

Senator John McCain Meets Leaders of Terror Brigade in Syria. The NGOs that Made it Happen

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The recent furore surrounding US senator John McCain's illegal trip inside Syria, and the supposed 'rebels' he was seen posing with alongside Supreme Military Council (SMC) Chief Salim Idriss, have shed further light on what appears to be another corrupt 'NGO' enterprise.

After the worldwide publication of the photographs, McCain was quick to try to dispel rumours that the Syrian 'rebels' were the very people responsible for the kidnapping of 11 Lebanese pilgrims inside Syria, who still remain in captivity to this day. Contrary to McCain's - and his media apologists - desperate attempts to refute the claims; many reports suggested it was indeed the kidnappers he was seen posing with. Furthermore, in one report in Lebanon's [Al Akhbar](#), it is claimed McCain even went so far as to ask the kidnappers to hold some of the captive pilgrims, as they are suspected members of Hezbollah. According to a source who had previously been in contact with the kidnappers, McCain was allegedly there "to obstruct the efforts... to secure the release of the hostages." Lebanon's the [Daily Star](#) also reported on the "crossing of paths" between McCain, Mohammad Nour and Ammar Al-Dadikhi (a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim), who are members of 'rebel' group the Northern Storm; alleged to be holding the 11 Lebanese pilgrims.



In a [report](#) by Josh Rogin of the Daily Beast, it is claimed the 'rebels' McCain was seen posing with were not those responsible for the kidnapping, stating: (my emphasis)

The man said to be Nour by the Lebanese press never identified himself to McCain or to anyone else and that man was not inside McCain's meeting with the rebels, **two American NGO** workers who were there on the scene told The Daily Beast on Thursday.

The first of these American 'NGO' workers responsible for setting up the McCain meeting and illegal trip into Syria is one Mouaz Moustafa, who is named as the Executive Director of 'non-profit' organisation the '[Syrian Emergency Task Force.](#)' (SETF). Moustafa has previously worked as a staffer at the US House of Congress and Senate. He was also an 'activist' during the US/NATO- led illegal war in Libya and overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi. Moustafa is listed as an 'expert' at the Wasington Institute for Near East Policy, ([WINEP](#)), the sub-branch of the huge Israeli lobby: the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC](#); which regularly lobbies for US militarism and 'intervention' in the Middle East to uphold Israeli 'interests'.

Moustafa, in his 'expert' role, has also recently addressed a WINEP conference on the Syrian conflict. (since these suspicious links were highlighted by an investigative reporter they have been removed from WINEP's website.) Anyone with a passing knowledge of Israeli/Syrian relations and the [power and influence](#) these lobbying groups hold in Washington and within corporate US media, knows these affiliations are dubious to say the least. In a report by investigative journalist [Maidhc Ó Cathail](#) on the [Passionate Attachment](#) blog, it is also revealed:

Even more intriguingly, one of the web addresses for Moustafa's nonprofit is "syriantaskforce.torahacademybr.org." The "[torahacademybr.org](#)" URL belongs to the Torah Academy of Boca Raton, Florida whose academic goals notably include "inspiring a love and commitment to Eretz Yisroel."

The second 'NGO' worker quoted in the Daily Beast is one Elizabeth Obagy, named as Political Director of the same 'NGO' the SETF. The name Elizabeth Obagy immediately rang alarm bell's. Obagy is also a "Syria analyst" at the [Institute for the Study of War](#) (ISW). The ISW in its mission statement describes itself as: (my emphasis)

The Institute for the Study of War advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education. **We are committed to improving the nation's [the US] ability to execute military operations and respond to emerging threats in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.** ISW is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization.

Upon reading ISW's Board of Directors and donors from their [2011 annual report](#), it becomes rather obvious as to what the ISW is designed for and whose 'objectives' it is designed to propagate. A quick glance of the ISW's main donors for 2011 is telling; the list of military (defense) contractor's donors include:

[General Dynamics](#), (General Dynamics is a market leader in business aviation; land and expeditionary combat vehicles and systems, armaments, and munitions; shipbuilding and marine systems; and mission-critical information systems and technology.) [CACI](#), (CACI provides information solutions and services in support of national security missions and government transformation for Intelligence, Defense, and Federal Civilian clients. A member of the Fortune 1000 Largest Companies and the Russell 2000 Index, CACI provides dynamic careers for approximately 15,000 employees working in over 120 offices worldwide.)

[DynCorp International](#), (DynCorp International is a global government services provider in support of U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives, delivering support solutions for defense, diplomacy, and international development.)

[Palantir](#), (Our products are built for real analysis with a focus on security, scalability, ease of use and collaboration. They are broadly deployed in the intelligence, defense, law enforcement and financial communities.)

[Northrop Grumman](#), (Northrop Grumman is a leading global security company providing innovative systems, products and solutions in unmanned systems, cybersecurity, C4ISR, and logistics and modernization to government and commercial customers worldwide.)

These companies represent just a few of the huge US corporate military contractors, ranging from hardware and logistics, to telecommunications and intelligence software that are primary donors of the ISW. The ISW describes its Corporate affiliations as a “Corporate Council”: (my emphasis)

Many of America’s top corporations are members of ISW’s Corporate Council. Corporate Council members believe that an advanced understanding of military issues results in significantly better national security policy. **They recognize the relevance, accuracy, and impact of ISW’s research and analysis.** Corporate Council members receive a number of benefits, **including exclusive briefings with ISW’s leadership**, advance publications, access to our network, **tailored analysis**, increased corporate visibility, and **invitations to exclusive events and discussions with national security leaders.**

So the ISW is providing “tailored analysis” for its Corporate clients, and also provides “exclusive briefings with ISW leadership”. Does this sound like a ‘non-profit’ organisation? Does providing “tailored analysis” for military contractors include raising the ‘need’ for such equipment and contracts? And do military contractors make money in any other way than profiting from war? One would find it difficult to put these things together and not see a conflict of interest from this alleged ‘objective’ research NGO.

The board of Directors at the ISW is also somewhat telling as to its political and corporate affiliations, some of the distinguished board members include such humanitarian adherents as founder of ISW Kimberly Kagan (Supported US ‘surge in Iraq, husband is resident scholar at Neo-Con ‘think-tank’ the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), brother is the husband to State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland) Liz Cheney, (daughter of war-criminal Dick) and leading Neo-Con mouthpiece and US militarist William Krystol, who all sit alongside many fellow US-militarism proponents, retired US Army Generals, and policy planners.

It seems that at least one of the organisers for McCains trip: Elizabeth Obagy, named as a “Political Director” of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, is also a “Syria specialist” at what appears to be a Neo-Con led US ‘NGO’ that propagates US militarism on behalf of huge military contractors and ‘defense’ corporations. So why would Liz Obagy be organising illegal trips for US Senator John McCain into Syria in her role as “political director” at the SETF, whilst also claiming to offer ‘balanced’, ‘neutral’ and ‘objective analysis’ on the Syrian conflict? One doesn’t have to be a rocket scientist to realise there is a massive conflict of interest here. When approached on Twitter, Moustafa of the SETF, which is based in Washington DC, claimed their funding comes from American Syrian doctors and expatriate donors. The mission statement of the SETF is as follows: (my emphasis)

To organize, mobilize and empower the Syrian American community,

and our partners in order to play a positive role in public policy regarding Syria and the Middle East, supporting the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people, improving the lives of average Syrian people, strengthening the rule of law, and **helping in transitioning Syria into a viable, inclusive, diverse, democratic state.**

Without delving too far into Moustafa's ties to the US Government through his previous work experience and former 'activist' work; it becomes clear that his current duties are at the behest of the US State Department. In a recent press release the SETF personally thanked the State Department: (my emphasis)

Washington, DC-The Syrian Emergency Task Force would like to thank all those involved in making Senator McCain's trip to Gaziantep and to Syria a success, **particularly the U.S. Department of State**....It was a pleasure working with the Department of State in ensuring that the Senator's visit went safely and flawlessly," said SETF Executive Director Mouaz Moustafa.

Employing "political Directors", that are affiliated with Neo-Con, and military contractor funded 'NGO' the Institute for the Study of War, seems somewhat contradictory to "improving the lives of average Syrian people", and "supporting democratic aspirations" in the Middle East. Has it occurred to Moustafa and Obagy, that the vast majority of Syrian people want nothing to do with war criminals and pushers of all things US/Israeli militarism under the guise of "freedom and democracy"? One thinks this is out of the equation, and Moustafa's 'Syrian Emergency Task Force' outfit is nothing more than a State Department/Neo-Con/Israel lobby initiated, propaganda outfit.

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