

Iran charges Washington with sponsoring terrorist attacks

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A leading government official in Teheran charged Thursday that the Bush administration is sponsoring terrorist attacks as a means of ratcheting up its campaign of aggression against Iran.

The charge by the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Gholamali Haddadadel, followed a report by ABC News in the US that Washington has been covertly aiding and advising a militant Pakistani Islamist group that has carried out a string of terrorist attacks against Iranian targets.

“There is no doubt in our minds that the United States spares no efforts to put pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Haddadadel told reporters following a meeting with Pakistani officials in Islamabad.

“The best indication of United States support to a particular terrorist group is that one of the leaders of his terrorist group was given the opportunity to speak on VoA [Voice of America] after committing the crime.”

In its report aired first on Tuesday night, ABC charged that a group known as Jundullah (Army of God), a Sunni militant organization made up of members of the Baluchi tribe, “has been secretly encouraged and advised by American officials since 2005” as it has carried out its deadly operations inside Iran.

According to numerous published reports, this US-backed terrorist group has close ties to both Al Qaeda and the Taliban, supposedly the principal enemies in Washington’s “global war on terrorism.”

The organization is also believed to be involved in narcotics trafficking across the porous Iranian-Pakistani border.

Jundullah’s attacks have centered on the Iranian province of Sistan-Baluchestan, which borders both Afghanistan and Pakistan. In February, Jundullah terrorists carried out a car bomb attack on a bus in the

Iranian city of Zehedan, killing at least 11 Iranians, most of them apparently members of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard. Another 31 people were wounded in the blast.

Other bloody attacks included a May 2006 bombing of a motorcade, which claimed the lives of at least 20. The group has also filmed the beheadings of captured Iranian soldiers and officials.

According to the ABC report, Pakistani intelligence sources said that the covert terror campaign was a central topic of discussion when US Vice President Dick Cheney met Pakistan’s dictator, President Pervez Musharraf, in February.

When asked by the Reuters news agency about this account, a spokeswoman for Cheney replied, “We don’t discuss conversations between the vice president and foreign leaders.”

Haddadadel, who was in Islamabad in part to seek Pakistani cooperation in stemming the cross-border attacks, dismissed this aspect of the ABC report.

“Some of the militants...are active in our border areas and we should work with Pakistan in order to increase security cooperation,” he said. “There is no news, no evidence, and we don’t have any reason to believe that the military establishment in Pakistan is also supporting such militant groups.”

ABC indicated that the US-sponsored terrorism is an “off-the-books” operation, which some officials told the network was reminiscent of the illegal covert US “contra” war against Nicaragua under the Reagan administration in the 1980s.

Money, according to ABC’s sources, is funneled through Iranian exile groups in Europe and elsewhere to Jundullah’s leader, Abd el Malik Regi. Counterterrorism expert Alexis Debat told ABC that Regi “used to fight with the Taliban. He’s part drug

smuggler, part Taliban, part Sunni activist.”

The purpose of this arrangement, US officials told the network is to avoid the necessity of “an official presidential order or ‘finding’ as well as congressional oversight.”

It is evident that the covert US links with Jundullah are only part of a broader destabilization campaign being waged by Washington with the aim of fomenting conflict between Iran’s Shia majority and a Sunni minority that accounts for nearly 12 percent of the country’s 70 million people. The largest component of this Sunni population is made up of Kurds, followed by the Baluch and then the Turkoman, based in the northeast.

The CIA is also reportedly funding the Iran-based Kurdistan Free Life party to destabilize the Iranian government. And Washington has come into conflict with the Iraqi regime over the presence in Iraq of some 3,800 expatriate Iranian members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq, or MEK, which has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks against Iran.

Even though the State Department has classified the MEK as a foreign terrorist organization, and the Iraqi regime accuses it of acting as an arm of the Saddam Hussein regime security forces, the Pentagon and CIA have provided it with protection at a base outside Baghdad and have reportedly sponsored its operations inside Iran.

Washington’s covert terror war against Iran is aimed at furthering a goal of “regime change” in Teheran. It is likewise designed to pave the way for a far more direct US military intervention.

As ABC aired its report of US-sponsored terrorism, a third US nuclear aircraft carrier battle group set sail for the Persian Gulf. The USS Nimitz and its accompanying warships left San Diego on Monday, supposedly to relieve the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. The John C. Stennis Strike Group is also in the Gulf. Obviously, the Pentagon has the option of reversing the order to withdraw the Eisenhower, thereby concentrating unprecedented firepower against Iran.

The preparations for a US war against Iran are being carried out—with support from both Democrats and Republicans in Washington—under the same propaganda slogans used to justify the attack on Iraq: the threat from a supposed drive to build “weapons of mass destruction” and terrorist ties.

But, as the ABC report indicates, Washington itself appears to be pursuing its militarist policy by funding and advising a terrorist group connected to Al Qaeda, the organization blamed for the September 11, 2001, attacks.



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