OMNI
IRAN NEWSLETTERS, JULY 2019
MEDIA/ADG REPORTS IRAN
CRITICISM OF US EMPIRE


COMPILED BY DICK BENNETT FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE, JUSTICE, and ECOLOGY


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(Local action in Fayetteville, Arkansas: Toward stopping Iran war and imperialism, we are currently holding weekly peace protests every Saturday at 11 A.M. in front of Washington County Courthouse. Please join us. If temp. in 90s drink water before, during, and after.)

CONTENTS: OMNI’S IRAN NEWSLETTER #31, July 25, 2019

Continuation of Analysis of Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Reporting Iran by Dick Bennett

Published Commentary on US Imperialism

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TEXTS

Analysis of NADG Reporting of US Aggression Against Iran July 19-23, with assistance from Inside Iran by Medea Benjamin
D-G Staff. “US. Warship in Gulf Downs Iranian Drone. Trump Calls U.S. Response –Self-Defense.” NADG (7-19-19). [Imagine an Iranian warship in Tampa Bay shooting down a US surveillance drone. Imagine too the warship was an amphibious assault vessel like the USS Boxer. And imagine the ship was accompanied outside the Bay by the full complement of a Carrier Strike Force (like the one led by the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln presently in the Arabian Sea). Now can you imagine US Central Command not sending out a surveillance drone? And imagine Iranian news media describing the incident as part of the US “raising tensions” by threatening Iranian forces and interests in the Gulf of Mexico. And throw in imagining four Iranian B-52 long-range bombers and Patriot air defense missiles to Cuba and Venezuela. And, no imagining now, remember how close to violent war the two nations came when on June 20, Trump ordered a retaliatory military strike in retaliation for Iran shooting down a US Navy drone, but called it off at the last moment. The authors of the report, the D-G Staff, do not imagine how all of this might look to the Iranians.]

D-G Staff. “Iran Claims to Seize Now-silent U.K. Ship. Incident Adds to Tensions in Persian Gulf” 7-20-19. [During the 19th c., Russia, Britain, and France were rivals in taking over various Iranian resources. “…one with monumental consequences, came in 1901, when Iranian rulers signed over the exclusive rights to drill for oil” to a British businessman….the first step in what became the U.K. takeover of Iran’s oil resources.” From this time forward, dislike of “foreign concessions” and of Iran’s rulers’ failure to defend the nation’s sovereignty grew among the populace. Medea Benjamin, Inside Iran (2018).]

The UK’s dubious role in the new tanker war with Iran. Mronline.org (7-20-19). There are signs of a new tanker war in the Persian Gulf, with Britain joining a coalition that wants a war with Iran. Source

Stan Choe and Damian Troise (AP). “Iran Tensions, Fed Rate Worries Send Stocks Lower.” 7-20-19. 2D. [“Iran Tensions” is a common US mainstream media (MM) coverup of the causation agency chain. The “tensions” didn’t just appear, but began when the US/CIA overthrew the democratically elected Iranian government under Mossadegh. A tit for tat relationship ensued, which was reinforced when Pres. Trump arbitrarily and unilaterally canceled the nuclear agreement between the countries. More recently, the UK seized an Iranian vessel, the US shot down an Iranian drone, and the Iranians seized a British and a Liberian vessel.]


The 3rd paragraph includes two important reminders: in June the US came “to within minutes of a military strike against targets in Iran,” and “a fifth of the world’s crude oil supply is shipped from the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Iran.” Tough talk from Britain regarding “further measures”—a freeze on Iranian assets, pushing the EU and UN to reimpose sanctions.” Britain’s Foreign Secretary also defended “British-assisted” seizure of Iran’s supertanker earlier this month as “legal” because vessel suspected of breaching EU sanctions on oil shipments to Syria. In contrast, Iran’s Foreign Minister labeled the seizure “piracy,” and its Guardian Council justified its
seizure of a British tanker as “reciprocal action.” Other Iranian agencies explained the seizure differently, which we have seen before resulting from the three main sources of power in Iran. Trump, France, Germany sided with Britain. “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said...that the U.S. isn't willing to talk with Iran until it acts like a normal country.” [This statement seems so hypocritical or ignorant, given US's own history, that one wonders if Pompeo even attended high school, though of course the true history of imperial US in the Middle East is not taught there.] Pompeo also said “Iran has shown ‘no signs’ it wants to change direction on its nuclear and missile programs.” [Maybe he suffers from short-term memory loss. Iran did change direction under the deal signed under the Obama administration by accepting strict, verifiable limits on its uranium enrichment program.] To add to the extremely heavy force being gathered surrounding Iran [the Lincoln Carrier Strike Group, etc.], the U.S. Central command began “putting in place ‘a multinational maritime effort’ called Operation Sentinel that would ‘increase surveillance of and security in key waterways in the Middle East to ensure freedom of navigation in light of recent events in the Arabian Gulf region’ [British marines seizing the Iran tanker at Gibraltar July 4?!].

Robert Burns (AP). “Wary of Iran, U.S. Dusting Off 1990s Saudi base, Shoring Up Defenses.” 7-21-19. More quotations followed by comment. [The first is the term “defenses.” Iran is on the defense, not the US, which has surrounded Iran with a dozen military bases and nuclear armed submarines and planes, enabling the US to have already programmed for annihilation all of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard’s bases. One of the best acts for peace for all of us would be the total replacement of the word “defense,” repeated endlessly in the official Orwellian vocabulary of war, and its replacement by the word offense.

“Tensions with Iran have spiked since May when President Donald Trump’s administration said it had detected increased Iranian preparations for possible attacks on U.S. forces and interests in the Persian Gulf area. . . .This movement of forces provides an additional deterrent, and ensures our ability to defend our forces and interests in the region (translation: oil) from emergent credible threats,’ Central Command said.” “With Iranian military threats in mind, the United States is sending American forces” to a Saudi air base—al-Kharj, now the Prince Sultan air base-- that was a hub of US power in the ME in the 1990s. [It was this US presence in SA that caused SA citizen bin Laden to hate the US and to mastermind flying US planes into the Trade Towers in 2001.] [George Orwell would have enjoyed citing much of this report on the massive US armed squeeze of Iran presented as defense: war is peace.]

D-G Staff. “In Recording, U.K. Warship Urges Iran to Let Tanker Go.” 7-22-19. Details of the seizure, some historical events leading to the seizure, and “U.K. Response” are crowded into this report derived from AP, Bloomberg News, and NYT sources. Benjamin in chapter 1 of Inside Iran recounts the long struggle by the Iranian people to regain Iranian sovereignty. A momentous episode in this history is the coup that overthrew Mossadegh in 1953 engineered by the CIA and UK spy agency M16. Mossadegh’s National Front Party had created the National Iranian Oil Company to negotiate with the British to purchase the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. (precursor to BP). When the British refused, Mossadegh nationalized the company. (A big deal; the British had profited by hundreds of millions of dollars each year, and the British Navy depended on Iran’s oil for 85 percent of its fuel.) The larger issue was control of Iran’s oil by Western powers. In June of 1953, US Secretary of State John foster Dulles unveiled the plot to overthrow Mossadegh. The actual British and US arranged coup occurred on August 19 when a mob paid for the by the US took over the streets and Sherman tanks surrounded key buildings.

“Relations between Iran and the United States were permanently damaged, as the U.S. government was now seen as yet another duplicitous power, in cahoots with the perfidious British who had constrained and thwarted Iran’s independence and sovereignty for 150 years.
By contrast, Mohammad Mossadegh is remembered by his people as a national leader in the mold of India’s Gandhi…” (p. 27).

Given such a history, not the Supreme Leader, the Revolutionary Guard, nor the Parliament and Prime Minister were prepared to listen to any UK warship.

D-G Staff. “Britain Seeking Mission in Gulf. Goal to Protect Ships from Iran.” 7-23-19, 1A. 2A.

Let’s see it from the other side’s pov.

*Tehran Republican Guard Democrat-Gazette.* “Iran Seeking Mission in Gulf of Mexico. Goal to Protect Ships from US.” (7-23-19).

Middle Eastern governments plan to develop and deploy a “maritime protection mission” to safeguard shipping in the Gulf of Mexico following US seizure of an Iranian-flagged tanker as it approached the Port of Texas City, a major deepwater port at Galveston Bay. Its location on the bay, which is used by the Port of Houston and the Port of Galveston, puts Texas City in the heart of one of the world’s most important shipping hubs.

Briefing Iran’s Parliament, Iran’s President accused the US of “an act of state piracy” that must be met with a coordinated international reaction.” The US Secretary of the Department of War suggested the Iranian New Century was seized and taken to the Port of Galveston in response to Iran’s role in seizing a US oil tanker, the Deep Driller, in the Gulf of Ormuz. Iran’s President countered that under international law, the US had no right to stop the Deep Driller or to board it. The President said Iran’s allies will play a major role in keeping shipping lanes open, for one-fifth of all global crude exports pass through the Gulf of Mexico from both US and Mexican ports. . . . [I have barely begun. Will one of you satirists carry on?]

What “terrorism” looks like from Tehran:

*Iranian parliament labels entire US military as terrorist - AP News*
https://www.apnews.com/81a36d0a93ae46b7ba5617b7c504a6b4

Apr 23, 2019 - TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iranian lawmakers on Tuesday overwhelmingly ... Iranian parliament labels entire US military as terrorist ... meets with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Tehran, Iran, Monday, April 22, 2019. ...

D-G Staff. “Iran Claims 17 Arrests of Spies Linked to U.S.” 7-23-19.1A, 2A.

Quotations followed by my comments:

"Iran said": [Media around the world far too frequently over-generalizes, making agency difficult to impossible to identify. Let’s remember that Iran has 3 tiers of gov: at the top religion, the Supreme Leader and Guardian Council; under the Supreme Leader the military Revolutionary Guard; below the Supreme Leader the government bureaucracy performing all aspects familiar to gov responsibility, with a parliament (Iranian National Assembly) and a prime minister (recently I noticed that the government and the guard each had its own navy). Any time an article says that “a nation” said something, I register the writer’s obfuscating laziness.]

After labeling the accusation of spying “another lie’ from Iran,” Pres. Trump added “that his interest in negotiating with the country is waning.” [I expect that anyone who is reading this newsletter would reply that it’s incomprehensible for Trump to repudiate the lengthily negotiated treaty between the US/Pres. Obama and the gov of Iran and then to declare his interest in negotiating “is waning.”]

Trump…called the Iranian claim about the spies ‘totally false.’” [But why should we believe such an accusation, when Trump has been repeatedly exposed as a pathological liar? (Google Donald Trump]
liar lies to find an “avalanche of lies”.)] And he supported his accusation by describing Iran as “a Religious Regime that is Badly Failing and has no idea what to do.” [But how do these derogations support the accusations? And who caused it to be “Badly Failing”? (See Inside Iran, chapter 7, “The Iranian Economy After Decades of Sanctions.”)]

Trump also said he was waiting for “Tehran” “to agree to negotiate new limits on its nuclear program and other activities.” [By “new” we must assume he meant more restrictive (or why would he have blamed Pres. Obama for allowing the “disastrous” 2015 nuclear accord?), yet the accord restricted Iran to enriching its uranium to below 4% (far from weapons grade) and to a stockpile of 661, both of which limits the UN Inspection Commission has repeatedly verified were performed and maintained.

I have covered Trump’s questionable comments in the first 14 paragraphs in a sizeable report of 39. Will one of you take over?

Suddenly on the 24th the NADG stopped reporting on the Iran War, so I will break off too.

Criticism of US Global Aggression

Contents:

Iran’s right to have a nuclear energy program.
The US invasion of Afghanistan brought not peace but death and starvation.
David Vine’s book, Base Nation.
“Stop Imperialist Warfare” by Abel Tomlinson.

The U.S.-Iran standoff can only end when the U.S. accepts Iran’s right to have a nuclear energy program. mronline.org (7-24-19).

The U.S. objection to Iran is not based on international law, but merely based on its political objectives. This is clearly illustrated by open U.S. support for nuclear energy and nuclear weapon development in India; and nuclear weapon stockpiling in Israel, which the U.S. has always fully backed.

Source

Peace is a word that the West has taken from the Afghans.

mronline.org (6-14-19)

The war on Afghanistan has been ugly. Death is one consequence of war—2019 has been the deadliest year for civilians since the United States first began to bomb Afghanistan in 2001. Starvation is another—according to the UN, half of the population will need food assistance over the course of this year.

Source
Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World by David Vine.

From Italy to the Indian Ocean, from Japan to Honduras, a far-reaching examination of the perils of American military bases overseas

American military bases encircle the globe. More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. still stations its troops at nearly a thousand locations in foreign lands. These bases are usually taken for granted or overlooked entirely, a little-noticed part of the Pentagon's vast operations. But in an eye-opening account, Base Nation shows that the worldwide network of bases brings with it a panoply of ills—and actually makes the nation less safe in the long run.

As David Vine demonstrates, the overseas bases raise geopolitical tensions and provoke widespread antipathy towards the United States. They also undermine American democratic ideals, pushing the U.S. into partnerships with dictators and perpetuating a system of second-class citizenship in territories like Guam. They breed sexual violence, destroy the environment, and damage local economies. And their financial cost is staggering: though the Pentagon underplays the numbers, Vine’s accounting proves that the bill approaches $100 billion per year.

U.S. MILITARY BASES ABROAD, 2015

As of 2015, the United States controlled approximately 800 bases outside the fifty U.S. states and Washington, D.C. The sheer number of bases as well as the secrecy and lack of transparency of the overseas base network make any graphic depiction challenging.

Notes:

Praise for Base Nation

“As U.S. national security policy rests on the assertion that ‘forward presence' contributes directly to global peace and security. In this powerful book, David Vine examines, dismantles, and disproves that claim. He demonstrates that America's sprawling network of overseas bases imposes costs—not only financial but also political, environmental, and moral—that far exceed what the Pentagon is prepared to acknowledge. Base Nation offers a devastating critique, and no doubt Washington will try to ignore it. Citizens should refuse to let that happen.”

https://abeltomlinson.wordpress.com/2019/07/21/stop-imperialist-warfare/
We must stop lying to ourselves and our children. **Dozens of U.S. wars and coups** were not in honest self-defense, or to spread “freedom” and “democracy.” These lies are made obvious when one studies history, and knows the **U.S. has overthrown several democracies**, and **installed, supported and armed numerous dictators**. The coups are overwhelmingly waged for corporate imperialist interests, for profits for the richest few.

Perhaps the most persuasive voice in describing U.S. imperialism is the highly decorated General Smedley Butler. Way back in 1933, **Butler blew the whistle on corporate empire:**

“I spent 33 years (in the) Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major-General. And during that period, I (was) a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street… I **was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism**…I helped make Mexico (safe) for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys…I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street….I helped purify Nicaragua for (Brown Brothers banking) in 1909-1912…I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.”

Fast forward to recent history, and see the U.S. empire has grown to over **800 foreign military bases in over 80 nations**, and has neared total world domination. Most governments, whether democracy or dictatorship, have become subservient to U.S.-enforced corporate imperialist interests. When a given government stands up too strongly, like **nationalizing key resources**, that is the cue for regime change.

Imperialist warfare is not only military assault or CIA covert operations, but also **economic warfare such as sanctions**. We know sanctions often prove deadly to civilian populations. Just recently, sanctions were found to have **killed over 40,000 civilians in Venezuela**. In the 1990s, the New York Times reported Bush-Clinton **sanctions killed 500,000 Iraqi children**.

On national television, Lesley Stahl interviewed Secretary of State Madeleine Albright about these sanctions. Stahl asked, “We have heard that a half million children have died…that’s more children than died in Hiroshima…is the price worth it?” Albright calmly replied, “**We think the price is worth it.**” Her statement displays an utter lack of conscience, and brings to mind a choice psychological term.

My political awakening was triggered by **935 documented lies** about Iraq’s nonexistent WMD and connections to 9-11. These lies led to a textbook definition of not just a war crime, but the “**supreme international crime.**” which **killed over a million humans**, wasted **trillions of taxpayer dollars**, and **other ongoing horrors**. That war had nothing to do with freedom, and everything to do with imperialism and **oil**.

Since Iraq, imperialist coups or attempted coups have been waged on several more nations, including **Libya, Honduras, Ukraine, Venezuela, Syria**, etc. The most catastrophic coup du
jour on the menu is Iran. General Anthony Zinni warned, “If you liked Iraq...you will love Iran.” The “best” case scenario is, like Iraq, killing another million people and wasting trillions more. The worst case scenarios are unspeakable.

We must stop the lies and imperialism. Most people correctly see slavery was deeply immoral, and we must now realize imperialism is equally evil. What is imperialism but a love of money so extreme that it demands killing people?

About 75 percent of Americans consider themselves Christians. Perhaps it is time to re-read Matthew, “No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money,” and Timothy, “For the love of money is the root of all evil.”

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