

WARRICK PARROTS US DOCUMENTATION OF IRAN-AL QAEDA RIFT, IGNORES LARGER IRAN-SAUDI ARABIA CONTEXT

Joby Warrick takes to the pages of the Washington Post again today in his primary function of regurgitating whatever points the US government wishes to make. In today's installment, Warrick is repeating US statements on how Iran's expulsion of Suleiman Abu Ghaith reveals a widening crack between Iran and al Qaeda, but by confining his report to the talking points he got from the government, he misses the larger context of how the Iran-al Qaeda issues fit into the overall propaganda battle between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Here is the beginning of Warrick's report (which he begins, of course, by crediting "US officials"):

Iran's expulsion of a senior al-Qaeda official appears to signal a crackdown on the terrorist group that has long been granted safe haven within its borders, U.S. officials say.

Iran's ouster of Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, a former al-Qaeda spokesman and the son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, marked at least the third time in the past year that a prominent al-Qaeda figure has left the country after living for years in a limbo between houseguest and home detainee.

U.S. officials and terrorism experts say the tougher stance appears to reflect growing tensions between Iran's Shiite clerics and the Sunni Muslim terrorist group, particularly over the civil war in Syria, where they are backing

opposing sides.

Despite the fact that the primary source of support for al Qaeda, as a “Sunni Muslim terrorist group” is Saudi Arabia, that country is never mentioned in Warrick’s report. Such an omission is especially glaring because Iran is producing much material right now in its ongoing propaganda battle against Saudi Arabia. The UN report on human rights in Iran released earlier this week provided much fodder for Iran’s propaganda machine. In the press release accompanying release of the report, the UN noted:

An independent United Nations expert today voiced serious concern about the general situation of human rights in Iran, pointing to “widespread and systemic” torture, as well as the harassment, arrest and attacks against human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists.

“The prevailing situation of human rights in Iran continues to warrant serious concern, and will require a wide range of solutions that are both respectful of cultural perspectives and mindful of the universality of fundamental human rights promulgated by the treaties to which Iran is a party,” said the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed.

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At the same time, a “preponderance of reports” communicated to him this past year indicate that that the situation for individuals in Iran who advocate for the advancement of human rights, or those that document, report, or protest against human rights violations, is “grave and continues to deteriorate.”

People who defend the rights of women,

religious and ethnic minorities, as well as those that work to advance protections for the environment, workers and children continue to be subjected to harassment, arrest, interrogation, and torture and are “frequently charged with vaguely-defined national security crimes, which is seemingly meant to erode the frontline of human rights defence in the country,” said the expert.

At Fars News, Iran is denouncing the report and Shaheed, blaming “terrorists” aligned with the West for fabrication. Remarkably, though, at Mehr News, Iran accuses Saudi Arabia of exactly the same offenses as the UN found against Iran, specifically the abuse and imprisonment of human rights activists:

Fuad Ibrahim in an interview with Al-Alam network said: “International human rights organizations are concerned about the continued violations of human rights in Saudi Arabia. And the silence of the US, UK, France, and other European countries for abuses of human rights against Saudi people has led these organizations to act as the human rights defenders and to defend Saudi Arabians human rights.”

He added: “probably, there would be more people to join the Saudis advocates for human rights. Specially, since most of the prisoners are Saudis human right activists.”

He pointed out that: “Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Saudi King, has had a meeting with those who had called for democratic changes in January 2003. They presented their own petitions to Saudi King, and the King had promised them in that meeting, that their demands will be implemented, but a year later they were in prison.”

In a remarkable extension of the accusations against Saudi Arabia, another story in Mehr News today accuses the Saudis of destroying the site of the the tomb of Eve.

Although Warrick does note that Iran and al Qaeda (and by the extension he fails to note, Saudi Arabia) find themselves on opposite sides over Syria, he also fails to mention that Iran and Saudi Arabia are on opposite sides in Bahrain, where both the US and Saudi Arabia side with Bahrain's government while Iran sides with the civilian protesters. In an article today in Fars News noting a new round of protests planned for Friday, we have this description of the situation in Bahrain:

The Bahraini political activists' new call for staging protest rallies comes on the threshold of the second anniversary of the occupation of Bahrain by the Saudi forces.

According to the movements which have called for the Friday protests, demonstrators will also underline their demand for overthrowing the al-Khalifa regime during the rallies.

Anti-government protesters have been holding peaceful demonstrations across Bahrain since mid-February 2011, calling for an end to the al-Khalifa dynasty's over-40-year rule, end of discrimination, establishment of justice and a democratically-elected government as well as freedom of detained protesters.

Violence against the defenseless people escalated after a Saudi-led conglomerate of police, security and military forces from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) member states – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar – were dispatched to the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom on March 13, 2011, to help

Manama crack down on peaceful
protestors.

However, since the US bases the Navy's Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, it also, along with Saudi Arabia, supports Bahrain's government. Isn't it interesting that Warrick (as dictated to by his government handlers) is completely silent on the role of Saudi Arabia in the issues he is reporting, and that silence coincides with the ascension to the directorship of the CIA by the former station chief in Riyadh? Surely that is just a coincidence.