

# The Assassination of Iranian Scientists: In What Way is Iran a Threat to Israel?

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Global Research, February 17, 2012

17 February 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)  
In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

*To avoid restating the obvious, or repeating what others have already established, I take these facts as givens: that the main perpetrator of the assassination of Iranian scientists has been the Israeli spy agency Mossad, assisted by various covert operations agencies of the United States and its allies; that the claim of Iran's possessing or pursuing a nuclear arms program is false; and that, therefore, the assertion that Iran poses an "existential" threat to Israel is, likewise, a fiction designed to justify plans of war and regime change in that country.*

*I would also like to make it clear at the outset that while the imperial powers of the West and their allies, including the Iranian expats collaborating with them, certainly pursue their own nefarious objectives in hunting for regime change in Iran, the focus of this essay is primarily on Israel, and its motives for trying to overthrow the Iranian government.*

## IN WHAT WAY IS IRAN A THREAT TO ISRAEL?

A statement or an answer to a question can of course be false simply because of a lack of knowledge of the true answer. The claim that Iran's nuclear program poses an "existential" threat to Israel, however, is false not because those who make the claim lack the knowledge that Iran's nuclear program does not entail arms production, but because they apparently need to fabricate a pretext for the purposes of destabilization and regime change in that country.

However, while its nuclear program poses no threat to Israel (or any other country), Iran nonetheless poses a threat of a different nature to the expansionist plans of Israel and its allies in the region. That threat stems from Iran's national sovereignty, its independence from imperial powers, its unwavering exposition of (and challenge to) the radical Zionist project of "greater Israel," and its defense of the rights of the Palestinian people to their land and their homes.

Iran under the Shah was a close ally of Israel, upholding military and diplomatic ties and supplying it with oil. Since the overthrow of the Shah (1979), however, Iran has switched alliances from the oppressor to the oppressed, the Palestinian people. Not that Iran denies the right of the Jewish people to live in the historical Palestine; but it maintains that such co-existence should be based on international laws and conventions: that is, in a united (one) state and under a democratically-elected government based on one person, one vote, with equal rights to all citizens.

Not only does Iran expose Israel's formal gestures of peace negotiations with Palestinians as

disingenuous delaying tactics, it also exposes the shameful collaboration of most of the Arab leaders with Israel and its imperialist masters in this charade. As this makes Iran's policy of national sovereignty popular in the Arab-Muslim world, it also earns it the wrath of not only the Israeli and Imperialist powers but also of most of the Arab leaders—hence, the unholy alliance of them all against Iran.

Israel's fear of Iran is, therefore, a fear of being exposed for what it is, and what it stands for, that is, fear of the truth, not of Iran's non-existing nuclear weapons.

What frightens Israel and its allies most is the example of the Iranian revolution of 1979, and its subsequent national independence from external powers. Contrary to the distorted image of Iran in the West, the country's resistance to the Zionist-imperialist pressure is quite popular in the Arab/Muslim world. This is clearly reflected in a number of public opinion polls (taken by well-known pollsters of the United States and other Western countries) that consistently rank President Ahmadinejad of Iran (and Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah of Lebanon's Hezbollah) above the corrupt and cringing rulers of Arab countries—despite the fact that Iran is neither Arab nor Sunni, as most Arab countries are.

Not surprisingly, many observers of the recent social upheavals in the Arab/Muslim world, known as the Arab spring, argue that these revolutionary movements may have in subtle and roundabout ways been inspired by the Iranian revolution. Nor is it surprising that, to put an end to these revolutionary upheavals, Israel and its allies have gone all out on a relentless mission to destroy the Iranian example of national sovereignty through policies of destabilization and regime change.

#### A STATE OF TERRORISM, BY TERRORISM, FOR TERRORISM

It is no secret that the state of Israel was created through the expropriation of the Palestinian land by terrorizing and evicting them from their homes—750,000 in the initial 1948 raid alone. Nor is it a secret that Israel has since its creation held to and expanded territory also through terrorism. It is equally clear that militant Zionist leaders of Israel base their future policies of occupation and control on sheer military force and terrorizing strategies—hence, Israel a state of, by and for terrorism.

In an article titled, "The Israeli Terrorist State and its Mossad Assassins," the late professor Israel Shahak, a Holocaust survivor, and chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights from 1970 until 1990, famously wrote: "There is nothing new in the fact that Israel is a terrorist state, which, almost from its inception, has used its intelligence service (the Mossad) to assassinate people on foreign soil with any violence or terror it considers necessary for its ends."

Of course, the Palestinian people bear the bulk of the brunt of the Israeli carnage. The policy of violent obliteration of "existential threats," real or perceived, to the expansionist plans of Israel, however, goes beyond Palestinians and their supporters in the Arab/Muslim world; it also includes targets in other parts of the world, including the United States, Israel's most generous benefactor and staunchest ally.

The following is a small sample of instances of Israel's acts of violence against targets viewed as threats to its existence or interests (there is no chronological or any other type of order in the list provided below).

- One of the most notorious acts of Israeli terrorism occurred in the immediate aftermath of its surprise invasion of Palestine in 1948, when Jewish forces, members of the LEHI underground (also known as the Stern Gang) assassinated Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte, a U.N. appointed mediator. Bernadotte was killed on September 17, 1948, a day after he offered his second mediation plan which, among other things, called for repatriation and compensation for the Palestinian refugees [1].
- There is also “evidence that in 1991 an Israeli undercover team planned to assassinate a U.S. president. The intended victim was George Herbert Walker Bush.” The plot was planned to be carried out when President Bush “went to Madrid for the opening day of the peace conference to be held that year.” Bush’s sin was that he had attempted to pressure Israel into ending its illegal settlement expansion on confiscated Palestinian land by withholding loan guarantees to Israel until it ended this practice. The planned assassination was not carried out, however, presumably because Victor Ostrovsky, a former Mossad agent, who had written a book exposing Israel’s spy agency, had given it away [2].
- Iranian scientists are not the first to fall prey to Israeli-orchestrated targeted killings. Israel has over the years “assassinated a number of scientists of various nationalities.” For example, “In 1990 a Canadian-American scientist and father of seven, Gerald Bull, was assassinated in Belgium. All indications are that it was an Israeli Mossad hit team that drilled five bullets into the back of his head and neck” [2].
- In a similarly cold-blooded fashion, a number of US peace activists have in recent years been “intentionally killed, maimed, and injured by Israeli forces, including 23-year-old Rachel Corrie, 21-year-old Brian Avery, 37-year-old Tristan Anderson, 21-year-old Emily Henochowicz, and 21-year-old FurkanDogan” [2].
- In 1967, Israeli air and sea forces perpetrated an almost two-hour assault in which they tried to sink a U.S. technical Navy ship (USS Liberty) with a crew of 300. While the attack failed to sink the ship, it succeeded in killing 34 Americans and injuring 174. Analysts have conjured that this was a false-flag operation, intended to blame Egypt for the attack, had the ship gone down and the evidence of Israeli culpability was not discovered [2].
- In 1954, Israeli secret agents planted explosives in the U.S. diplomatic and “cultural” centers in Cairo and Alexandria in an effort to create animosity between Egypt and the United States by blaming the plot, known as the Lavon Affair, on Egyptians. A premature detonation of one of the devices undid the plot before it could cause horrendous death and destruction. Israel later honored the perpetrator, Marcello Ninio [3].
- The first known act of deliberately shooting down a civilian airline was carried out by Israel in February 1973. “Libyan Arab Airlines Flight 114 was a regularly scheduled flight from Tripoli to Cairo via Benghazi. . . . The aircraft was piloted by a mostly French crew . . . under a contractual arrangement between Air France and Libyan Arab Airlines.” On the orders of the then Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, the plane was shot down by Israeli fighter jets, killing 107 of its 113 passengers, including the entire French crew [4].
- Zionist terror did not even spare Jews. In 1940, MenachemBegin’s Irgun ZweiLeumi terrorist gang bombed the ship Patria in Haifa harbor, killing 240 Jewish refugees, so as to put the blame on the British for political gain. And in 1950-1951, Israeli agents were dispatched to Iraq where they tossed hand grenades into the crowded Massauda Shem-Tov synagogue, causing numerous deaths, in order to blame it on the Iraqis and encourage

reluctant Iraqi Jews to immigrate to Israel [3].

## THE ORIGINAL SIN

Horrendous as these crimes are, they do not mean that radical Zionist planners and/or perpetrators of such offenses are born with terrorist genes. They are rather indicative of the fact that their perpetrators are captive to a selfish and self-inflicted ideology of apartheid that aims to build an exclusive or predominantly Jewish state in the historical Palestine that would stretch from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean coasts, the so-called “greater Israel.” It should not be difficult to see how a plan of creating and maintaining an unlawful state in the homes and lands of other people might create a siege mentality of paranoia proportions in the minds of the occupiers, reacting violently to any questioning of the legitimacy of such a state. Writer/researcher Ronald Bleier has aptly called the ideological foundation of the state of Israel, Zionism, the “Original sin”:

“Israel’s Original sin is Zionism, the ideology that a Jewish State should replace the former Palestine. At the root of the problem is Zionism’s exclusivist structure whereby only Jews are treated as first-class citizens. In order to create and consolidate a Jewish State in 1948, Zionists expelled 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland and never allowed them or their descendants to return. In addition, Israeli forces destroyed over 400 Palestinian villages and perpetrated about three dozen massacres. In 1967, the Israelis forced another 350,000 Palestinians to flee the West Bank and Gaza as well as 147,000 Syrians from the Golan Heights” [1].

Terrorism is a logical outcome of this “Original sin,” or radical Zionism, since a major component of the scheme of establishing and maintaining the state of Israel is removal (including physical elimination) of any and all threats, real or perceived, to this plan. Elimination of any and all threats—this is key to a better understanding of Israel’s policy of terrorism, whether it is wholesale terrorism carried out by unilateral wars and aerial bombardments, or retail terrorism and targeted assassinations. It also helps explain the brutal assassination of Iranian scientists, as part a well-established pattern of targeted killings.

## CONCLUSION

The well-documented pattern of Israel’s policy of targeted killings shows that the assassination of Iranian scientists is neither the first nor the last of Israel’s acts of terrorism. It also shows that the claim that Iran’s nuclear program presents an “existential” threat to Israel is no more than a harebrained excuse to deflect attention from the real threat to Israel: hardline Zionism, or the ideology of colonization and occupation by military force.

As long as this poisonous ideology (which is dangerous not only to the Palestinian people but also, ultimately, to the Jewish people) persists, so would resistance and opposition to it. Today that alleged threat is said to come from Iran and Hezbollah, yesterday it came from Nasser’s Egypt and the PLO, tomorrow it would be from other sources of anti-occupation in the region ... and the day after it would be from anti-apartheid forces worldwide, including many among Jewish people, just as it happened in South Africa.

Many well-intentioned critics, including a large number of far-sighted Jews, have long warned against the inherent limits and dangers of occupation and rule by military force. Such concerns are perhaps best expressed by these sage yet simple words of Albert

Einstein: "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." Radical Zionist leaders have responded, in a patronizing fashion, that while Einstein was a good scientist, he was politically naive. The logic of things, the history of Israeli relationship with its neighbors, as well as its uncertain future show, however, that Einstein's warning is indeed prophetic.

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