

John Brennan: Killing of Fakhrizadeh 'An Act of State-Sponsored Terrorism'

by Hugh Fitzgerald



While many will agree that the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the “mastermind” of Iran’s nuclear weapons program, has made the world a safer place, and that we owe a debt a gratitude to the Israelis for this latest act of derring-do, designed to further slow Iran’s ability to produce nuclear weapons, John Brennan – who was head of the C.I.A. under Barack Obama – was enraged by Israel’s action. His view was reported [here](#) at Jihad Watch yesterday. This report has more: “US, world leaders mum on Fakhrizadeh killing; ex-CIA chief calls hit ‘reckless,’” [Times of Israel](#), November 28, 2020:

United States officials and world leaders remained mum on the killing of Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh as of Friday night [Nov, 27], while the UN called for restraint and a former head of the CIA said the assassination was "highly reckless."

Was the targeted assassination of Iran's top nuclear scientist any more "reckless" than the American killing of the head of Iran's Quds Force, Qassem Soleimani, at the beginning of this year? Or was this killing any more "reckless" than the killing of Osama bin Laden by Seal Team Six, in 2011, when Brennan was high up in the C.I.A. (he became the Director in 2013)? The Israelis have surely calculated the likelihood of Iranian retaliation, factoring in Tehran's desire to avoid doing anything until after Trump leaves office. And when that retaliation does come, surely Jerusalem has already prepared a far more devastating response. "Reckless" the attack on Fakhrizadeh was not. "Bold," "intrepid," "meticulously planned" – these are fitter adjectives.

When Soleimani was killed, the Americans had no idea what Iran would do; in the end, it sent missiles into two airbases in Iraq that were used by American troops, wounding 100 soldiers, but there were no deaths. Nor did the Americans know how Al Qaeda might respond to the killing of Bin Laden in Abbotabad. Israel's killing of Fakhrizadeh was less "reckless" than the American killings of Soleimani and bin Laden; the Israelis were able to factor into their decision what they knew about Iran's likely response, or rather likely lack of it, until after January 20.

There were no immediate comments from the White House, Pentagon, US State Department, CIA or US President-elect Joe Biden's transition team.

The leaders of other countries were similarly silent. Israel has not commented on the killing and no group has claimed

responsibility.

The former head of the CIA, John Brennan, called the assassination a crime that risked inflaming conflict in the region.

This was a criminal act & highly reckless. It risks lethal retaliation & a new round of regional conflict," Brennan said in a series of tweets.

Fakhrizadeh's assassination was no more a "criminal act" than the killings, by American forces, of Soleimani and bin Laden, both of which "risked lethal retaliation and a new round of regional conflict." Fakhrizadeh was a Major General in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which the American government has designated to be a terrorist group. As the "mastermind" of the nuclear program, he was possibly the most dangerous man in Iran. He didn't wear a uniform, but he was no civilian. By killing him, and thus delaying still further Iran's nuclear program, Israel made the world a safer place.

"I do not know whether a foreign government authorized or carried out the murder of Fakhrizadeh," he said. "Such an act of state-sponsored terrorism would be a flagrant violation of international law & encourage more governments to carry out lethal attacks against foreign officials."

Of course Brennan knows perfectly well that Israel, a country for which he has exhibited a palpable want of sympathy in the past, was responsible for the assassination of Fakhrizadeh. He pretends "not to know" so that his extraordinary condemnation of what he calls this "act of state-sponsored terrorism," this "criminal act," will not be attributed to his anti-Israel bias.

Brennan has repeatedly defined "Jihad" as a non-violent struggle by Muslims to "purify themselves" or for "a moral

goal." In 2009, Brennan said: "Nor does President Obama see this challenge as a fight against 'jihadists.' Describing terrorists in this way—using a legitimate term, 'jihad,' meaning to purify oneself or to wage a holy struggle for a moral goal—risks giving these murderers the religious legitimacy they desperately seek but in no way deserve." And in 2010, he said: "Nor do we describe our enemy as 'jihadists' or 'Islamists' because jihad is a holy struggle, a legitimate tenet of Islam, meaning to purify oneself or one's community, and there is nothing holy or legitimate or Islamic about murdering innocent men, women and children."

Just think: at a time when Jihadists are active all over the world, and threaten America and American interests, the C.I.A. recently had as its director John Brennan, who believes that "Jihad" means a "holy struggle...to purify oneself or one's community"; that there is nothing "holy or legitimate or Islamic" about those who kill innocent civilians; therefore, everyone must stop calling them (that is, these fanatics who misunderstand the real Islam) Jihadists. There is nothing violent about the "Jihad," rightly understood. That's Islam according to the fatuous John Brennan.

In May 2010, Brennan called for building up the "moderate" elements of Hezbollah: **"There is [sic] certainly the elements of Hizballah that are truly a concern to us what they're doing. And what we need to do is to find ways to diminish their influence within the organization and to try to build up the more moderate elements."**

What can he have been thinking? By 2010, Brennan was very high up in the C.I.A., and surely knew all about Hezbollah's activities in Lebanon and Syria, as an ally and proxy of the Islamic Republic. He knew about their more than 100,000 rockets and missiles, their attempts to build terror tunnels, their cross-border killings and kidnappings that led to the 2006 Hezbollah-Iran War. What "moderate elements" of Hezbollah is he talking about? Are there any Hezbollah members who do

not believe in killing Israelis?

In an address to a meeting at New York University School of Law, sponsored by the Islamic Society of North America, Brennan said in February 2010: **"As Muslims you have seen a small fringe of fanatics who cloak themselves in religion, try to distort your faith, though they are clearly ignorant of the most fundamental teachings of Islam. Instead of creating, they destroy – bombing mosques, schools and hospitals. They are not jihadists, for jihad is a holy struggle, an effort to purify for a legitimate purpose, and there is nothing, absolutely nothing holy or pure or legitimate or Islamic about murdering innocent men, women and children,"** Brennan said. **"We're trying to be very careful and precise in our use of language, because I think the language we use and the images we project really do have resonance. It's the reason why I don't use the term jihadist to refer to terrorists. It gives them the religious legitimacy they so desperately seek, but I ain't gonna give it to them."**

What do you think of John Brennan's confident reassuring words to a Muslim audience – they must have been delighted at his display of such ignorance – about those "fanatics...who try to distort your faith, though they are clearly ignorant of the most fundamental teachings of Islam"? Isn't he describing himself? And what should we make of his insistence that "jihad is a holy struggle, an effort to purify for a legitimate purpose"? Remember, this is not a man on the street, for whom such ignorance may be forgiven. This is someone who spent more than three decades in the C.I.A., and who headed our chief intelligence agency from 2013 to Jan. 20, 2017.

At the NYU meeting where Brennan spoke, he was introduced by then-ISNA President Ingrid Mattson, who made the writings of Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1950s, required reading in a course she taught. Mattson has long inveighed against using terms like "Islamic terrorism," since the earliest days after 9/11. During his

speech, Brennan praised Mattson as “an academic whose research continues the rich tradition of Islamic scholarship and as the President of the Islamic Society of North America, where you have been a voice for the tolerance and diversity that defines Islam.”

Yes, Ingrid Mattson, a deep admirer of the Muslim Brotherhood’s fanatical Qutb, is for John Brennan “a voice for the tolerance and diversity that defines Islam.” And Brennan, who delivered this utter nonsense, was for four years the man in charge of dealing mortal threats to American well-being from Jihadi terrorists worldwide.

Don’t you think that John Brennan, as part of his duties as head of the C.I.A., should have read and studied the Qur’an? (Shouldn’t it, in fact, now be required reading of everyone now in the C.I.A.?) Of course he should have, and of course he did not. He has no idea, even now, that the Qur’an commands all Muslims to fight, to kill, to smite at the necks of, to strike terror in the hearts of, the Infidels. He doesn’t know, either, that Muslims are told that they are the “best of peoples,” while non-Muslims are “the most vile of created beings.” That just might bring him up short.

At the very least, Brennan ought to have read a baker’s dozen of Qur’anic verses: 2:191-193, 3:151, 4:89, 5:33, 8:12, 8:60, 9:5, 9:29, 47:4, 98:6. A starter kit. But he never mentions the Qur’an, without a knowledge of which no one should presume to pontificate, as he has so often, on the essence of Islam. He’s been retired from the C.I.A. since January 2017, but still John Brennan has not managed to find time to read, and study, the Qur’an. He should accompany that study by reading Robert Spencer’s [*The Complete Infidel’s Guide to the Koran*](#). Having that under his belt, he could then read several dozen of the most important Hadith (including “War is deceit” and “I have been made victorious through terror”), and parts of the Sira (the biography of Muhammad). He could complete his *cursus studiorum* by reading Spencer’s [*The History of Jihad: From*](#)

[Muhammad To ISIS](#). If he does all that, he'd be able to understand what was so absurd about his definition of Jihad as a "moral struggle to purify oneself or one's community" that had nothing to do with violence, and his praise of "the tolerance and diversity that defines Islam." He doesn't strike me as someone who would ever own up to his intellectual failures, especially as colossal as his complete failure to understand Islam, but one never knows. Miracles do happen; hope springs eternal.

Brennan's furious reaction to the assassination of Fakhrizadeh included his charge that this was a "criminal act," because Fakhrizadeh was not himself a terrorist. But he was. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was a Brigadier General in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which the American government has designated as a terrorist organization. Brennan has it wrong: Fakhrizadeh was indeed a member – a very high-ranking member – of a terrorist group and hence, a legal target.

A strong critic of US President Donald Trump, Brennan urged Tehran to "resist the urge" to retaliate and "wait for the return of responsible American leadership on the global stage," referring to Biden, who will replace Trump in the White House on January 20.

Reading between the lines, Brennan is advising Iran to wait until a much more pliant President Biden is in office, ready to return the U.S. to the disastrous 2015 Iran deal, and unlikely to be on board with Israel's efforts to protect itself, its Sunni allies, and America itself, by continuing its relentless campaign to ensure that Iran never acquires nuclear weapons. Brennan is not advising Iran to refrain from retaliating, but only urging it to wait for a more propitious time, when Biden is in the Oval Office.

John Brennan for more than a decade has been a defender of the faith of Islam, insisting that Jihad refers to a "moral

struggle,” never to violence against Infidels. He praises Islam for the “tolerance and diversity that defines Islam.” He describes the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, that has set back the genocidal plans of a criminal regime that regards the U.S. as the “Great Satan,” as a “criminal act,” “an act of state-sponsored terrorism.” It was no more a “criminal act” or “state-sponsored terrorism” than were the killings of Osama bin Laden and Qassem Soleimani. We should be celebrating, for the world is, as an unnamed Israeli official told *The New York Times*, a “safer place” because of the death of Fakhrizadeh.

Brennan’s over-the-top reaction to the assassination is useful: We already have his scandalous record of empty-headed fatuities about Islam. Now he’s revealed his anti-Israel animus as never before. It’s flabbergasting that this was the man who for four years headed the C.I.A. Or perhaps not, since at the time Barack Obama was president. Could Biden, try as he might, possibly appoint someone worse?

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