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The meaning of subservience to America

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Beyond hypocrisy

For me one of the key scenes in post-WW2 American movies is in *Godfather 2*. In the mid 1950s, Michael Corleone, the middle aged don, is sitting in his study, while in the grounds of his mansion beside Lake Tahoe the extended Corleone family are celebrating a wedding. The senator for Arizona comes in and gives Michael a load of abuse about incomers and how they aren't wanted in his state. Corleone shows no emotion and just says, 'Senator, we're both part of the same hypocrisy'. Except 'hypocrisy' doesn't do justice to the gulf between the words and the deeds. It is, in the title of the Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky book, *beyond hypocrisy*. Being subservient to the US means the British state and politicians can never publicly acknowledge anything which draws attention to that gulf.

Craig Murray

Ambassador Craig Murray hadn't learned this when he began asking questions about the American and British use of information gathered in Uzbekistan by the regime there torturing its citizens. In America recently Murray talked again about the consequences he faced:¹

'.....even when I was only complaining internally, I was subjected to the most dreadful pattern of things which I

¹ <www.consortiumnews.com/2009/102409b.html>

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still find it hard to believe happened.'

'I was suddenly accused of issuing visas in return for sex, stealing money from the post account, of being an alcoholic, of driving an embassy vehicle down a flight of stairs, which is extraordinary because I can't drive. I've never driven in my life. I don't have a driving license. My eyesight is terrible. ...'

'But I was accused of all these unbelievable accusations, which were leaked to the tabloid media, and I spent a whole year of tabloid stories about sex-mad ambassador, blah-blah-blah. And I hadn't even gone public. What I had done was write a couple of memos saying that this collusion with torture is illegal under a number of international conventions including the UN Convention Against Torture.'

'I couldn't believe [what was happening], I'd been a very successful foreign service officer for over 20 years. The British Foreign Service is small. Actual diplomats, as opposed to [support] staff, are only about 2,000 people, I worked there for over 20 years. I knew most of them by name. All the people involved in smearing me, trying to taint me on false charges, were people I thought were my friends. It's really hard when people you think are your friends [lie about you].'

'I'm writing memos saying it's illegal to torture people, children are being tortured in front of their parents. And they're writing memos back saying it depends on the definition of complicity under Article Four of the UN Convention.'

This is the sequence of events which led to Murray's ouster.

* The US was supporting the dictator in Uzbekistan initially in pursuit of a pipeline which Enron wanted to run through the country.

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* To justify US activities in Uzbekistan an al Qaeda 'threat' was invented by torturing Uzbeks until they 'admitted' being al Qaeda.

* Because the US was tolerating this, the UK government had to turn a blind eye to it.

* Because Murray would not drop the issue of torture in Uzbekistan, he had to be got rid of lest he embarrass the American 'friends'.

* To get rid of Murray a smear campaign was generated against him.

I admire Murray but you have to wonder how he arrived at the age of 40 plus, after 20 years working for HMG's foreign service, and had not realised what would happen if he tried to oppose American foreign policy.

Lockerbie

The recent events over Lockerbie illustrate the taboo status of anything which might point out the gulf between the fantasy and real American foreign policy. Even though hardly anyone believed the Libya-did-it story,² even though creating and sustaining it involved corrupting the English and Scottish legal systems, the British state went along with the fairy story so crudely concocted by the Americans.³ And the state held the line until al-Megrahi's lawyers began preparing another appeal which threatened to lift the lid on the frame-up.

The Sunday Times reported that al-Megrahi's defence team had planned to produce:

² One who does, apparently, is the one-time radical barrister Geoffrey Robertson, who wrote: 'I have read the judgement of the Lockerbie court and the two appeal judgements upholding it and al-Megrahi's guilt seems plain beyond reasonable doubt. In his 'We should be ashamed that this has happened', *The Guardian*, 22 August 2009.

³ Not that crudely concocted frame-ups haven't worked in the past: think of Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray – or the Birmingham 6 *et al.*

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'...a memo from the DIA dated September 24, 1989. It states: "The bombing of the Pan Am flight was conceived, authorised and financed by Ali-Akbar (Mohtashemi-Pur), the former Iranian minister of interior.'

'The execution of the operation was contracted to Ahmad (Jabril), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC) leader, for a sum of 1,000,000 US dollars.'

'One hundred thousand dollars of this money was given to Jabril up front in Damascus by the Iranian ambassador to Sy [ie Syria], Muhammad Hussan (Akhari) for initial expenses. The remainder of the money was to be paid after successful completion of the mission.'" 4

After al-Megrahi had departed for Libya, Tam Dalyell made this comment :

'The Iranian Minister of the interior at the time [of the shooting down of the Iranian airliner by the USS Vincennes], was Ali Akbar Mostashemi, who made a public statement that blood would rain down in the form of ten western airliners being blown out of the sky.....Washington was appalled. I believe so appalled and fearful that it entered a Faustian agreement that, tit-for-tat, one airliner should be sacrificed. This may seem a dreadful thing for me to say. But consider the facts. A notice went up in the US Embassy in Moscow advising diplomats not to travel with Pan Am back to America for Christmas. American military personnel were pulled off the plane. A delegation of South Africans, including foreign minister Pik Botha, were pulled off Pan Am Flight 103 at the last minute'.⁵

4 Jason Allardyce and Mark Macaskill in 'US spies blamed Iran for Lockerbie bomb', in *The Sunday Times* 16 August 2009.

5 In 'The Crime of Lockerbie' in *The Spokesman* no. 105, 2009.

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Former CIA officer Robert Baer said:

'Your justice secretary had two choices – sneak into Megrahi's cell and smother him with his pillow or release him.... The end game came down to damage limitation because the evidence amassed by his appeal team is explosive and extremely damning to your system of justice.'

'There is hard evidence of other nations – Iran particularly – being responsible for this atrocity.'

'The CIA knew this almost from the moment the plane exploded. This decision to free Megrahi was about protecting the integrity of your judiciary because the appeal papers prove Iran was involved.... I knew this information back then so you can rest assured both MI5 and MI6 knew.'⁶

Don't you just love Baer's notion that freeing al-Megrahi was about 'protecting the integrity of [the British but primarily Scottish] judiciary'? As if it had any left!⁷

Subservience produces other effects. For example, it produces a civil service and ministers who just say 'Yes', to any American proposal; for example, the now notorious one-sided extradition treaty between the US and the UK in which the British state has to produce evidence but the Americans do not. This treaty wasn't signed by mistake: the Home Office was warned about it six years ago by a committee of MPs who

⁶ In 'CIA spook says Megrahi was freed before appeal humiliated justice system', <www.sundaymail.co.uk/news/scottish-news/2009/08/23/cia-spook-says-megrahi-was-freed-before-appeal-humiliated-justice-system-78057-21618329/>

⁷ For further reading, try Paul Foot's 1994 essay, 'Taking the blame', in the *London Review of Books*, which reviewed the Lester Coleman book, *Trail of the Octopus*; John Pilger's 'Megrahi was framed' in the *New Statesman* on 3 September 2009; and Gareth Pierce's 'The framing of al-Megrahi' in the *London Review of Books*. All are excellent and on-line.

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were considering the legislation.⁸

⁸ Christopher Hope, 'Home Office warned six years ago about unfair extradition treaty', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 July 2009.