

No Letup In Political Witch-Hunts Under Obama

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For eight years, the Bush administration relentlessly targeted Muslim, environmental, and animal rights activists as national security or terrorist threats. Shamefully, Obama continues the same practice.

On May 20, the FBI arrested four New York men, claiming they planned to bomb a Bronx synagogue and community center and shoot down Newburgh, New York-based Air National Guard jets with stinger missiles.

The same day Justice Department press release said:

“The charges against James Cromite (aka Abdul Rahman and Abdul Rehman), David Williams (aka Daoud and DL), Onta Williams (aka Hamza), and Laguerre Payen (aka Amin and Almondo) include “plot(ing) to detonate explosives near a synagogue in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, New York, and to shoot military planes....with Stinger surface-to-air missiles. In their efforts to obtain weapons, the defendants dealt with an informant acting under law enforcement supervision, and the FBI and other agencies monitor(ing) the defendants’ actions up to the time of arrest, including providing an inactive missile and inert explosives to the informant for the defendants.”

It’s a familiar scheme involving an FBI sting using an informant to entrap unwitting victims, in this case four poor black Newburgh, New York men who’d converted to Islam, two while in prison for unrelated charges. Cromite was called the ringleader. A Pakistani man named Shahed Hussain (aka Malik) was a paid FBI informant facing prison and/or deportation on dozens of fraud counts. He was enlisted to cooperate in return for leniency.

He’s the same man used earlier for four separate stings, Yassin Aref among them, an innocent man, entrapped and victimized, now serving a 15 year prison term, and a valued friend of this writer. In post-9/11 America, he’s one of many Muslim victims of police state justice. They’ve been targeted, persecuted, arrested, imprisoned, kept in isolation, denied bail, tried on secret evidence on trumped-up charges, convicted by juries too intimidated to acquit, and sentenced to long prison terms for being Muslims at the wrong time in America. Others for being environmental and/or animal rights activists. It went on under George Bush and continues under Obama. When the Newburgh 4 are tried in late 2009, they’ll face 25 year to life sentences if convicted on one or more charges.

They’re petty felons, not terrorists, with criminal records on drug-related charges, assault, and Payen’s unrelated weapons charge for firing a BB gun hitting two people in the head, then snatching purses from two women the same day. He’s a Haitian citizen. The others are Americans, and both Williams men aren’t related. They apparently met in prison where two

of them were introduced to Islam.

Background on Informant Malik

On FBI instructions, he looked for targets at a Newburgh mosque and found them in four convicted felons, prime candidates to be framed on bogus charges if he could lure them into the trap. He befriended them with offers to pay medical bills, but never did because arrests came first after months of entrapment. His victims were poor, in need of cash, and induced to go along by small gifts and offers of more.

The Justice Department called them “radicalized Muslims,” acting out of hatred for Jews and wanting revenge on behalf of Muslims against America.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) uses anti-Semitism for moral cover, but is notoriously Islamophobic in its ideology. Its web site highlighted “Muslim extremists motivated by hatred for Jews and Israel have targeted Jews in the US for many years, an alarming number of post-9/11 plots and conspiracies have involved or been led by” American Muslims “arrested on various terror-related charges (related to) ideologies of extreme intolerance propagated by terrorist movements overseas (and in some cases) jihadist materials on the Internet.” The ADL cited alleged quotes about wanting “to get a synagogue” and willingness to die and go to “paradise” as a martyr.

New York police commissioner Raymond Kelly said the men planned to bomb two Bronx synagogues by detonating explosives from a cell phone. After supposedly planting phony devices, given Malik by the FBI, police surrounded their car and arrested them in a carefully planned operation. It involved an 18-wheel police vehicle and armored personnel carrier using NYPD Emergency Service Unit personnel. It came off with military precision and why not. It was a setup.

“It’s hard to envision a more chilling plot,” said Assistant US Attorney Eric Snyder. “These are extremely violent men.” In fact, they’re innocent victims of police state justice facing an uphill struggle for vindication against a Justice Department determined to convict with dozens of easily manipulated and/or doctored audio and video DVD recordings of supposedly terror-plotting meetings and conversations.

On June 2, a federal grand jury indicted the four men on eight bogus counts:

- “Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the United States”
- Three counts of “Attempt to use weapons of mass destruction within the United States
- Conspiracy to acquire and use anti-aircraft missiles
- Attempt to acquire and use anti-aircraft missiles
- Conspiracy to kill officers and employees of the United States (and)
- Attempt to kill officers and employees of the United States”

On May 20, The New York Times described “a painstaking investigation that began in June 2008 involving an FBI agent who had been told by a federal informant of the men’s desire to

attack targets in America.” No explanation was given about entrapment. Instead The Times highlighted “some of the most significant allegations of domestic terrorism in some time” and expressions of relief by local political leaders, including Charles Schumer, the senator from AIPAC, saying:

“If there can be any good news from this terror scare it’s that this group was relatively unsophisticated, infiltrated early, and not connected to another terrorist group. This incident shows that we must always be vigilant against terrorism – foreign or domestic.” The senator said nothing about four innocent men, targeted and framed for a supposed terror plot.

If convicted on all charges, the men face possible life sentences. No trial date so far has been set. All four are in Westchester County Jail without bail.

The North Carolina 7

On July 27, dozens of heavily armed Swat and hostage rescue team members arrested seven North Carolina men on terrorist-related charges, six US citizens and one permanent resident.

The same day Justice Department press release cited Daniel Patrick Boyd, his two sons, Zakariya and Dylan, Hysen Sherifi, Anes Subasic, Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan, and Ziyad Yaghi on charges of “conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and conspiring to murder, kidnap, main and injure persons abroad.” Allegations only were provided. Precise details were omitted.

Earlier on July 22, the federal grand jury indictment listed seven counts:

- “conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists;
- conspiracy to murder, kidnap, main, and injure persons in a foreign country;
- receiving a firearm through interstate commerce;
- possession of a firearm to be used for a crime of violence;
- selling or otherwise disposing of a firearm and ammunition to a person knowing and having reasonable cause to believe was convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year;” and
- two counts of false statements.

The DOJ also alleged that “Daniel Boyd is a veteran of terrorist training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan who, over the past three years, has conspired with others in this country to recruit and help young men travel overseas in order to kill.” Again, no evidence was cited, just supposition-based accusations.

The indictment claimed that from 1989 – 1992, Boyd got “violent jihad” training abroad and “allegedly fought in Afghanistan” against the Soviets. Then from November 2006 through July 2009, he and the other defendants “conspired to provide material support and resources to terrorists, including currency, training, transportation and personnel” along with the other charges in the indictment. As part of the “conspiracy,” they “believe(d) that violent jihad was a personal religious obligation,” and they “were willing to die as martyrs.”

An eighth unnamed suspect is also being sought, a man believed to have traveled to Pakistan last year, for what purpose wasn't indicated.

According to US Attorney George EB Holding:

"These charges hammer home the point that terrorists and their supporters are not confined to the remote regions of some far away land but can grow and fester right here at home. Terrorists and their supporters are relentless and constant in their efforts to hurt and kill innocent people across the globe. We must be equally relentless and constant in our efforts to stop them."

Six of the seven men are being held at a Farmville, VA detention facility. When brought to trial, they'll face life sentences if convicted on the most serious charges. Yet according to The New York Times:

DOJ officials "said that the men charged on (July 22) were not seen as serious terrorist threats to the United States or American interests abroad, and that there were no indications of ties to Al Qaeda or other militant groups."

The claimed evidence relates solely to concern that they were "amassing a sizable number of automatic weapons, (the fact that Boyd had) foreign fighter experience, (and has) a network of contacts overseas, intending to recruit others who were on the fence."

Yet Attorney General Eric Holder and DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano cited the arrests as proof of increased "homegrown terrorism."

On August 5, AP reported that:

"Federal authorities said Tuesday (August 4) the accused ringleader of a group of North Carolina terrorism suspects talked about loving jihad, fighting for Allah and loathing a US military presence at Muslim holy sites."

Writer Mike Baker said FBI Special Agent Michael Sutton claimed Boyd wanted the defendants "to engage in jihad, train on firearms and travel overseas. Sutton said Boyd repeatedly spoke of armor-piercing ammunition and a year ago told a witness about his dislike of the US military in some Middle Eastern lands." According to Boyd, "They're over there killing our brothers."

In an August 5 Jewish World Review article, self-styled anti-terrorism expert and notorious Islamophobe Steven Emerson played up the prosecution charges of another homegrown terrorist plot using secretly (and perhaps illegally) FBI taped conversations and comments "reported by witnesses," including a voice identified as Boyd saying:

"If I don't leave this country soon, I am going to make jihad right here in America (and) Allah knows I love jihad."

Emerson said the FBI "found a fatwa, or religious edict, in Boyd's house saying Muslims have 'an individual duty to kill Americans and their allies.'"

Both Emerson and the Justice Department are notorious for manipulating, doctoring, or

inventing evidence to incite fear and intimidate juries to convict.

Yet this entire case appears as bogus as others, and this one is even stranger. Throughout the 1980s, the CIA and Pakistani ISI spent billions recruiting and training Afghan mujahedeen (including Osama bin Laden) to wage jihad against the Soviets. Ronald Reagan called them “freedom fighters.” Today, they’re “homegrown terrorists” with no apparent proof they plan crimes, just suspicions based on the flimsiest suppositions.

As for Daniel Patrick Boyd, the so-called ringleader, he arrived in Pakistan after the Soviets’ February 1989 withdrawal. Yet the CIA continued to support a civil war against the Kabul government, and beginning in 1977 began working with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a man “responsible for murdering hundreds of dedicated resistance fighters, political workers, and intellectuals (as well as being) a leading figure in the heroin trade,” according to Ralph McGehee, a former CIA veteran (from 1952 – 1977) and critic.

In 1977, Hekmatyar founded the Hezb-e-Islami Party of Islam. The CIA backed it with material support and weapons. Boyd arrived in Peshwar, Pakistan in 1989, apparently to work for a Muslim relief organization connected to the movement, not to train and fight as a mujahedeen. But in any event, Washington and the CIA backed the party and his activities.

Now he and the others are called jihadists, the DOJ citing Boyd, his son Zakariya, Yaghi, and Sherifi’s overseas travels as more proof. In March 2006, Boyd and his sons went to Gaza, then to Israel in June 2007 to visit Muslim holy sites. The DOJ claims the first trip was to meet with Palestinians who “believed that violent jihad was a personal religious obligation,” and the second to wage “violent jihad,” yet no evidence of specific crimes were mentioned or intent to commit them.

In October 2006, Yaghi, it was alleged, went to Jordan for the same reason, and so did Sherifi in July 2008 on a trip to Kosovo after which he “returned to North Carolina in April 2009, for the purpose of soliciting funds and personnel to support the mujahedeen” – the same fighters America backed in Afghanistan, then did again with KLA extremists in NATO/America’s war against Milosovic and Serbia.

Overall, the indictment is as bogus as others. It’s based on suppositions and unfounded claims but no clear evidence of intent to commit or support violent crimes. The defendants are being used to instill fear, justify the Iraq occupation, the escalated offensive in Afghanistan and spillover into Pakistan, and expanded US military presence globally, including on US streets if ordered. It’s happening at a time when we’re all as vulnerable as the Newburgh 4 and North Carolina 7.

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