

The War on Terrorism ... or Whatever: Syria and “America’s Jihad”

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Global Research, October 08, 2013

[The Anti Empire Report](#)

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

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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“U.S. hopes of winning more influence over Syria’s divided rebel movement faded Wednesday after 11 of the biggest armed factions repudiated the Western-backed political opposition coalition and announced the formation of an alliance dedicated to creating an Islamist state. The al-Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra, designated a terrorist organization by the United States, is the lead signatory of the new group.” 1

Pity the poor American who wants to be a good citizen, wants to understand the world and his country’s role in it, wants to believe in the War on Terrorism, wants to believe that his government seeks to do good ... What is he to make of all this?

For about two years, his dear American government has been supporting the same anti-government side as the jihadists in the Syrian civil war; not total, all-out support, but enough military hardware, logistics support, intelligence information, international political, diplomatic and propaganda assistance (including the crucial alleged-chemical-weapons story), to keep the jihadists in the ball game. Washington and its main Mideast allies in the conflict – Turkey, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia – have not impeded the movement to Syria of jihadists coming to join the rebels, recruited from the ranks of Sunni extremist veterans of the wars in Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, while Qatar and the Saudis have supplied the rebels with weapons, most likely bought in large measure from the United States, as well as lots of what they have lots of – money.

This widespread international support has been provided despite the many atrocities carried out by the jihadists – truck and car suicide bombings (with numerous civilian casualties), planting roadside bombs à la Iraq, gruesome massacres of Christians and Kurds, grotesque beheadings and other dissections of victims’ bodies (most charming of all: a Youtube video of a rebel leader cutting out an organ from the chest of a victim and biting into it as it drips with blood). All this barbarity piled on top of a greater absurdity – these Western-backed, anti-government forces are often engaged in battle with other Western-backed, anti-government forces, non-jihadist. It has become increasingly difficult to sell this war to the American public as one of pro-democracy “moderates” locked in a good-guy-versus-bad-guy struggle with an evil dictator, although in actuality the United States has fought on the same side as al Qaeda on repeated occasions before Syria. Here’s a brief survey:

Afghanistan, 1980-early 1990s: In support of the Islamic Moujahedeen (“holy warriors”), the CIA orchestrated a war against the Afghan government and their Soviet allies, pouring in several billions of dollars of arms and extensive military training; hitting up Middle-Eastern countries for donations, notably Saudi Arabia which gave hundreds of millions of dollars in aid each year; pressuring and bribing Pakistan to rent out its country as a military staging

area and sanctuary.

It worked. And out of the victorious Moujahedeen came al Qaeda.

Bosnia, 1992-5: In 2001 the Wall Street Journal declared:

It is safe to say that the birth of al-Qaeda as a force on the world stage can be traced directly back to 1992, when the Bosnian Muslim government of Alija Izetbegovic issued a passport in their Vienna embassy to Osama bin Laden. ... for the past 10 years, the most senior leaders of al Qaeda have visited the Balkans, including bin Laden himself on three occasions between 1994 and 1996. The Egyptian surgeon turned terrorist leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri has operated terrorist training camps, weapons of mass destruction factories and money-laundering and drug-trading networks throughout Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Bosnia. This has gone on for a decade. 2

A few months later, The Guardian reported on “the full story of the secret alliance between the Pentagon and radical Islamist groups from the Middle East designed to assist the Bosnian Muslims – some of the same groups that the Pentagon is now fighting in “the war against terrorism”. 3

In 1994 and 1995 US/NATO forces carried out bombing campaigns over Bosnia aimed at damaging the military capability of the Serbs and enhancing that of the Bosnian Muslims. In the decade-long civil wars in the Balkans, the Serbs, regarded by Washington as the “the last communist government in Europe”, were always the main enemy.

Kosovo, 1998-99: Kosovo, overwhelmingly Muslim, was a province of Serbia, the main republic of the former Yugoslavia. In 1998, Kosovo separatists – The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) – began an armed conflict with Belgrade to split Kosovo from Serbia. The KLA was considered a terrorist organization by the US, the UK and France for years, with numerous reports of the KLA having contact with al-Qaeda, getting arms from them, having its militants trained in al-Qaeda camps in Pakistan, and even having members of al-Qaeda in KLA ranks fighting against the Serbs. 4

However, when US-NATO forces began military action against the Serbs the KLA was taken off the US terrorist list, it “received official US-NATO arms and training support” 5 , and the 1999 US-NATO bombing campaign eventually focused on driving Serbian forces from Kosovo.

In 2008 Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, an independence so illegitimate and artificial that the majority of the world’s nations still have not recognized it. But the United States was the first to do so, the very next day, thus affirming the unilateral declaration of independence of a part of another country’s territory.

The KLA have been known for their trafficking in women, heroin, and human body parts (sic). The United States has naturally been pushing for Kosovo’s membership in NATO and the European Union.

Nota bene: In 1992 the Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and Serbs reached agreement in Lisbon for a unified state. The continuation of a peaceful multi-ethnic Bosnia seemed assured. But the United States sabotaged the agreement. 6

Libya, 2011: The US and NATO to the rescue again. For more than six months, almost daily missile attacks against the government and forces of Muammar Gaddafi as assorted Middle East jihadists assembled in Libya and battled the government on the ground. The predictable outcome came to be – the jihadists now in control of parts of the country and fighting for the remaining parts. The wartime allies showed their gratitude to Washington by assassinating the US ambassador and three other Americans, presumably CIA, in the city of Benghazi.

Caucasus (Russia), mid-2000s to present: The National Endowment for Democracy and Freedom House have for many years been the leading American “non-government” institutions tasked with destabilizing, if not overthrowing, foreign governments which refuse to be subservient to the desires of US foreign policy. Both NGOs have backed militants in the Russian Caucasus area, one that has seen more than its share of terror stretching back to the Chechnyan actions of the 1990s. 7

“Omission is the most powerful form of lie.” – George Orwell

I am asked occasionally why I am so critical of the mainstream media when I quote from them repeatedly in my writings. The answer is simple. The American media’s gravest shortcoming is much more their errors of omission than their errors of commission. It’s what they leave out that distorts the news more than any factual errors or out-and-out lies. So I can make good use of the facts they report, which a large, rich organization can easier provide than the alternative media.

A case in point is a New York Times article of October 5 on the Greek financial crisis and the Greeks’ claim for World War Two reparations from Germany.

“Germany may be Greece’s stern banker now, say those who are seeking reparations,” writes the Times, but Germany “should pay off its own debts to Greece. ... It is not just aging victims of the Nazi occupation who are demanding a full accounting. Prime Minister Antonis Samarass government has compiled an 80-page report on reparations and a huge, never-repaid loan the nation was forced to make under Nazi occupation from 1941 to 1945. ... The call for reparations has elicited an emotional outpouring in Greece, where six years of brutal recession and harsh austerity measures have left many Greeks hostile toward Germany. Rarely does a week go by without another report in the news about, as one newspaper put it in a headline, ‘What Germany Owes Us’.”

“The figure most often discussed is \$220 billion, an estimate for infrastructure damage alone put forward by Manolis Glezos, a member of Parliament and a former resistance fighter who is pressing for reparations. That amount equals about half the country’s debt. ... Some members of the National Council on Reparations, an advocacy group, are calling for more than \$677 billion to cover stolen artifacts, damage to the economy and to the infrastructure, as well as the bank loan and individual claims.”

So there we have the morality play: The evil Germans who occupied Greece and in addition to carrying out a lot of violence and repression shamelessly exploited the Greek people economically.

Would it be appropriate for such a story, or an accompanying or follow-up story, to mention the civil war that broke out in Greece shortly after the close of the world war? On one side were the neo-fascists, many of whom had cooperated with the occupying Germans during

the war, some even fighting for the Nazis. Indeed, the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, acknowledged in August 1946 that there were 228 ex-members of the Nazi Security Battalions – whose main task had been to track down Greek resistance fighters and Jews – on active service in the new Greek army. 8

On the other side was the Greek left who had fought the Nazis courageously, even forcing the German army to flee the country in 1944.

So guess which side of the civil war our favorite military took? ... That's right, the United States supported the neo-fascists. After all, an important component of the Greek left was the Communist Party, although it wouldn't have mattered at all if the Greek left had not included any Communists. Support of the left (not to be confused with liberals of course) anywhere in the world, during and since the Cold War, has been verboten in US foreign policy.

The neo-fascists won the civil war and instituted a highly brutal regime, for which the CIA created a suitably repressive internal security agency, named and modeled after itself, the KYP. For the next 15 years, Greece was looked upon much as a piece of real estate to be developed according to Washington's political and economic needs. One document should suffice to capture the beauty of Washington's relationship to Athens – a 1947 letter from US Secretary of State George Marshall to Dwight Griswold, the head of the American Mission to Aid Greece, said:

During the course of your work you and the members of your Mission will from time to time find that certain Greek officials are not, because of incompetence, disagreement with your policies, or for some other reason, extending the type of cooperation which is necessary if the objectives of your Mission are to be achieved. You will find it necessary to effect the removal of these officials. 9

Where is the present-day Greek headline: "What The United States Owes Us"? Where is the New York Times obligation to enlighten its readers?

The latest step in the evolution of America's Police State

"If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear."

So say many Americans. And many Germans as well.

But one German, Ilija Trojanow, would disagree. He has lent his name to published documents denouncing the National Security Agency (NSA), and was one of several prominent German authors who signed a letter to Chancellor Angela Merkel urging her to take a firm stance against the mass online surveillance conducted by the NSA. Trojanow and the other authors had nothing to hide, which is why the letter was published for the public to read. What happened after that, however, was that Trojanow was refused permission to board a flight from Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, to Miami on Monday, September 30. Without any explanation.

Trojanow, who was on his way to speak at a literary conference in Denver, told the Spiegel magazine online website that the denial of entry might be linked to his criticism of the NSA. Germany's Foreign Ministry says it has contacted US authorities "to resolve this issue". 10

In an article published in a German newspaper, Trojanow voiced his frustration with the incident: "It is more than ironic if an author who raises his voice against the dangers of surveillance and the secret state within a state for years, will be denied entry into the 'land of the brave and the free'." 11

Further irony can be found in the title of a book by Trojanow: "Attack on freedom. Obsession with security, the surveillance state and the dismantling of civil rights."

Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr., who oversees the NSA and other intelligence agencies, said recently that the intelligence community "is only interested in communication related to valid foreign intelligence and counterintelligence purposes." 12

It's difficult in the extreme to see how this criterion would apply in any way to Ilija Trojanow.

The story is a poignant caveat on how fragile is Americans' freedom to criticize their Security State. If a foreigner can be barred from boarding a flight merely for peaceful, intellectual criticism of America's Big Brother (nay, Giant Brother), who amongst us does not need to pay careful attention to anything they say or write.

Very few Americans, however, will even be aware of this story. A thorough search of the Lexis-Nexis media database revealed a single mention in an American daily newspaper (The St. Louis Post-Dispatch), out of 1400 daily papers in the US. No mention on any broadcast media. A single one-time mention in a news agency (Associated Press), and one mention in a foreign English-language newspaper (New Zealand Herald).15

Notes

1. Washington Post, September 26, 2013 [↵](#)
2. Wall Street Journal, November 1, 2001 [↵](#)
3. The Guardian (London), April 22, 2002 [↵](#)
4. RT TV (Moscow), May 4, 2012 [↵](#)
5. Wall Street Journal, November 1, 2001 [↵](#)
6. New York Times, June 17, 1993, buried at the very end of the article on an inside page [↵](#)
7. Sibel Edmonds' Boiling Frogs Post, "[Barbarians at the Gate: Terrorism, the US, and the Subversion of Russia](#)", August 30, 2012 [↵](#)
8. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, October 16, 1946, column 887 (reference is made here to Bevin's statement of August 10, 1946) [↵](#)
9. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, Vol. V (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 222-3. See William Blum, Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II, chapter 3 for further details of the US role in postwar Greece. [↵](#)
10. Associated Press, October 2, 2013 [↵](#)
11. Huffington Post, "[Ilija Trojanow, German Writer, Banned From US For Criticizing NSA](#)", October 1, 2013 [↵](#)
12. Washington Post, October 5, 2013 [↵](#)

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