

Robert Parry's Rather Naïve Notion

From Editor Robert Parry: When I founded the Consortiumnews Web site in 1995, I had the rather naive notion that Americans cared enough about truly independent journalism on important topics that we could raise adequate money for at least a low-budget investigative project based on the then-newfangled Internet.

Yes, I did know that the mid-1990s were a time of mostly brain-dead media, when Ronald Reagan was hailed as one of the greatest presidents and the press corps obsessed over exaggerated "Clinton scandals" except when cable news went 24/7 over some pretty American blonde woman gone missing.

I also should have paid heed when I encountered resistance from some wealthy individuals who I thought might help. They searched for excuses not to, possibly fearing that our reporting would prove uncomfortable or inconvenient. Some expressed worries about costs, as if journalists weren't the most reliable people to handle money, especially regarding journalism projects.

Still, I thought the growing triviality of the mainstream press must have left some space in the media marketplace for serious truth-telling, historical context and old-fashioned investigative journalism. So, I pressed ahead, cashing out my Newsweek retirement account (and even paying a penalty to the IRS for the early withdrawal) to raise the money to get the project off the ground.

What we showed then and have continued to demonstrate for more than 16 years is that our original vision could work, at least journalistically. We have produced not only quality investigative journalism on a shoestring, but we have generated stories that change how people understand the world, both historically and currently.

Just recently, for instance, I was able to glean from declassified records at the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas, insights into why the Vietnam peace talks failed in 1968, what then-President Lyndon Johnson knew about Richard Nixon's "treason," and who might even have profited from inside knowledge of Nixon's peace-talk sabotage.

I was able to keep the cost of the entire trip at less than \$1,000 by using my own frequent flyer mileage and traveling on a tight budget. (And there are still more stories to come from the trip.)

Sadly, however, we still struggle to pay the bills at Consortiumnews.com. Despite our careful spending and our site's expanding content our future remains in doubt. While I am proud of how many small donors chip in what they can, I

still encounter resistance from many wealthier individuals who have other priorities.

There remains this idea among some potential donors that “the truth will out,” even if there are not honest and determined people fighting to get it out. Yet that is even a more naive notion than my own early belief that it wouldn’t be that hard to build a “consortium” of people who understood the need to finance courageous journalism.

So, if you can help, please contribute to our spring fund drive, which has set a modest goal of \$25,000, but remains more than \$23,000 short.

You can make a donation by credit card at the Consortiumnews.com Web site or by check to Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd.; Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201. Or you can use PayPal (our account is named after our e-mail address “consortnew@aol.com”).

Since we are a 501-c-3 non-profit, your donation may be tax-deductible.

You also can choose whether you want your entire donation to go to support our work or if you’d like one of our thank-you gifts, which we are now offering to anyone who donates at least \$50 or who signs up for a monthly donation.

Those gifts include an autographed copy of one of my last three books: *Lost History*, *Secrecy & Privilege* or *Neck Deep*.

Or a DVD of the 1991 PBS “Frontline” documentary “The Election Held Hostage,” which I co-wrote. It explores Republican skullduggery with Iran prior to the pivotal 1980 election.

We also have a few copies left of the late Gary Webb’s book, *The Killing Game*, and a few DVDs of war correspondent Don’s North’s documentary on the lives of former Salvadoran guerrillas, entitled “Yesterday’s Enemies.” (So, those gifts must be “while supplies last.”)

If you want one of the thank-you gifts, just follow-up your donation with an e-mail to consortnew@aol.com. Otherwise, we’ll put your entire donation toward keeping Consortiumnews.com going.

As always, thanks for your support.

Robert Parry

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 as the Internet’s first investigative magazine. He saw it as a way to combine modern

technology and old-fashioned journalism to counter the increasing triviality of the mainstream U.S. news media.

Police State Blues

The New York Police Department reacted quickly against Occupy Wall Street activists who returned to Liberty Square (or Zuccotti Park) six months after the original occupation began. But the confrontation marked one more milepost in a longer and surely more painful journey, writes poet Phil Rockstroh.

Phil Rockstroh

At mid-evening, on Saturday, March 17, upon the six-month anniversary of the occupation of Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan, the NYPD initiated another brutal operation to expel OWS activists from the premises, and to discourage, in general, those who might venture attempts to exercise their right to free assembly and free expression across the whole of the city of New York as winter proceeds into spring.

After all, the NYPD suffered no ill consequences from its search-and-destroy mission launched in the late fall of 2011 to scour the park, renamed Liberty Square, of liberty.

In a police state, unjust actions by authoritarian bullies, operating at the behest of privileged bullies in power, act by caprice and will escalate their level of brutality by the degree that the public at large reacts with support and indifference to the state's assaults on civil liberties and common decency.

Bear in mind, police agencies, devoid of meaningful oversight, comprise a legal form of gang activity; therefore, when one is witness to their acts of brutality, and, as outraged protesters are apt to do, shower their ranks with taunts of "shame, shame, shame" – rather than experiencing feelings of remorse, brutish individual officers regard the scolding as a badge of honor.

Why? Because they view OWS as a rival gang – not a force of democratic passion and outrage. The defining creed of a violent gang, such as the NYPD, is to ensure their own survival by the modus operandi of violently crushing perceived rivals.

If rank-and-file police officers ever surrender their arms and change sides, this event will have come to pass because the institutions of power that direct

their actions (and that issue their paychecks) will begin to collapse.

Anything you can do to challenge and to help facilitate the end of the reign of exploitation and terror that is the neoliberal international superstate will, in turn, prove helpful in achieving the goal of ceasing the brutality inherent to the U.S. police state.

But, and I hope I'm wrong in positing this dismal augury, there will be much blood lacquering the pavements of the city of New York, and scores of other municipalities, worldwide, before that day arrives.

At our best, as a species, we human beings use our minds and imaginations to bring less suffering to the world; at our worst, we use said attributes to rationalize causing so much of it.

Although not widely acknowledged by mainstream opinion shapers, the struggle to retake the public commons by activists facing hostile local municipalities and their police enforcers and the imperative to reduce mankind's destruction of the ecological balance of the earth are related issues, of which the implications extend far beyond the political realm.

The unfolding of these matters determines how you spend your days from when you rise in the morning, to what you eat, to which locations you proceed during the day, to when and how you sleep at night right down to the state of your health and the condition of your soul.

To those who proffer the excuse, "in my heart, I know you're right, but I have to be a realist about this": you're letting a crackpot realist mindset falsely frame the matter. Given that the heart is more than a pump – it is the alpha and omega point of the soul of the world i.e., animus mundi, perhaps, you are confused regarding the nature of reality.

Moreover, you sound like George F. Babbitt giving a book report on Hannah Arrent's conception of the banality of evil from Eichmann in Jerusalem, and you have missed the point. Apropos: Evil is maintained by mundane means, by people who see themselves as normal and who live ordinary lives.

And it seems to be what you're actually trying to express is closer to the following: I feel overwhelmed and powerless about the situation. Addressing it makes me feel uncomfortable, so I'll just accept the matter, maybe grouse about it a bit, but I'll continue to accept the small comforts the system proffers and I'll hope that will serve as balm to my empty, troubled soul.

The Cartesian fallacy that one's joy and suffering are almost exclusively a private matter – the idea that the process all takes place in one's own mind and

body and has no connection to any larger order – has diminished perception and has stressed the environment to the tipping point. This is the dismal litany of Industrial/Commercial Age false consciousness: the paramount function of the intellect is to reduce the vast and proliferate criteria of life down to the “bottom line.”

But anyone who posits the concept that life can and should be reduced to only self-serving, mechanistically controllable verities has much to learn from 20th century death camps, and, moreover, should take note of our present-day analogs of Auschwitz: the so-called industrial “farming industry”; the practices of deep sea “fishing” by trawlers (i.e, strip-mining the world’s oceans); deep water oil-drilling practices; and fracking. The list goes on and on, and finds an analog in the mechanistic suppression of dissent by militarized police forces.

Yet the agenda of the corporate/police/commercial/militarist state is to preserve and expand these practices, the very practices that keep its populace alienated, locked into benumbing, destructive habits that leave individuals hollow, anomie-prone, and addicted to distraction.

Withal, the acceptance of a way of life that is dependent on a habitual disengagement from the very acts that maintain one’s culture necessitates the construction of an imprisoning wall of psychological separation between oneself and reality. To awaken to reality is to suffer allowing oneself to experience feelings of despair, powerlessness and rage. Speaking the truth sets you free, because emotion engenders motion.

If witnessing peaceful protesters being beaten by police, manacled with zip cuffs (a device that by its structural makeup ensures a loss of circulation) and transported to jail on trumped-up charges, fails to get your blood up, then your absent soul can be located exchanging banalities at a mental dinner party with Adolf Eichmann.

To express indifference or to be an apologist for the quotidian evils of our time is reprehensible. Like the “good Germans” of the 1930s, you might believe your codified hatreds and commodified longings, manifested by the industrial and military power of the state, will deliver and preserve freedom but these beliefs, maintained by systems of mechanized force, will, in time, come to debase everything you hold dear.

How can an individual gain a modicum of empathy for the plight of the planet and for those brutalized by the operatives of state oppression when he refuses to gaze upon his own degraded condition?

At this point, the awakening of your heart comes down to a cultural imperative.

Even if you don't quite know where you're going at first, by moving in the direction of what your heart yearns for, you begin to reveal to yourself who you are. Thus, you wander off the banal path of empty obligation and self-serving rationalization – then, even in moments of doubt and confusion, you can make a home in being lost.

“Show your wounds,” exhorted artist Joseph Bueys. The wound becomes the womb, poets tell us. Pain and sorrow can induce one to seek out and to join the chorus of a larger order to give full-throated sorrow to songs emanating from the suffering earth.

You can join this chorus or elect to be self-cast as a supernumerary in a lethal farce that assigns you the dubious role of being both oppressor and oppressed. The earth's song, at this juncture, is one of soul-rending lamentation and sacred vehemence. This song needs you to lend your voice.

And I submit this lyric as the song's refrain, a riff of the blues inspired by the less than inspired acts of our men and woman uniformed in blue: “Our rights do not end where the caprice of authoritarian bullies begins.”

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Israel Killing Wrong Iranian Scientists?

A suspected Israeli-sponsored assassination campaign has claimed the lives of five Iranian scientists supposedly linked to the country's nuclear program. But the evidence implicating some scientists in nuclear research may be as murky as the suspicions that a weapons program even exists, writes Gareth Porter at Truthout.

By Gareth Porter

On July 23, 2011, a 35-year-old Iranian electrical engineering student named Darioush Rezaeinejad was gunned down as he and his wife, who was also wounded in the attack, waited for their child in front of a kindergarten in Tehran.

Israel has never denied that it was behind that assassination, and two senior US officials have confirmed to NBC news that the accusation by Ali Larijani – a

senior adviser to Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei – that Israel's Mossad had used the Mujahideen E. Khalq (MEK) to carry out the killing of Iranian scientists was essentially accurate.

Rezaeinejad was the fourth Iranian scientist whom the Israelis had tried to assassinate, but what was different about his assassination is the subsequent effort by the Israelis to justify it after the fact. That effort casts new light not only on the larger assassination campaign, but on the way in which Israel has gone about constructing its contention that there is an active Iranian nuclear weapons program.

In the first hours after Rezaeinejad was gunned down, the chancellor of Khajeh Nasir Toosi University, Majid Ghasemi, identified him as an MS electrical engineering student who had specialized in power engineering. Ghasemi said he was unaware of any involvement by Rezaeinejad in Iran's nuclear program.

Iranian officials were convinced, at first, that the assassins had confused the young student with an assistant professor at Amir Kabir University of Technology in Tehran named Dariush Rezaei Ochbelagh, who is a specialist in nuclear reactors.

Fars News Agency reported the next day that it was indeed the student in electrical engineering who had been assassinated. The agency reported that Rezaeinejad had been doing basic research on high-voltage switches. Noting that high-voltage switches are used in detonators for nuclear weapons and missiles, the agency speculated that this was why Rezaeinejad was put on an "assassination list."

It pointed out, however, that high-voltage switches have many nonmilitary as well as conventional applications, and insisted there was "no evidence" that Rezaeinejad's work was related to nuclear weapons.

The possibility that Mossad killed the wrong Iranian scientist cannot be completely ruled out. But almost immediately after his murder, Israel sought to justify the murder of Rezaeinejad by presenting him as working on the covert nuclear weapons program Israel had been claiming for years.

Associated Press correspondent in Vienna, George Jahn, reported on July 28 that an anonymous official of an anonymous "member state" of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) told him that Rezaeinejad had been participating in "developing high voltage switches," which he described as "a key component in setting off the explosives needed to trigger a nuclear warhead."

Jahn's anonymous source also gave him the abstract of a professional paper by Rezaeinejad, which Jahn reported "appeared to back that claim." Jahn went on to

quote a source he described as a “former UN nuclear inspector,” who said the title of the paper would make an “explosive application” of the switch “likely” and suggested that he had co-written professional articles with a specialist on “explosives testing,” further confirming that view.

Two months later, on Sept. 19, Jahn and his anonymous source from the unnamed member state were back at it again, this time with a purported “intelligence summary” claiming to identify the researcher who had allegedly collaborated with Rezaeinejad on making a “key component” of a nuclear weapon as Mojtaba Dadashnejad. The alleged collaborator was said to have been playing “a key role at the center of the Iranian nuclear project,” according to Jahn.

The “intelligence summary” further claimed that Iranian officials suspected that Dadashnejad had “leaked information” that led to the killing. There was no explanation as to why the purported collaborator, supposedly at “the center” of Iran’s nuclear weapons program, would have decided to “leak” information that he would have known would expose both of them to being killed by an Israeli-sponsored assassination team.

Finally, the intelligence summary claimed that Rezaeinejad was not an electrical engineer at all, but a “physicist” who had worked for the Iranian defense ministry on not only high-voltage switches, but also on other projects linked to nuclear weapons development – which it did not identify.

But an investigation into the Rezaeinejad case reveals that Israel had used the AP’s Jahn to carry out a deliberate disinformation campaign about the victim to justify his murder. Rezaeinejad left a record of published research which makes it very clear that he was indeed an electrical engineer, rather than a physicist, and that he had been working on basic electrical power engineering technologies.

The title of the professional paper by Rezaeinejad that was cited as evidence of his ties to a nuclear weapons work, written for the 2008 Iranian Conference on Electrical Engineering, was translated into English as “Design, Build and Test an Explosive Closing Switch.” His co-author on the paper, which can be found on the Internet, was indeed Dadashnejad, and the paper refers to a “test explosion of a switch for switching packets.”

But the Israeli official and his former UN “nuclear inspector” were implying that the “explosion” to be tested involved high explosives such as would be used to detonate a nuclear weapon. That was profoundly misleading, according to Dr. Behrad Nakhai, a nuclear engineer and former research scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

“One shouldn’t make too much of the word ‘explosive’ in the title and in the abstract,” said Nakhai, who suggested that “spark” would be a more appropriate term to describe what was tested in Rezaeinejad’s research. In fact, the abstract also refers to the closing switch in question as a “spark gap switch.”

The “key words” accompanying the abstract further suggest that the closing switch Rezaeinejad was developing was for an “explosive pulsed power” system, an electric power technology which uses an explosive to produce the most rapid release of energy possible.

Explosive pulsed power (EPP) was originally developed by Los Alamos National Laboratory and its Soviet counterpart in support of the respective governments’ nuclear weapons programs. But in recent decades, EPP programs have sprung up in a number of countries as scientists and engineers have discovered a range of military and nonmilitary applications.

The U.S. Air Force, for example, is using EPP for aerospace missions requiring extremely high peak energy supplies provided by much more compact power sources. In addition, EPP is used for high-power lasers, high-power microwave sources and other commercial applications.

As for Rezaeinejad’s co-author, Dadashnejad, there is no institutional affiliation listed and no further record of any publications. Three Iranian-American scientists and engineers have told this writer that inquiries to their colleagues in the academic community in Iran about that individual have brought the same response: no one has heard of him.

Nakhai, the nuclear engineer and former research scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, believes that Dadashnejad may not have been a specialist on explosive testing, as the “former UN weapons inspector” and Israeli intelligence suggested, but merely a junior laboratory technician who helped Rezaeinejad assemble materials and carry out the testing.

Nakhai noted that the publication of that paper itself is actually strong evidence that neither Rezaeinejad nor Dadashnejad had any involvement whatever in anything related to nuclear weapons research.

“If an individual were involved the design and production of any part of a nuclear weapon,” he told me, “they would not have been allowed to publish any paper with even the slightest hint of the research and development.”

Two other professional papers by Rezaeinejad confirm the fact that he had been carrying out rudimentary research on basic electrical technologies with a range of commercial applications. In a paper published at the same annual conference on electrical engineering in 2007, Rezaeinejad had described research on

electrolyte resistors for a high-voltage pulsed power system. Such resistors are found in most electronic equipment.

And in 2006, Rezaeinejad presented a paper on the "Design and Simulation of a 5000 kV Marx Generator." The Marx generator is a basic technology for generating high-voltage pulses used in testing the insulation of electrical systems such as large power transformers.

The story peddled by the Israeli "intelligence summary," that Iranian officials suspected Dadashnejad of having "leaked" information about the sensitive work it claimed he and Rezaeinejad were doing for the military, was even more far-fetched.

The logical implication of that claim would be that Dadashnejad – supposedly a top scientist in the nuclear weapons program – had reported Rezaeinejad's work to Israeli intelligence. Perhaps it was imagined that such a detail would lend more credibility to the idea of Rezaeinejad as secretly working on nuclear weapons.

What Associated Press and the raft of newspapers which featured Jahn's story should have asked themselves – even without having carefully examined the details of the claims – was why a researcher involved in a covert nuclear weapons program would go about his daily life in Tehran without the slightest security precautions, despite the previous assassination or attempted assassination of three Iranian scientists.

A notable feature of the Israeli effort to justify the killing of Rezaeinejad is the role played by an unnamed "former UN nuclear inspector." The only former IAEA inspector who is known to have passed on "intelligence" about Iran from an IAEA member state or from someone inside the IAEA is David Albright, the head of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, DC.

It was Albright who revealed the name of the Ukrainian scientist Vyacheslav Danilenko to a group of intelligence officials last October. Danilenko was reported in the November 2011 IAEA report as a "former nuclear weapons specialist" who allegedly helped Iran build a containment vessel to carry out testing of nuclear weapons designs.

In comments on the PBS NewsHour on Jan. 12 about the assassination of Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan, a procurement officer at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility, Albright appeared to be justifying the killing by speculating that Roshan was responsible for international smuggling of materials into Iran.

The murder of Rezaeinejad, and the way Israel has justified it, parallels the way Israel has made its case that Iran is pursuing a covert nuclear weapons

program. The operative principle of the Israeli approach has always been that, if a particularly individual, technology or project could conceivably be linked to nuclear weapons, it must be assumed that it is evidence of Iran's nuclear weapons program.

For example, Israel, backed by the Bush administration, began insisting in 2004 that the Iranian military was the real power managing the Gchine uranium mine in order to secretly acquire uranium for a covert weapons program, despite the evidence that the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran was managing the mine.

And that same year, the Israelis and their allies in Washington pointed to satellite photos of the Parchin military testing facility that they claimed showed sites that must be for testing nuclear weapons without fissile material. They insisted that the IAEA visit the facility twice to find a nuclear weapons testing site, but after inspecting ten different buildings and grounds in two different areas of that base, they found nothing.

Rezaeinejad was a victim of the same scattershot approach, which claims a connection to nuclear weapons on the most slender and far-fetched evidence. But the Israeli government has been able to take advantage of the credulity of the news media to cover up the irrationality of its terrorism.

Gareth Porter is an investigative historian and journalist specialising in U.S. national security policy. The paperback edition of his latest book, *Perils of Dominance: Imbalance of Power and the Road to War in Vietnam*, was published in 2006. [This analysis was originally [published at Truthout](#).]
