

U.S. Propaganda Enters Into Insane, Irrational Overdrive in Attempt to “Sell” War in Syria

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Thanks to a dizzying barrage of lies, mainstream media fear-mongering and a couple of beheadings, the Obama Administration finally achieved its long sought after war in Syria. The tactic that proved most effective in mobilizing the American public back into a shivering, post-9/11 fetal position, was the same tactic used by elites in the UK to convince Scotland against voting for independence. That tactic, as I detailed in [a recent post](#), is fear.

However, fear in itself is not enough. It must be coupled with endless slogans and misdirection by the mainstream media and politicians. It must lead the public to subconsciously embrace a thought process that is completely irrational. Such tactics can be labeled propaganda, and it results in a public suddenly supporting a war it strongly opposed only a year ago. All it takes is a little repackaging. Propaganda allows those who profit from war to push the American public into a tizzy of trepidation based on a couple of beheadings from ISIS, while not batting an eye over [the daily beheadings](#) that were simultaneously occurring in Saudi Arabia.

So the power structure and its impotent puppet, Barack Obama, intentionally pushed the American public into a frenzy of fear and finally got their little war. Nevertheless, serious people immediately began to call into question two very significant issues with respect to the aggression.

First, it appeared clear to almost everyone without a biased penchant for overseas death and destruction, that the war is completely unconstitutional and illegal no matter how you slice it. As I highlighted in the post, [Obama’s ISIS War is Not Only Illegal, it Makes George W. Bush Look Like a Constitutional Scholar](#):

But the 2001 [authorization for the use of military force](#) does not apply here. That resolution — scaled back from what Mr. Bush initially wanted — extended only to nations and organizations that “planned, authorized, committed or aided” the 9/11 attacks.

Not only was ISIS created long after 2001, but Al Qaeda publicly [disavowed](#) it earlier this year. It is Al Qaeda’s competitor, not its affiliate.

Mr. Obama may rightly be frustrated by gridlock in Washington, but his assault on the rule of law is a devastating setback for our constitutional order. His refusal even to ask the Justice Department to provide a formal legal pretext for the war on ISIS is astonishing.

Senators and representatives aren't eager to step up to the plate in October when, however they decide, their votes will alienate some constituents in November's midterm elections. They would prefer to let the president plunge ahead and blame him later if things go wrong. But this is precisely why the War Powers Resolution sets up its 60-day deadline: It rightly insists that unless Congress is willing to stand up and be counted, the war is not worth fighting in the name of the American people.

So that's glaring problem number one. The second problem, which I highlighted in the post, [The American Public: A Tough Soldier or a Chicken Hawk Cowering in a Cubicle? Some Thoughts on ISIS Intervention](#), is that:

Did you know that the US government's counterterrorism chief Matthew Olson [said last week](#) that there's no "there's no credible information" that the Islamic State (Isis) is planning an attack on America and that there's "no indication at this point of a cell of foreign fighters operating in the United States"? Or that, [as the Associated Press reported](#), "The FBI and Homeland Security Department say there are no specific or credible terror threats to the US homeland from the Islamic State militant group"?

So as quickly as it began, Obama's little war had some serious PR issues. So what did the chicken-hawks do? They repackaged and resold the entire thing. Enter Khorasan.

Yep, just as quickly as ISIS spontaneously generated like maggots on meat from the sands of Mesopotamia to open the door to another Middle East quagmire, another existential threat nobody had ever heard of suddenly emerged. Not only that, but this group supposedly posed an imminent threat to America. How incredibly convenient.

Here's *ABC News* compliantly pushing the latest propaganda to its lobotomized readership in the article, [US Averts 'Active Plotting Against Homeland' By Hitting Al Qaeda Cell Khorasan in Syria](#):

American airstrikes in Syria have taken out members of a shadowy al Qaeda unit known as the Khorasan Group who were planning "imminent" attacks against targets including the U.S., the Pentagon said today.

Pentagon spokesperson Rear Admiral John Kirby declined to go into specifics, but told *ABC News*' George Stephanopolous, "We had very good indications that this group, which is a very dangerous group, was plotting and planning imminent attacks against Western targets to include the U.S. homeland and it was on that basis that we struck targets, Khorasan targets inside Syria."

The Khorasan Group — consisting of about 50 or so hardened fighters of mixed past and current jihadi affiliations — has been holed up in [Aleppo, Syria](#) under the protection of al Qaeda's official wing in the country, Jabhat al-Nusra, developing cutting edge weapons of terror with the help of al Qaeda's [Yemen](#) affiliate to strike Western civilian aviation targets, according to a half-dozen officials with knowledge of the group who spoke to *ABC News*.

So all of a sudden the Pentagon identifies and targets a group of 50 fighters in Syria, which happens to be conveniently tied to al-Qaeda (thus justifying strikes under the 2001 AUMF), planning an imminent attack on the "homeland."

There are two reasons I distrust this meme. First of all, the U.S. government employs an extremely bizarre definition when using the word imminent. As Trevor Timm [noted earlier today](#) in the Guardian:

Take, for example, this definition from [a Justice Department white paper](#), which was leaked last year, intended to justify the killing of Americans overseas:

An “imminent” threat of violent attack against the United States does not require the [United States](#) to have clear evidence that a specific attack on U.S. persons will take place in the immediate future.

To translate: “imminent” can mean a lot of things ... including “not imminent”.

Fascinating, and all this time I thought “imminent” meant “imminent.” Someone should let Merriam-Webster know they’ve got it all wrong.

The screenshot shows the Merriam-Webster dictionary entry for the word "imminent". At the top, the word is written as "im·mi·nent" with a speaker icon, followed by the part of speech "adjective" and the phonetic transcription "\'i-mə-nənt\". Below this, a definition states ": happening very soon". A section titled "Full Definition of IMMINENT" is followed by three social media sharing buttons: "Cite!", "g+1", and "Like". The main definition is ": ready to take place; *especially* : hanging threateningly over one's head <was in *imminent* danger of being run over>". Below this, the adverb form is listed: "— im·mi·nent·ly *adverb*". At the bottom, there are two links: "See imminent defined for English-language learners »" and "See imminent defined for kids »".

The employment of this new definition of imminent was further solidified in my mind after reading an article from the New York Times titled: [In Airstrikes, U.S. Targets Militant Cell Said to Plot an Attack Against the West](#). In it, we learn that:

American military and intelligence analysts were still studying damage reports from the initial air assault, but senior Obama administration officials expressed hope that they had killed Muhsin al-Fadhli, the leader of Khorasan and a onetime confidant of Osama bin Laden. The officials said they had been contemplating military action against Khorasan in recent months, but President Obama’s decision to hit the Islamic State’s forces inside Syria provided a chance to neutralize the other perceived threat.

You’ve got to wonder what other unrelated opportunities the ISIS campaign might allow. But I digress.

The air campaign against Khorasan and the Islamic State got underway even as Mr. Obama flew to New York to meet with world leaders gathering at the

opening session of the United Nations General Assembly. Mr. Obama did not seek United Nations permission for the military campaign, but he presented the strikes as the collaboration of a multinational coalition that included five Arab nations: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain.

Yeah, well he didn't seek approval from Congress either. Now here's the money shot.

Most officials speaking publicly on Tuesday characterized the Khorasan threat as imminent. Lt. Gen. William C. Mayville Jr., who is in charge of operations for the Pentagon's Joint Staff, said the terrorist group was nearing "the execution phase of an attack either in Europe or the homeland."

But one senior counterterrorism official, who insisted on anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the group might not have chosen the target, method or even the timing for a strike. An intelligence official said separately that the group was "reaching a stage where they might be able to do something."

Wait, come again? An attack is imminent, yet you don't know which gigantic continent with hundreds of millions of inhabitants straddling opposing sides of the Atlantic ocean they were going to hit?

Furthermore, they "might not have chosen the target, method or even the timing for a strike," and they are "reaching a stage where they might be able to do something." Sure sounds imminent to me. Don't piss on my leg and tell me it's raining.

So with Americans back to shivering in corners filled with nightmares of Islamists under their beds, the military-industrial complex is set to do what it does best. Get paid. For some details on who will be raking in the big bucks, I turn to [Tim Shorrock's piece](#) earlier today in *Salon*:

A massive, \$7.2 billion Army intelligence contract signed just 10 days ago underscores the central role to be played by the National Security Agency and its army of private contractors in the unfolding air war being carried out by the United States and its Gulf States allies against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Under its terms, 21 companies, led by Booz Allen Hamilton, BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman, will compete over the next five years to provide "fully integrated intelligence, security and information operations" in Afghanistan and "future contingency operations" around the world.

INSCOM announced the global intelligence contract two days after President Obama, in a speech to the nation, essentially declared war on ISIS in Iraq and Syria and outlined a campaign of airstrikes and combat actions to "degrade and ultimately destroy" the terrorist group.

The top contractors on the INSCOM contract are already involved in the war. Lockheed Martin, for example, makes the Hellfire missiles that are used extensively in U.S. drone strikes (in 2013, it also won a three-year contract to train INSCOM'S "Army intelligence soldiers" in "analytical and operational disciplines"). Northrop Grumman makes the Global Hawk surveillance drone, one of the most formidable weapons in the U.S. arsenal. Both companies have large intelligence units.

The role of contractors at the command is spelled out by BAE Systems, which has its own INSCOM website. "We enhance the U.S. Army's ability to detect, decide, and act on vital intelligence in real-time," BAE [says](#). "From Intelligence Analysis to Persistent Surveillance, BAE Systems is proud to provide essential and sustainable end-to-end solutions and support to the warfighter."

As I first [reported](#) in Salon in 2007 and later chronicled in my book "Spies for Hire," 70 percent of the U.S. intelligence budget is spent on private contractors. Much of this spending – estimated at around \$70 billion a year – winds up at the NSA, where SIGINT operations, particularly for collection and analysis, were heavily outsourced at the turn of the century.

"Hayden started the privatization, but it was really Alexander who built it," said Drake.

Alexander's ties with INSCOM are extensive. One of the winning bidders on the new INSCOM contract is [Sotera Defense Solutions](#). Russell Richardson, its former CEO and a former INSCOM commander, is now one of Alexander's partners at IronNet and, under Alexander's command of INSCOM, was its "chief architect." Before that, Richardson was a vice president of NSA contractor SAIC, where he ran INSCOM's so-called Information Dominance Center.

INSCOM's ties with Booz Allen, the company that employed Edward Snowden at its top secret site in Hawaii, are equally close. Robert Noonan, who directs the company's "military intelligence account," served for 35 years in the military, including a stint as INSCOM's commanding general and the US Army's deputy chief of staff for intelligence. Roberto Andujar, the INSCOM contract leader at Invertix Corp., another contract winner, once served as the command's chief information officer (CIO).

The revolving door between INSCOM and its contractors bothers Shaffer. "It's a cash-and-carry program," he said. "You go in there and get the knowledge, then you carry it out and get cash."

The Pentagon press office referred all calls on the contract to INSCOM. The command did not comment by press time.

Wake up America. You will continue to be raped, pillaged and economically strip-mined until you stand up for yourselves, but for now, it appears the fetal position suits you just fine.

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