



OPINION: AFTER HAMAS POGROM, QATAR MUST FINALLY PAY FOR ITS SPONSOR OF TERRORISM - JOSH HAMMER

Posted on November 21, 2023 by Josh Hammer



In a now-infamous recent podcast recording on the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, former President Barack Obama lectured: "You have to admit that nobody's hands are clean, that all of us are complicit to some degree." Ironically for such a narcissist, Obama is painfully lacking in self-awareness. It is Obama himself who doggedly pursued a grand strategic "realignment" in the Middle East, away from Israel and America's traditional Sunni Arab allies and toward the terrorist Iranian regime and the Muslim Brotherhood (for which Hamas is the Palestinian-Arab offshoot). The Biden administration, reliably acting as a third Obama term, has stayed the course -- evinced by a brand-new alleged U.S. sanctions waiver that would enrich the Tehran mullahcracy to the tune of \$10 billion.

The Iranian regime is the "head of the snake," as Israeli intelligence is known to refer to it, when it comes to state-funded Islamism and jihadism across the Middle East. But often absent from the discussion is Iran's chief Sunni ally, a fabulously wealthy tiny emirate that funds and houses Hamas and disseminates Muslim Brotherhood-style Islamism throughout the region via its state-owned network, Al Jazeera: Qatar.

In the aftermath of the single largest slaughter of Jews since the defeat of Nazi Germany, as well as the single biggest American hostage crisis since Tehran in 1979, Qatar cannot be allowed to get away with its duplicity any longer.

Along with Iran, Qatar is one of the primary state bankrollers of Hamas. It is also the physical home of Hamas' organizational leaders, who live lavishly in five-star luxury hotels in Doha, far removed from the mayhem in Gaza. The Qatari regime has provided material aid and comfort to myriad other Islamist outfits, once even offering banking services for the branch of ISIS responsible for the brutal on-camera beheading of American journalist Steven Sotloff in 2014.

Qatar, via both diplomatic support and Al Jazeera's fanning of the flames of Islamism, was also the tip of the spear of the tumultuous Arab Spring uprisings a decade ago. Today, Qatar's state-sponsored Islamism makes it a convenient ally of Iran -- although the emirate's non-Islamist Gulf Cooperation Council neighbors, such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, view it with skepticism if not outright disdain.

Qatar manages to evade Western scrutiny for its sundry malign activities via a multifaceted strategy, centered around Al Udeid Air Base, strategic Western investments, and a sprawling, deeply sophisticated information operation.

Al Udeid Air Base is the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East, and Qatar looks the other way when the U.S. launches strategic

operations, such as the January 2020 assassination of Iranian arch-terrorist Qasem Soleimani, from the base. The fact that Al Udeid is shockingly close to the Doha penthouses where Hamas leadership physically lives seems not to bother top U.S. military brass. On the contrary, Qatar's cynical loaning of Al Udeid has been so successful in duping Americans that the emirate is on "our side" that the Biden administration even formally designated Qatar a "major non-NATO ally of the United States" in March 2022. The administration is also currently indulging the farce of Qatar "mediating" hostage negotiations with Hamas in Gaza -- the equivalent of enlisting the arsonist to put out the fire.

Qatar, which sits on the world's third largest natural gas reserve and is one of the wealthiest per-capita countries in the world, also attempts to indoctrinate and strategically buy out gullible, venal Westerners. The Qatar Investment Authority, the emirate's sovereign wealth fund, invests in many key assets, such as the Empire State Building in New York City and Heathrow Airport in London. Qatar has also been the single largest foreign state investor in American universities since 9/11, investing huge sums in such prestigious institutions as Cornell, Georgetown, Northwestern and Carnegie Mellon -- many of which now have branches in Doha.

Qatar additionally invests heavily to promote its image as sleek and "forward-looking." It quite literally bribed its way to hosting the World Cup last year, and state-owned Qatar Airways is one of the most visible and ubiquitous sponsors of Formula 1 racing across the world. Al Jazeera's English-language outlet, AJ+, is also overtly progressive in its political slant.

The Qatari information operation is multilayered, complex and unfortunately quite effective. It has duped successfully many Western elites in both North America and Europe. But no matter how much money Qatar sinks into its global P.R. campaign, and no matter how much the U.S. benefits from Al Udeid, the emirate cannot escape the fact that it is one of the leading sponsors of Islamism and jihad the world over.

The U.S. State Department currently only lists four State Sponsors of Terrorism: Cuba, North Korea, Iran and Syria. Qatar should be added to the list, but stripping it of its ludicrous "major non-NATO ally" status would be a fine place to start.

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