

# Terrorism as an Instrument of Imperial Conquest. From Afghanistan to Syria, America Supports Al Qaeda

By [William Blum](#)

Global Research, January 10, 2014  
[williamblum.org](http://williamblum.org)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*"At last the world knows America as the savior of the world!"* – President Woodrow Wilson, Paris Peace Conference, 1919

The horrors reported each day from Syria and Iraq are enough to make one cry; in particular, the atrocities carried out by the al-Qaeda types: floggings; beheadings; playing soccer with the heads; cutting open dead bodies to remove organs just for mockery; suicide bombers, car bombs, the ground littered with human body parts; countless young children traumatized for life; the imposition of *sharia* law, including bans on music ... What century are we living in? What millennium? What world?

People occasionally write to me that my unwavering antagonism toward American foreign policy is misplaced; that as awful as Washington's Museum of Horrors is, al-Qaeda is worse and the world needs the United States to combat the awful jihadists.

"Let me tell you about the very rich," F. Scott Fitzgerald famously wrote. "They are different from you and me."

And let me tell you about American leaders. In power, they don't think the way you and I do. They don't feel the way you and I do. They have supported "awful jihadists" and their moral equivalents for decades. Let's begin in 1979 in Afghanistan, where the *Moujahedeen* ("holy warriors") were in battle against a secular, progressive government supported by the Soviet Union; a "favorite tactic" of the *Moujahedeen* was "to torture victims [often Russians] by first cutting off their nose, ears, and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another", producing "a slow, very painful death".

With America's massive and indispensable military backing in the 1980s, Afghanistan's last secular government (bringing women into the 20th century) was overthrown, and out of the victorious *Moujahedeen* arose al Qaeda.

During this same period the United States was supporting the infamous *Khmer Rouge* of Cambodia; yes, the same charming lads of Pol Pot and The Killing Fields.

President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was a leading force behind the US support of both the *Moujahedeen* and the *Khmer Rouge*. What does that tell you about that American leader? Or Jimmy Carter – an inspiration out of office, but a rather different person in the White House? Or Nobel Peace Laureate Barack Obama, who chose Brzezinski as one of his advisers?

Another proud example of the United States fighting the awful jihadists is Kosovo, an overwhelmingly Muslim province of Serbia. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began an armed conflict with Belgrade in the early 1990s to split Kosovo from Serbia. The KLA was considered a terrorist organization by the US, the UK and France for years, with numerous reports of the KLA having contact with al-Qaeda, getting arms from them, having its militants trained in al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan, and even having members of al-Qaeda in KLA ranks fighting against Serbia. But Washington's imperialists, more concerned about dealing a blow to Serbia, "the last communist government in Europe", supported the KLA.

The KLA have been known for their torture and trafficking in women, heroin, and human body parts (sic). The United States has naturally been pushing for Kosovo's membership in NATO and the European Union.

More recently the US has supported awful jihadists in Libya and Syria, with awful consequences.

It would, moreover, be difficult to name a single brutal dictatorship of the second half of the 20th Century that was not supported by the United States; not only supported, but often put into power and kept in power against the wishes of the population. And in recent years as well, Washington has supported very repressive governments, such as Saudi Arabia, Honduras, Indonesia, Egypt, Colombia, Qatar, and Israel.

Not exactly the grand savior our sad old world is yearning for. (Oh, did I mention that Washington's policies create a never-ending supply of terrorists?)

And what do American leaders think of their own record? Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was probably speaking for the whole private club when she wrote that in the pursuit of its national security the United States no longer needed to be guided by "notions of international law and norms" or "institutions like the United Nations" because America was "on the right side of history."

If you've never done anything you wouldn't want the government to know about, you should re-examine your life choices.

"The idea is to build an antiterrorist global environment," a senior American defense official said in 2003, "so that in 20 to 30 years, terrorism will be like slave-trading, completely discredited."

One must wonder: When will the dropping of bombs on innocent civilians by the United States, and invading and occupying their country become completely discredited? When will the use of depleted uranium, cluster bombs, CIA torture renditions, and round-the-world, round-the-clock surveillance become things that even men like George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Barack Obama, and John Brennan will be too embarrassed to defend?

Last month, a former National Security Agency official told the Washington Post that the Agency's workers are polishing up their résumés and asking that they be cleared - removing any material linked to classified programs - so they can be sent out to potential employers. He noted that one employee who processes the résumés said, "I've never seen so many résumés that people want to have cleared in my life."

Morale is "bad overall", said another former official. "The news - the Snowden disclosures -

it questions the integrity of the NSA workforce,” he said. “It’s become very public and very personal. Literally, neighbors are asking people, ‘Why are you spying on Grandma?’ And we aren’t. People are feeling bad, beaten down.”

President Obama was recently moved to declare that he would be proposing “some self-restraint on the NSA” and “some reforms that can give people more confidence.” He also said “In some ways, the technology and the budgets and the capacity [at NSA] have outstripped the constraints. And we’ve got to rebuild those in the same way that we’re having to do on a whole series of capacities ... [such as] drone operations.”

Well, dear readers and comrades, we shall see. But if you’re looking for a glimmer of hope to begin a new year, you may as well try grabbing onto these little offerings. When the American Empire crumbles, abroad and at home, as one day it must, Edward Snowden’s courageous actions may well be seen as one of the key steps along that road. I’ve long maintained that only the American people have the power to stop The Imperial Machine – the monster that eats the world’s environment, screws up its economies, and spews violence on every continent. And for that to happen the American people have to lose their deep-seated, quasi-religious belief in “American Exceptionalism”. For many, what they’ve been forced to learn the past six months has undoubtedly worn deep holes into the protective armor that has surrounded their hearts and minds since childhood.

A surprising and exhilarating example of one of these holes in the armor is the New Year’s day editorial in the *New York Times* that is now well known. Entitled “Edward Snowden, Whistle-blower” – itself a legitimization of his actions – its key part says: “Considering the enormous value of the information he has revealed, and the abuses he has exposed, Mr. Snowden deserves better than a life of permanent exile, fear and flight. He may have committed a crime to do so, but he has done his country a great service.”

The president has been moved to appoint a committee to study NSA abuses. This of course is a standard bureaucratic maneuver to keep critics at bay. But the committee – Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies – did come up with a few unexpected recommendations in its report presented December 13, the most interesting of which perhaps are these two:

“Governments should not use surveillance to steal industry secrets to advantage their domestic industry.”

“Governments should not use their offensive cyber capabilities to change the amounts held in financial accounts or otherwise manipulate the financial systems.”

The first recommendation refers to a practice, though certainly despicable, that is something the United States has been doing, and lying about, for decades. Just this past September, James Clapper, Director of US National Intelligence, declared: “What we do not do, as we have said many times, is use our foreign intelligence capabilities to steal the trade secrets of foreign companies.”

Clapper is the same gentleman who told Congress in March that the NSA does not intentionally collect any kind of data on millions of Americans; and, when subsequently challenged on this remark, declared: “I responded in what I thought was the most truthful, or least untruthful, manner by saying ‘no’.”

The second recommendation had not been revealed before, in a Snowden document or from any other source.

“That was a strangely specific recommendation for something nobody was talking about,” observed the director of a government transparency group.

*ABC News* reported that “A spokesperson for the NSA declined to comment on the issue of bank account hacking, and a representative for U.S. Cyber Command did not immediately return an emailed request for comment.”

Manipulating bank records is about as petty and dishonorable as a superpower can behave, and could conceivably, eventually, lead to the end of the NSA as we’ve all come to know and love it. On the other hand, the Agency no doubt holds some very embarrassing information about anyone in a position to do them harm.

The bombing of Flight 103 – Case closed?

When the 25th anniversary of the 1988 bombing of PanAm Flight 103 occurred on December 21 I was fully expecting the usual repetitions of the false accusation against Libya and Moammar Gaddafi as being responsible for the act which took the lives of 270 people over and in Lockerbie, Scotland. But much to my surprise, mingled with such, there were a rash of comments skeptical of the official British-US version, made by various people in Scotland and elsewhere, including by the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and Libya.

In a joint statement the three governments said they were determined to unearth the truth behind the attack. “We want all those responsible for this brutal act of terrorism brought to justice, and to understand why it was committed”, they declared.

Remarkable. In 1991, the United States indicted a Libyan named Adelbaset al-Megrahi. He was eventually found guilty of being the sole perpetrator of the crime, kept in prison for many years, and finally released in 2009 when he had terminal cancer, allegedly for humanitarian reasons, although an acute smell of oil could be detected. And now they speak of bringing to justice “those responsible for this brutal act of terrorism”.

The 1988 crime was actually organized by Iran in retaliation for the American shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane in July of the same year, which took the lives of 290 people. It was carried out by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), a 1968 breakaway from a component of the Palestine Liberation Organization, with some help from Syria. And this version was very widely accepted in the Western world, in government and media circles. Until the US buildup to the Gulf War came along in 1990 and the support of Iran and Syria was needed. Then, suddenly, we were told that it was Libya behind the crime.

If the US and UK now wish to return to Iran, and perhaps Syria, as the culprits, they will have a lot of explaining to do about their previous lie. But these two governments always have a lot of explaining to do. They’re good at it. And the great bulk of their indoctrinated citizens, with little resistance, will accept the new/old party line, and their mainstream media will effortlessly switch back to the old/new official version, since Iran and Syria are at the top of the current list of Bad Guys. (The PFLP-GC has been quiescent for some time and may scarcely exist.)

If you're confused by all this, I suggest that you start by [reading my detailed article on the history of this case](#), written in 2001 but still very informative and relevant. You may be rather surprised.

The UK, US and Libyan governments have now announced that they will co-operate to reveal "the full facts" of the Lockerbie bombing. And Robert Mueller, the former head of the FBI, said he believes more people will be charged. This could be very interesting.

#### Free books of historical value

1. The complete set, less one volume, of the 15 Church Committee (1975-6) volumes. Lacking only Final Report, book 6: "Congressional Research Service. Supplementary Reports on Intelligence Activities."
2. The complete set, less one volume, of the 6 Pike Committee volumes. Lacking only volume 6: "Committee Proceedings, part II"
3. The Rockefeller Commission Report, one volume.
4. Hearings on FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) before Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (same as Church Committee), one volume.

Total of 21 volumes, all from 1975-1976, all in good condition. Either pick them up in Washington, DC or send me \$10 for postage.

#### Notes

1. *Washington Post* May 11, 1979; *New York Times*, April 13 1979
2. William Blum, "Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower" (2005), chapter 10
3. RT TV (*Russia Today*, Moscow), May 4, 2012
4. *Associated Press*, December 14, 2010
5. *Foreign Affairs (Council on Foreign Relations)*, January/February 2000 issue
6. *New York Times*, January 17, 2003
7. *Washington Post*, December 7, 2013
8. *Washington Post*, December 18, 2013
9. *Washington Post*, December 7, 2013
10. "[Liberty and Security in a Changing World](#)", p.221
11. See [Anti-Empire Report, #118](#), June 26, 2013, second part
12. [Statement by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper on Allegations of Economic Espionage](#), September 8, 2013
13. *NBC News*, June 9, 2013
14. Kel McLanahan, executive director of National Security Counselors, speaking to *ABC News Radio*, December 23, 2013
15. *ABC News Radio*, December 23, 2013
16. *Reuters* news agency, December 22, 2013

The original source of this article is [williamblum.org](http://williamblum.org)

Copyright © [William Blum](http://William Blum), [williamblum.org](http://williamblum.org), 2014

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

## **Become a Member of Global Research**

Articles by: [William Blum](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)