

The Liquid Bomb Hoax: The Larger Implications

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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The charges leveled by the British, US and Pakistani regimes that they uncovered a major bomb plot directed against nine US airlines is based on the flimsiest of evidence, which would be thrown out of any court, worthy of its name.

An analysis of the current state of the investigation raises a series of questions regarding the governments' claims of a bomb plot concocted by 24 Brits of Pakistani origin.

The arrests were followed by the search for evidence, as the August 12, 2006 Financial Times states: "The police set about the mammoth task of gathering evidence of the alleged terrorist bomb plot yesterday." (FT, August 12/, 2006) In other words, the arrests and charges took place without sufficient evidence — a peculiar method of operation — which reverses normal investigatory procedures in which arrests follow the "monumental task of gathering evidence." If the arrests were made without prior accumulation of evidence, what were the bases of the arrests?

The government search of financial records and transfers turned up no money trail despite the freezing of accounts. The police search revealed limited amounts of savings, as one would expect from young workers, students and employees from low-income immigrant families.

The British government, backed by Washington, claimed that the Pakistani government's arrest of two British-Pakistanis provided "critical evidence" in uncovering the plot and identifying the alleged terrorist. No Western judicial hearing would accept evidence procured by the Pakistani intelligence services that are notorious for their use of torture in extracting 'confessions'. The Pakistani dictatorship's evidence is based on a supposed encounter between a relative of one of the suspects and an Al Qaeda operative on the Afghan border. According to the Pakistani police, the Al Qaeda agent provided the relative and thus the accused with the bomb-making information and operative instructions. The transmission of bomb-making information does not require a trip half-way around the world, least of all to a frontier under military siege by US led forces on one side and the Pakistani military on the other. Moreover it is extremely dubious that Al Qaeda agents in the mountains of Afghanistan have any detailed knowledge of specific British airline security, procedures or conditions of operations in London. Lacking substantive evidence, Pakistani intelligence and their British counterparts touched all the propaganda buttons: A clandestine meeting with Al Qaeda, bomb-making information exchanges on the Pakistani-Afghan border, Pakistani-Brits with Islamic friends, family and terrorist connections in England . . .

US intelligence claimed, and London repeated, that sums of money had been wired from Pakistan to allow the plotters to buy airline tickets. Yet air tickets were found in only one residence (and the airline and itinerary were not stated by the police). None of the other

suspects possessed plane tickets and some did not even have passports. In other words, the most preliminary moves in the so-called bomb plot had not been taken by the accused. No terrorist plot to bomb airplanes exists when the alleged conspirators are lacking travel funds, documents and tickets. It is not credible to argue that the alleged conspirators depended on instructions from distant handlers ignorant of the basic ground level conditions.

Initially the British and US authorities claimed that the explosive device was a “liquid bomb,” yet no liquid or non-liquid bomb was discovered on the premises or persons of any of the accused. Nor has any evidence been produced as to the capability of any of the suspects in making, moving or detonating the “liquid bomb” — a very volatile solution if handled by unskilled operatives. No evidence has been presented on the nature of the specific liquid bomb question, or any spoken discussion or written documents about the liquid bomb, which would implicate any of the suspects. No bottle, liquid or chemical formula has been found among any of the suspects. Nor have any of the ingredients that go into making the “liquid bomb” been uncovered. Nor has any evidence been presented as to where the liquid was supposed to come from (the source) or whether it was purchased locally or overseas.

When the liquid bomb story was ridiculed into obscurity, British Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clark claimed that, “bomb making equipment including chemicals and electric components had been found,” (BBC News, 8/21/2006)

Once again there is no mention of what “electronic components” and “chemicals” were found, in whose home or office and if they might be related to non-bomb making activities. Were these so-called new bomb-making items owned by a specific person or group of persons, and if so were they known by the parties implicated to be part of a bombing plot. Moreover, when and why have the authorities switched from the liquid bombs to identifying old fashion electronic detonators? Is there any evidence — documents or taped discussions — that link these electronic detonators and chemicals with the specific plot to “blow up 9 US bound airliners”?

Instead of providing relevant facts clearing up basic questions of names, dates, weapons, and travel dates, Commissioner Clark gives the press a laundry list of items that could be found in millions of homes and the large number of buildings searched (69 so far). If stair climbing earns promotions, Clark should be nominated for a knighthood. According to Clark the police discovered more than 400 computers, 200 mobile telephones, 8,000 computer media items (items as catastrophic as memory sticks, CDs and DVDs); police removed 6,000 gigabytes of data from the seized computers (150 from each computer) and a few video recordings. One presumes, in the absence of any qualitative data demonstrating that the suspects were in fact preparing bombs in order to destroy nine US airliners, that Commissioner Clark is seeking public sympathy for his minions’ enormous capacity to lift and remove electronic equipment from one site to another in up to 69 buildings. This is a notable achievement if we are talking about a moving company and not a high-powered police investigation of an event of “catastrophic consequences.”

Some of the suspects were arrested because they have traveled to Pakistan at the beginning of the school year holidays. British and US authorities forget to mention that tens of thousands of Pakistani ex-pats return to visit family at precisely that time of year.

The wise guys on Wall Street and The City of London never took the liquid bomb plot

seriously: At no point did the Market respond, nose-dive, crash or panic. The announced plot to bomb airlines was ignored by all Big Players on the US and London stock markets. In fact, petrol prices dropped slightly. In contrast to 9/11 and the Madrid and London bombings (to which this plot is compared) the stock market 'makers' were not impressed by the governments' claims of a 'major catastrophe.' George Bush or Tony Blair, who were informed and discussed the "liquid bomb plot" several days beforehand, didn't even skip a day of their vacations, in response to the catastrophic threat.

And each and every claim and piece of 'evidence' put forth by the police and the Blair and Bush security authorities runs a cropper. Some of the alleged suspects are released, and new equally paltry 'evidence' is breathlessly presented: two tape recordings of "martyr messages" were found in the computer of one suspect, which, we are told, foretold a planned terrorist attack. The Clark team claimed with great aplomb that they found one or a few martyr videotapes, without clarifying the fact that the videos were not made by the suspects but viewed by them. Many people the world over pay homage to suicide martyrs to a great variety of political causes. Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan visits a shrine dedicated to World War II military dead — including kamikaze suicide pilots, defying Chinese and Korean protests. Millions of US citizens and politicians pay homage to the war heroes in Arlington cemetery each year, some of whom deliberately sacrificed their lives in order to defend their comrades, their flag and the justice of their cause. It should be of no surprise that Asians, Muslims and others should collect videos of anti-Israeli or anti-occupation martyrs. In none of the above cases where people honor martyrs is there any police attempt to link the reverent observer with future suicide bomb plots — except if they are Muslims. Hero worship of fallen fighters is a normal everyday phenomenon — and is certainly no evidence that the idolaters are engaged in murderous activity.

A "martyr message" is neither a plot, conspiracy nor action, it is only an expression of free speech — one might add, 'internal speech' (between the speaker and his computer) which might at some future time become public speech. Are we to make private dialogue a terrorist offense?

As the legal time limit expires on the holding of suspects without charges, the British authorities released two suspects, charged eleven, and eleven others continue to be held without charges, probably because there is no basis for proceeding further. As the number of accused plotters thin out in England, Clark and company have deflected attention to a world-wide plot with links to Spain, Italy, the Middle East and elsewhere. Apparently the logic here is that a wider net compensates for the large holes. In the case at hand, of the eleven who have been remanded to trial, only eight have been charged with conspiracy to prepare acts of terrorism; the other three are accused of "not disclosing information" (or being informers . . . of what?) and "possessing articles useful to a person preparing acts of terrorism." (BBC News, 8/21/06) Since no bombs have been found and no plans of action have been revealed, we are left with the vague charge of 'conspiracy', which can mean a hostile private discussion directed against US and British subjects by several like-thinking individuals. The reason that it appears that ideas and not actions are in question is because the police have not turned up any weapons or specific measures to enter into the locus of attack (air tickets to board planes, passports and so on). How can suspects be charged with failing to disclose information, when the police lack any concrete information pertaining to the alleged bomb plot. The fact that the police are further diluting their charges against three more plotters is indicative of the flimsy basis of their original arrests and public claims. To charge a 17 year-old-boy with "possessing articles useful to a person preparing acts of

terrorism” is so open-ended as to be laughable: Did the article have other uses for the boy or for his family (like a box cutter). Did he ‘possess’ written articles because they were informative or fascinating to a young person? Since he still possessed the article, he had not passed these articles to any person making bombs. Did he know of any specific plans to make bombs or any bomb-makers? The charges could implicate anyone possessing and reading a good spy novel or science fiction thriller in which bomb making is discussed. The eleven have already pleaded innocent; the trial will begin in due time. The government and mass media have already convicted the accused in the electronic and print media. Panic has been sown. Fear and hysterical anger is present in the long security lines at airports and train stations . . . Asian men quietly saying prayers are being pulled off of airplanes and planes diverted or airports evacuated.

The bomb plot hoax has caused enormous losses (in the hundreds of millions of dollars) to the airlines, business people, oil companies, duty free shops, tourist agencies, resorts and hotels, not to speak of the tremendous inconvenience and health related problems of millions of stranded and stressed travelers. The restrictions on laptop computers, travel bags, accessories, special foods and liquid medicines have added to the ‘costs’ of traveling.

Clearly the decision to cook up the phony bomb plot was not motivated by economic interests, but domestic political reasons. The Blair administration, already highly unpopular for supporting Bush’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was under attack for his unconditional support for Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, his refusal to call for an immediate ceasefire and his unstinting support for Bush’s servility to US Zionist lobbies. Even within the Labor party over a hundred backbenchers were speaking out against his policies, while even junior cabinet ministers such as Prescott stated that Boss Bush’s foreign policy smelled of the barnyard. Bush was not yet cornered by his colleagues in the same way as Blair, but unpopularity was threatening to lead his Republican party to congressional defeat and possible loss of a majority of seats.

According to top security officials in England, Bush and Blair were “knowledgeable” about the investigation into a possible “liquid bomb” plot. We know that Blair gave the go-ahead for the arrests, even as the authorities must have told him they lacked the evidence and at best it was premature. Some reports from British police insiders claim that the Bush Administration pushed Blair for early arrests and the announcement of the ‘liquid bomb’ plot. Security officials then launched a massive, all-out ‘terror propaganda’ campaign designed to capture the attention and support of the public with the total support of the mass media. The security-mass media campaign served its objective — Bush’s popularity increased, Blair avoided censure and both continued on their vacations.

The bomb plot political ploy fits the previous political pattern of sacrificing capitalist economic interests to serve domestic political and ideological positions. Foreign policy failures lead to domestic political crimes, just as domestic policy crises lead to aggressive military expansion.

The criminal frame-up of young Muslim-South Asian British citizens by the British security officials was specifically designed to cover up for the failed Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and the Anglo-American backing for Israel’s destructive but failed invasion of Lebanon. Blair’s “liquid bombers” plot sacrificed a multiplicity of British capitalist interests in order to retain political offices and stave off an unceremonious early exit from power. The costs of failed militarism are borne by citizens and businesses.

In an analogous fashion Bush and his Zioncon and other militarists exploited the events of 9/11 to pursue a militarist multi-war strategy in Southwest Asia and the Middle East. With time and scientific research, the official version of the events of 9/11 have come under serious questioning — both regarding the collapse of one of the towers in New York, as well as the explosions in the Pentagon. The events of 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq sacrificed major US economic interests: Losses in New York, tourism, airline industry and massive physical destruction; losses in terms of a major increase in oil prices and instability, increasing the costs to US, European and Asian consumers and industries.

Likewise the Israeli military invasion of Gaza and Lebanon, backed by the US and Great Britain, were economically costly destroying property, investments and markets, while raising the level of mass anti-imperial opposition.

In other words, the politics of US, British and Israeli (and by extension World Zionist) militarism has been at the expense of strategic sectors of the civilian economy. These losses to key economic sectors require the civilian-militarists to resort to domestic political crimes (phony bomb plots and frame-up trials) to distract the public from their costly and failed policies and to tighten political control. On both counts, the civilian militarists and the Zioncons are losing ground. The “liquid bomb” plot is unraveling, Israel is in turmoil, the Zioncons are preaching to the converted, and the US is, as always, the United States: The Democratic civilian militarists are capitalizing on the failures of their incumbent colleagues.

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