

Waking Up to Empire and “False Flags”

By [Barry Kissin](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAN: THE NEXT WAR?](#)

In the June 18 Frederick News-Post, page A1, from The Associated Press:

“It appears as if Iran has begun its own maximum pressure campaign on the world. ... The development follows apparent attacks last week in the Strait of Hormuz on [two] oil tankers, assaults that Washington has blamed on Iran. While Iran has denied being involved, it laid mines in the 1980s targeting oil tankers around the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of the world’s crude oil passes.”

This is pro-war propaganda — once again part of a campaign to justify American aggression, echoing Pompeo’s determination within hours of the attacks that Iran was responsible. Evidence ignored by the AP (and still by Pompeo) includes the statement by the Japanese owner of one of the tankers that the U.S. is wrong about the way the attack was carried out, that his ship was attacked on the starboard side by a flying object, not by a mine or torpedo. David Stockman, former director of management and budget under Reagan, posts at [antiwar.com](#): “You can virtually bet when the dust settles [these tanker assaults] are false flags ... manufactured pretexts for war.”

Until now, most Americans have been insulated from the ramifications of our Global War on Terror. That drastically changes in the event of a war with Iran. We are running out of places to blow up short of igniting global collapse — from which none are insulated except perhaps members of our ruling class of warmongers.

There is a ray of hope that Americans are finally wising up. A few elements in mainstream media are picking up on it. I have demonstrated in many previous letters and op-eds that both of our mainstream political parties are fully supportive of our militarism and our empire. There are very few exceptions, such as Republican Sen. Rand Paul and his father, Ron Paul, who have consistently opposed our Global War on Terror and confronted the litany of lies (pretexts).

In general, though, it is the Republican Party and its supporters who most consistently appear to approve on mindless patriotic grounds our every aggression and war crime. (You know, the “pro-life” crowd.) And so I am choosing a Fox News broadcast to illustrate how the run-up to war with Iran is being questioned even in the mainstream.

On June 13, Tucker Carlson interviewed a pollster from the Eurasia Group Foundation who reported that 80 percent of Americans want a “diplomatic solution” to our conflict with Iran, and that of the remaining 20 percent, a majority believed “Iran had a right to have nuclear

weapons” as a “deterrent,” leaving a mere 8 percent who favored “launching some sort of preventive war on Iran.”

Tucker then comments that “this is one of those topics, foreign policy more broadly, war in the Middle East specifically, that proceeds really with no reference at all to what the American public wants. That’s not how a democracy is supposed to operate, is it?”

No — that’s how an empire operates, based not on what the public wants but on what its ruling class wants, which includes the owners of mainstream media and the principals in our military-industrial-intelligence complex.

Everybody knows that Congress has been complicit in all of this.

The loudest people in Congress righteously demand more interventions, more war, greater military and black ops budgets. We have no visible champions of peace, the only way out of the swirling whirlpool we are in.

Before I focus on the performance of our **Reps. David Trone** and **Jamie Raskin**, I do want to give credit to Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen for co-sponsoring S1039, the Prevention of Unconstitutional War With Iran Act of 2019. Of the eight Maryland representatives in the House, only Raskin is a co-sponsor of the equivalent legislation in the House.

Raskin’s father was the well-known scholar and activist Marcus Raskin, co-founder of the Institute of Policy Studies, whose obituary for Marcus highlighted:

“[Marcus] coined the term ‘national security state.’ In congressional testimony in 1967, he used the phrase to describe the complex web of war institutions he feared would drive continuous conflict abroad while turning the United States into a ‘garrison and launching pad for nuclear war.’ ... In his final weeks, Marc Raskin was excited to learn about plans for a Poor People’s Campaign that, like his own work, will take on the inter-connected problems of the War Economy, poverty, racism, and ecological devastation.”

There is no one in Congress who understands the depravities of American empire better than Jamie Raskin. It is incumbent upon him to become more vocal, more opposed, and not just along party lines.

Trone needs to bone up, maybe get his colleague Raskin to open up about all this. Trone also needs help from his constituents regarding foreign policy, war and peace, national security state expenditures (annually about \$1 trillion — that’s 1,000 billion dollars). It is troubling that Trone is one of the first freshman members of Congress to sign up for this summer’s trip to Israel sponsored by AIPAC, the right-wing Israeli lobby, that incessantly advocates (along with Netanyahu) for aggression against Iran.

It will not do to rely on the patriotic myth that American soldiers and special operatives fight

for freedom and democracy all across the world. Quite the opposite. They fight for a corrupt, power-mad and cruel empire.

The American people are waking up. So must Congress.

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