

Russian experts see Israeli, US links in Jordan blasts, Lebanon murder

By [Global Research](#)

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Speakers in a Russian radio discussion have discerned an "Israeli connection" in the recent Amman bomb attacks and accused the USA of being behind the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. Member of the State Duma International Affairs Committee Shamil Sultanov said the bombs furthered the chances of Muhammad Dahlan to replace Mahmud Abbas as leader of the Palestinian National Authority. Middle East expert Vladimir Akhmedov said the Americans had targeted al-Hariri to get at Syrian President Bashar al-Asad and French President Jacques Chirac. The following is an excerpt from the programme in the "Panorama" series broadcast by Russian Mayak radio on 11 November. The subheadings have been added editorially:

[Presenter Vladimir Averin] Hello there. Live now on Mayak is "Panorama". Vladimir Averin at the microphone.

The blasts in Jordan, the Jordanian capital, Amman, have shaken that country and the region as a whole, and it seems that the repercussions have gone round the world. [Passage omitted] Our guests are Shamil Sultanov, member of the State Duma International Affairs Committee. [Passage omitted] And Vladimir Akhmedov, assistant professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations [MGIMO] and Middle East expert. [Passage omitted]

There are already a large number of commentaries in the press today. Various theories are being advanced. From your point of view, which of them is closest to the truth, Shamil Zagitovoch?

Israeli connection in Amman blasts

[Sultanov] [Passage omitted] If you consider these blasts, there are two key points, from my point of view. First, Jordan is a key player here for the Americans. The stance of the new king, Abdallah II, who, by the way is half-English, is fairly complex because contradictions have arisen between the old Jordanian team and the king in the last six months, even the last year. And in principle what has just happened is a very good opportunity for Abdallah II to make certain changes, to put it mildly, to his team and to strengthen his personal authority, and so on.

And the second theory I adhere to is the Israeli connection. Abu-Mazin [Mahmud Abbas], the leader of the Palestinian National Authority, is seriously ill. And many believe that his Fatah party may not win with such a leader, that it will definitely not win the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in the next few months. So for a very large number of

players – for the Americans, for Israel, for Sharon, for the Egyptians – [Palestinian Minister of Civilian Affairs Muhammad] Dahlan would be the optimal player and politician to replace Abu-Mazin. In that sense, these explosions, and in particular the murder, as a result of one of the blasts, of Bashir Nafi, the Palestinian National Authority’s military intelligence chief in the West Bank, is, from my point of view, a clearing of the way for Dahlan. [Passage omitted]

Change of elites

[Akhmedov] It is absolutely true that a very difficult and complex process of replacement of ruling elites is taking place in the Middle East. It is made particularly complicated by the pressure that the Near East experiences from the West on issues of democratization, reforms and liberalization, because the former ruling elites are naturally afraid of the possible consequences of their departure from the mechanisms of financial control that they command today, and the international community has not yet formulated a more or less intelligible mechanism for the departure of these former ruling elites.

Meanwhile, the process of the replacement of the ruling elites is gathering pace, and the USA is interfering in this process both diplomatically and, as we can see in the case of Iraq, by force. Thus the military-civilian balance of relations in each of these states and in the Middle East as a whole is being disturbed.

And Jordan is paying a very, very high price for its policy in the Middle East, a policy that is dictated in large measure by the purely geostrategic position of the country, which is surrounded by very powerful neighbours like Israel, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. [Passage omitted]

USA said behind al-Hariri murder

[Akhmedov] In what I would describe as his really epoch-making speech, his statement, Syrian President Bashar al-Asad demonstrated clearly that Syria’s fundamental strategy, as it has been in the past 50 years, despite enormous pressure over the past four years on the part of Europe and the Americans, will remain. [Passage omitted]

He said that the murder of [former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq] al-Hariri was an element of pressure on Syria. Syrians had nothing to do with the murder. Believe me: I’m a Middle East expert. If the Syrians had wanted to exert some sort of pressure or influence on al-Hariri, they would have had a great number of other methods. Then, in al-Sham [Greater Syria], people know each other well. They know that you are an enemy today, but tomorrow you may be a friend, and so on. And they never opt for such drastic measures, and so on.

My personal view is that Hariri was got rid of by the Americans. And there were even two targets. The first was [Syrian President] Bashar al-Asad, and the second was [French President Jacques] Chirac. It’s because Hariri was a very close friend of Chirac, very close. Hardly a month passed without a meeting between the two. He was a very close friend. People who know about politics should know what very close friend means.

And so they wanted to catch them out and spoil relations between Chirac and the Arab world. And they did succeed. They did succeed. But they did not succeed on the second point. They did not force the Syrians to capitulate. [Passage omitted]

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