

# South Africa Robbed of Its Independence

By [Danny Schechter](#)

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

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After months of covert pressure, lobbying, bullying and offering various “incentives,” South Africa has now cut its imports of Iranian Oil. The US campaign forced South Africa to compromise its own independence.

South Africa stopped all imports of Iranian oil as of July 2012 even though Iran traditionally was one of its biggest suppliers. Trade statistics showed that South Africa bought 42% of its oil from Iran a year ago. Now the oil is flowing in from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Angola. (South Africa also announced that gas prices will be going up by 97 cents per gallon, a development that may or may not be linked.

Changes in trade practices like this just don't happen; they are well organized externally.

This may be more evidence of the analysis offered by South African economist Sampie Terreblance in his new book *Lost in Transformation*, arguing that South Africa's economy has now been “Americanized” and integrated into an American-led neo-liberal global order.

There has been a debate here on what its proper relationship should be with Iran. In an essay on the Voice of the Cape website, Iqbal Jassat of the Media Review Network, suggests that there has been CIA pressure on South Africa to be more hostile to Iran.

He writes, “instead of being alarmed or at the least being curious, media seem to have ignored the questionable role of America's spooks in South Africa. The foremost question that requires probing is the timing of leaks in relation to an Israeli-inspired frenzy led by the Obama administration to impose sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As this scandal allegedly centers on so-called “sanctions busting”, it is entirely inappropriate to accept a narrative framed by the American government that would have South Africa believe it is guilty of a heinous crime by doing business with Iran. Quite distinct from the basis of this new round of sensational reports which are quite damning if true for they reveal the nature of deals constructed by being close or connected to political heavyweights, concerns raised by me relate to the ability of foreign entities to attack South Africa's economy!

So by setting aside allegations of fraud and corruption as a matter for investigation by the office of the Public Protector, a challenge facing media is to investigate the role of foreign agencies allied to American/Israeli interests intent on undermining South Africa's legitimate trade ties with Iran.”

Even as the Associated Press reports that this has been the first Republican convention since 1952 in which speakers did not openly advocate foreign wars. Vice President Joe Biden

charged Sunday night that Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney is pressing for a war with Syria and Iran.

Iran may not have been a major theme at the Tampa convention, but it was discussed even as the event was dominated by talk of tax cuts, cuts of government programs, and justifications of rule by the rich.

Iran was not far from the minds of many, according to Dan Froomkin, writing in the Huffington Post:

“Bob Merry, the editor of the National Interest and author of “Where They Stand: The American Presidents in the Eyes of Voters and Historians,” said ‘I think America is going to have a relatively bellicose foreign policy, and that may not necessarily be in the best interest of America.’

Merry argues that the U.S. is already on the path to war with Iran. Romney is less likely than Obama to change that course, he said.

Now, there’s also a highly visible and politicized Republican-led US based network trying to mobilize public pressure on Iran, calling for a boycott of the South Africa-based cellphone company for trading with Iran.

The group calls itself “United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI).” Its CEO is Ambassador Mark D. Wallace. Wallace worked for Governor Jeb Bush in Florida where he became an operative in the controversial George W Bush Campaign in 2000 that was accused of suppressing black participation, if not stealing the vote.

President Bush then rewarded him with a post at the UN. He opposed the UN’s Review of the World Conference on Racism held in South Africa -the so-called Durban 2 meeting that the US later boycotted. The lobby supporting Israel later mobilized a global campaign against the conference because the Iranian President was scheduled to speak.

You can be fairly certain that if the Romney campaign wins, Ambassador Wallace will likely join the Administration as a point person on Iran.

He is also Chief Executive Officer of the Tigris Financial Group, a New York City-based investment, advisory and asset management firm involved in mining

He founded UANI alongside former CIA Director R. James Woolsey, with support from intelligence professionals in other countries. He later married Nicole Wallace who served as Communications Director for the McCain Campaign in 2008.

According to Wikipedia, “since its founding, Wallace has led UANI in dozens of successful business and corporate campaigns that have called on such multinational firms as General Electric, Huntsman, Caterpillar, Ingersoll Rand, Porsche, Hyundai, Fiat,[ Royal Dutch Shell, Terex and Siemens to end their business dealings in Iran.”

His group recently issued a strongly rhetorical statement making charges that the South African cellphone company MTN actively conspired to bypass U.S. sanctions and procure U.S. technology for Iran:

It is clear that the folks who now want to boycott MTN were silent when it came to boycotts

against apartheid South Africa.

Selective outrage at companies seeking to do business with Iran also avoids the many complaints Americans have with criminal corporate sector's practices inside the US. It is easier to be "patriotically correct" towards so-called "sanctions busters" than admit that there are far more blatant corporate violations at home in the US.

I am referring to the large financial firms who are allowed to "settle" government charges of criminal conduct in a compromised and unethical business culture that operates out of sight and above the law while transferring more and more wealth to the super-rich.

This concern was conspicuous by its total absence at the Republican convention just as it often is in the dealings of the Obama Justice Department that is leading the legal charge against "Sanctions busters" when it comes to Iran, but ignoring the plunder of what wealth ordinary Americans still have by Wall Street firms.

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