

Washington's crimes against Iran

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The murder of Iranian nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan on January 11 is further testimony to the criminality of US foreign policy. Despite the official denials of the Obama administration, the assassination bears all the hallmarks of an operation carried out by the Israel intelligence agency, Mossad, in league with the US.

The Iranian regime has taken the unusual step of addressing a letter to Washington declaring that it has “reliable documents and evidence that this terrorist act was planned, guided and supported by the CIA.” A second letter to the British embassy alleges that the British intelligence agency MI6 “assisted” in the plot.

Roshan is the fourth Iranian nuclear scientist to be murdered over the past two years as part of a barely disguised covert war inside Iran that has included unexplained explosions at key military and nuclear facilities and the use of the Stuxnet computer worm to infect and damage nuclear equipment. Several of the assassinations, including the latest, involved the same *modus operandi*—a “sticky” magnetic bomb planted by motorbike on the side of a car.

While implausible, the Obama administration's “categorical denial” of any involvement in the latest assassination serves a definite legal purpose. The White House rationalises its murderous campaign by drone attack inside Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries as supposedly sanctioned by the authorization for use of military force passed by Congress in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The killing of Iranian citizens, or providing aid or intelligence to Mossad to do so, can hardly be legally justified with reference to a 2001 resolution ostensibly directed against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The assassination of Roshan and the other scientists is a clear breach of an executive order dating

back to the 1970s that officially bans assassinations, opening up the Obama administration to legal action.

The involvement of the US in assassination and sabotage inside Iran raises fresh questions about the killing of the young woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, at the height of US support for the so-called Green Movement protests in Iran in June 2009. The US and international media immediately blamed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and turned the victim into a martyr to whip up public support for efforts to install a regime sympathetic to Western interests. It is at least as plausible that Neda was set up for murder by US or Israeli agents, with her death conveniently filmed, in order to add further fuel to the hysterical media campaign against Ahmadinejad's election victory.

As in the case of every other crime of US imperialism, the American media has stepped in to justify the campaign of sabotage and murder inside Iran. A front-page *New York Times* article published January 12 and entitled “Adversaries of Iran Said to Be Stepping Up Covert Actions” reported what is commonly accepted in the US intelligence community—that Israel was responsible for the murder and that the US, in alliance with Israel, is engaged in “covert efforts against the Iranian nuclear program.”

The *Times* does not criticise the criminal and reckless character of these actions, but accepts them as a legitimate tool of foreign policy. It quotes, without comment, Patrick Clawson, director of the Iran Security Initiative at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, as saying, “Sabotage and assassination is the way to go, if you can do it.”

The brazen defence by the *Times* and virtually the entire establishment media in the US of assassination as

a legitimate tactic underscores the criminalization of US foreign policy, particularly over the past twenty years since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It also expresses the collapse of any democratic consciousness or commitment to democratic rights within the ruling class.

The hypocrisy of the media establishment knows no bounds. Only three months ago, the American press was demanding retaliation over entirely unsubstantiated claims by the Obama administration that Iran was involved in an improbable plan to hire a Mexican drug cartel to kill the Saudi ambassador to Washington on American soil.

Like so much of the commentary on the assassination of Roshan, the *Times* focuses not on its criminality, but the efficacy of covert action in achieving US ends. “The multifaceted covert campaign against Iran has appeared to offer an alternative to war,” the article declared. “But at most it has slowed, not halted, Iran’s enrichment of uranium.”

The British-based *Sunday Times* yesterday published a blow-by-blow account, based on unnamed sources, of the carefully-planned Mossad bombing of Roshan’s car in peak hour traffic in Tehran. Significantly, according to one Israeli source, “the killings were a precursor to a military strike, not merely an alternative, to make it more difficult for Iran to rebuild facilities if they are bombed.”

In reality, the killing of top nuclear scientists and the sabotage of facilities was never to stop or significantly hinder Iran’s nuclear programs, which Tehran has repeatedly insisted are for peaceful purposes. Rather, the murders are provocations calculated to incite retaliation by Tehran that can, in turn, be exploited to further demonise Iran and provide the pretext for war.

The murders go hand-in-hand with an intensification of economic warfare and a military build-up against Iran since the beginning of the year. The US, in collaboration with its European allies, is in the process of imposing a de facto embargo on Iran’s oil exports that threatens to collapse the Iranian economy. The latest sanctions are being imposed unilaterally, without

even the fig leaf of a UN Security Council resolution. The US is not only menacing Iran, but threatening penalties against those countries opposed to the embargo, such as China.

At the same time, the Pentagon has just doubled the number of US aircraft carrier battle groups in the immediate vicinity of the Persian Gulf, greatly enhancing its ability to wage a devastating aerial and naval war against Iran.

The killing of Roshan underlines the fact that the US will stop at nothing as it seeks to destabilise the Iranian regime and replace it with a more pliable alternative. Washington’s predatory activities in the Middle East are being driven by the vast erosion of the global economic position of the United States. As it has already done in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, the US is using its military muscle to undermine the economic and strategic interests of its main European and Asian rivals.

The same political gangsters in the White House who are plotting against Tehran are also responsible for the devastation of the living standards of the American working class. The escalating propaganda campaign against Iran and heightened danger of a catastrophic new war serve as a convenient political diversion from sharpening class tensions at home.

The American and international working class must oppose any war, covert or overt, against Iran on the basis of a socialist and internationalist strategy directed at abolishing the crisis-ridden capitalist system, which can offer nothing but plummeting living standards and the slide towards a third world war.

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