed over 10 lives. It is not clear who is behind the attacks. The Somali insurgent group, Al Shehab, which is said to have links to Al Qaeda, has been blamed by Kenyan police, but the group has denied involvement. While the grenade incidents have proven deadly, there is a distinct sense that the US embassy terror warnings were hinting at a more high-profile event.

Moreover, when the alleged Iranian bombers appeared in court, they claimed that they were interrogated and tortured by Israeli agents upon their arrest. The Israeli embassy declined to comment to media on these claims. But if they are true, that suggests a highly irregular policing matter. Why should Israeli agents be involved immediately in a criminal matter of a sovereign jurisdiction?

A deeper look into the historic role of Kenya in the American-led "war on terror" raises even more disquieting questions that cast doubt on the latest Iranian bomb plot claim.

For a start, Kenya is a key ally of Western intelligence in East Africa. It is believed to serve as a clandestine base for American aerial drone attacks in Somalia, which intensified over the past year, with reports of dozens of deaths, many of them civilians, in the southern Somali region around the rebel-held port city of Kismayu.

Kenya is also a node in the international rendition network run by the US, Britain and Israel. Young men from Somalia and other countries in the region who are suspected of Islamic Jihadi activities or sympathies are rendered to black sites in Kenya, where they are interrogated and tortured before being transferred to other such sites in Afghanistan. Human rights investigator Clara Gutteridge told the US-based Nation magazine in excruciating detail how one young Somali man was captured in Mogadishu in 2003 by a Somali warlord and handed over to American officials, who had him rendered via Kenya and Djibouti to Afghanistan for five years of detention and torture before he was released from Bagram Air Force Base without charge.

The Kenyan authorities have therefore a history of close collaboration with Western intelligence agencies, and this collaboration dates back to before 9/11 and the “war on terror”. Indeed, a case can be made that Kenya served as a crucial incubator for the American conception of fighting a global war against Islamic terrorists.

In 1998, three years before 9/11, one of the most deadly assaults against US personnel and sovereignty was carried out ostensibly by the newly formed Al Qaeda terror network led by Osama bin Laden. On 7 August 1998, a truck bomb carrying 1,000 kilos of explosive was driven into the US embassy in Nairobi. The lethal force demolished the building and killed 219 people, 12 of them American citizens, and injured more than 4,000. Minutes later, in Dar-es-Salaam, the capital of neighbouring Tanzania, a second truck bomb exploded at the US embassy there, killing 11 and injuring 85.

The twin attacks put Al Qaeda and its leader on the global map as America’s enemy number one. This was the genesis of the “war on terror” in which, supposedly, the former American mujahideen proxy army that had defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan was transformed from dutiful ally to mortal enemy. The rationale for the switch was said to be the arrival of US troops in Saudi Arabia – the home of the holy Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina – which began in August 1990 in the build-up to the Gulf War against Iraq’s Saddam Hussein over his invasion of Kuwait.

During the 1990s, Bin Laden’s newly formed Al Qaeda (“the base”) was reported to be expanding out of Afghanistan and setting up in Sudan, Kenya and Somalia. Recall that this was at the time of the Soviet Union’s collapse and with its demise the entire rationale of the America’s global military doctrine and spending was in danger of vanishing. During this period, Al Qaeda came to fill the void left by the collapsing Soviet Union as the new enemy for which the Pentagon’s trillion-dollar budget would have to be maintained, rather than it being furnished as a “peace dividend” for the good of American civic society.

The problem for US planners was making the nebulous Al Qaeda a credible threat to the American and world public. The devastating attacks on the US embassy in Kenya and Tanzania would provide such a crystallizing demonstration. But, as with the later, more spectacular 9/11 terror in New York, the bombings of the embassies were not masterminded by Al Qaeda Jihadis, but rather by American military intelligence. The horrific terrorist carnage would serve to mobilize the American public behind a new war agenda, no longer the one against the “evil Soviet empire”, but now against “Islamic extremists” hellbent on

destroying American values and the American way of life.

American author and commentator Ralph Schoenman has been researching the 1998 US embassy bombings from that date. Schoenman is convinced that the atrocities were “false flags” to create a new official enemy of the US in the form of Al Qaeda and Muslim extremists generally. In that way, he says, the US planners were able to bestow American imperialism with a badly needed new pretext to justify foreign interventions and wars for the control of natural resources, principally oil.

The American-led wars over the past decade in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia as well as the warmongering policies towards Syria and Iran bear that out.

A key indicator of a false flag operation in the 1998 US embassy attacks, says Schoenman, was the involvement of Ali A Mohamed, also known as Ali “the American”. He is labeled as the “point man”, who masterminded and coordinated the assaults. Two years after the blasts, Mohamed was arrested by the American authorities and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to murder.

It then transpired that the alleged Al Qaeda bomber had an impeccable US military service record, having trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and later working as an instructor in explosives at the John F Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School until 1989.

The American government narrative then claimed that Mohamed, who was married to an American citizen and who had lived in California, was all the while working as a double agent for Al Qaeda and that “he turned” by the time of the embassy attacks in 1998. This narrative was dutifully circulated by the American media. One headline in the San Francisco Chronicle in 2001 conveyed the sense of treachery: Bin Laden’s man in Silicon Valley – ‘Mohamed the American’ orchestrated terrorist acts while living a quiet suburban life in Santa Clara.

Schoenman dismisses the official claim as “straining credulity” in face of the facts. He says that during the 1990s Mohamed was working for the American secret services in East Africa, including Kenya. The operative was also known to be travelling and liaising with Bin Laden’s network in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“There is no way that US intelligence handlers did not know of every move made by Mohamed. This guy was recruited by the CIA in Cairo, where he was a major in the Egyptian army. He was then a handpicked graduate of Fort Bragg for American Special Forces and he went on to instruct green berets in psy-ops and explosives at the JFK School of Warfare. We are talking about the strictest security clearance in the US military. And yet the official account expects the public to believe that somehow Mohamed’s connections with Bin Laden’s Al Qaeda slipped their attention and that he carried out the US embassy bombings in a rogue fashion for the supposed enemy.”

Schoenman’s contention is that the Kenyan and Tanzanian US embassy attacks were a deliberate ploy by American military intelligence that was instrumented by Ali A Mohamed. The blasts involved suicide bombers and Schoenman does not rule out that there may have been willing Jihadi dupes recruited for the mission. But the bottom line is that the carnage was deliberately inflicted by US planners as a prelude to the “war on terror” and the subsequent spectacular of 9/11.

Supporting this contention is the fact that, despite pleading guilty in a New York court in 2000 to conspiracy to murder American citizens, Mohamed has never been sentenced. There are no records of subsequent court proceedings and his whereabouts are unknown. His Californian wife, Linda Sanchez, was quoted in 2006 as saying of her husband: "He can't talk to anybody. Nobody can get to him. They have Ali pretty secretive... it's like he just kinda vanished into thin air."

That sounds like Mohamed made a guilty plea bargain with his handlers, so that he would not have to go to trial thus suppressing all details of the embassy bombings, and in return he would be given a new identity and not have to spend a single day in jail.

To recap, Kenya holds a special place in the evolution of America's fraudulent war on terror - a war that it is conducting with trillion-dollar budgets in the pursuit of illusory or grossly exaggerated enemies. In the name of this spurious war, the US along with its NATO, Arab and Israeli allies are justified to invade sovereign countries, absolved from committing crimes against humanity, and free to commandeer the natural resources of subjugated nations. Warmongering, criminal imperialism is thus given a badge of respect.

Meanwhile, independent, peaceful countries such as Iran are traduced as "an axis of evil", "a rogue state", "sponsor of global terror", thereby justifying aggression by the self-styled "upholders of international law".

Paradoxically, the real sponsors of terror, who possess thousands of nuclear warheads in contravention of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, are beating the drums of war against nuclear unarmed Iran and imposing crippling economic sanctions.

And when Iran peaceably seeks new oil markets in Africa to circumvent illegal sanctions, it is not only denied the right to conduct international trade, it is doubly wronged by being blamed for plotting terrorism - by the very states that are the architects of global terrorism.

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