

Selected articles (September 21, 2019)

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1)

The World's Most Important Political Prisoner

By Craig Murray

September 17, 2019

The U.K.'s imprisonment of Julian Assange sets an example for authoritarian regimes to follow in their treatment of dissidents worldwide, writes Craig Murray.

<https://consortiumnews.com/2019/09/17/the-worlds-most-important-political-prisoner/>

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2a)

Turkey Summit Shows Russia's Growing Mideast Influence

Editorial

September 20, 2019

<https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2019/09/20/turkey-summit-shows-russias-growing-mideast-influence/>

"[...]Putin emphasized that the political process would be determined solely by Syrian people free from any constraints imposed by external powers.

The Russian president commented: "We all stand for Syria's territorial integrity and insist that once problems of security and counter-terrorism are resolved, Syria's territorial integrity will be fully restored. It concerns the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Syria's territory too."

He added that "self-governing areas" sponsored by foreign powers are not permissible. This was clearly a rebuke to Washington's attempts to carve up Syria with its sponsorship of Kurdish separatists to set up an autonomous mini-state within Syria.

Putin reminded that "US troops are illegally present on Syrian territory" and that they must withdraw from the country. A proposal to withdraw American forces last year by President Donald Trump has not seen any progress towards that stated objective. It is long overdue to be implemented. Further delay is inexcusable.[...]"

2b)

Joint Statement by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the Republic of Turkey

Ankara, 16 September 2019

<http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5439>

2c)

On the Road to Damascus

International Conference in Syria on Sanctions and Its Blowback

By Roger D. Harris

September 20, 2019

<https://dissidentvoice.org/2019/09/on-the-road-to-damascus/>

"[...] My experience on the road to Damascus was also one view of a complex picture, a view not often seen in the West. But whatever view one takes in the Syrian conflict, the US policy of economic sanctions, restricting access to food and medicines, is an illegal and unconscionable collective punishment of the Syrian people."

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3a)

Venezuelan Gov't Presents Video Showing Guaido Meeting With Drug Cartel in Colombia

September 21, 2019

<https://sputniknews.com/latam/201909211076856418-venezuelan-govt-demonstrates-video-showing-guaidos-meeting-with-drug-cartel-in-colombia/>

3b)

Venezuela: Despite U.S. sanctions Maduro delivers house number 2.8 million

September 17, 2019

<https://mronline.org/2019/09/17/venezuela-despite-u-s-sanctions-maduro-delivers-house-number-2-8-million/>

“[...] During the first United Nations Habitat Assembly that took place in late May in Kenya, the international body recognized Venezuela as one of the top countries to guarantee homes for its citizens. [...]”

3c)

Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova Moscow, September 20, 2019

http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3793042

“[...] Against this background, some positive news is coming in from Venezuela itself. On September 16, an agreement was signed between the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (USPV) and the moderate opposition (Movement for Socialism, Progressive Advance, Solution, Red Flag Party, and The Force of Change), under which the so-called National Dialogue Platform was established. There are quite a few encouraging points in the agreements that were put on paper, such as the pro-government faction’s return to the National Assembly, discussing a new composition of the Electoral Council, and plenty more. Please note point 5 of this Agreement, where the parties condemn the unlawful anti-Venezuelan sanctions and urge their immediate lifting. Juan Guaido has never brought himself to make such a statement and this only confirms the signatories’ real concern for the Venezuelan people, who are suffering from US economic pressure. This Agreement is open to signature by other parties. So, the radicals can join the Venezuelan talks aimed at finding mutually acceptable ways of settlement in the country. They can take the right, peaceful side of history instead of inviting armed interventionists to Venezuela under the cover of the Rio Treaty.[...]”

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4)

Capitalism and climate change

By Ammar Ali Jan

September 19, 2019

<https://mronline.org/2019/09/20/capitalism-and-climate-change-3/>

“[...] UN experts have claimed that we may be heading towards a climate apartheid where the wealthy will cordon off their areas from those affected by the ecological breakdown. That process is already underway and cannot be meaningfully addressed without questioning the underlying logic that propels it. In other words, the key to fighting climate change is not to condemn an abstract process but to identify the social relations of exclusion, domination and exploitation that shape our context. Only a new social system that privileges sustainability and planning over the destructive chaos of late capitalism can provide a way forward.

We can either witness a climate catastrophe that intensifies the construction of walls and borders around the world, sending millions into militarized forms of social control. Or we can build an alternative system that brings back the control of production and consumption in the democratic control of communities across the world. The stakes have never been higher. It is time to organize and fight back.”

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5a)

Crises – the Middle-East and a few hopefully useful pointers

The Saker

September 18, 2019

<http://thesaker.is/crises-the-middle-east-and-a-few-hopefully-useful-pointers/>

“[...] The Saudis and their AngloZionist patrons have three solutions:

- 1. Continue pretty much like before: that is the definition of insanity if different results are expected.*
- 2. Escalate and strike Iran, following which the entire Middle-East will explode with dramatic consequences.*
- 3. Do what the US always does: declare victory and leave. [...]”*

“[...] But in the last days of the Empire, facts don’t really matter. What matters is whatever is seen as politically expedient by the folks in the White House and in Israel. My biggest hope is that Trump finds out the truth about the strikes and that he has enough brains left to understand that should he strike Iran he will lose the election and will probably even be impeached to boot.”

5b)

How the Houthis overturned the chessboard

By Pepe Escobar

September 18, 2019

<http://thesaker.is/how-the-houthis-overturned-the-chessboard/>

“[...] Now we are entering a whole new dimension in asymmetric hybrid war.

In the – horrendous – event that Washington would decide to attack Iran, egged on by the usual neocon suspects, the Pentagon could never hope to hit and disable all the Iranian and/or Yemeni drones. The

US could expect, for sure, all-out war. And then no ships would sail through the Strait of Hormuz. We all know the consequences of that.

Which brings us to The Big Surprise. The real reason there would be no ships traversing the Strait of Hormuz is that there would be no oil in the Gulf left to pump. The oil fields, having been bombed, would be burning.

So we're back to the realistic bottom line, which has been stressed by not only Moscow and Beijing but also Paris and Berlin: US President Donald Trump gambled big time, and he lost. Now he must find a face-saving way out. If the War Party allows it."

5c)

How likely is the possibility of a military conflict between Iran and the US?

General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of IRGC's Aerospace Force, is on this episode of Nader's Show.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rExXOyJNXh8&feature=youtu.be>

5d)

How Russian And Iran Beat Their Opponents' Strategies

By Moon of Alabama

September 17, 2019

<https://www.moonofalabama.org/2019/09/how-russian-and-iran-beat-their-opponents-strategies.html#more>

5e)

Iran vs Saudi Arabia: it's game-over

By Ghassan Kadi

September 19, 2019

<http://thesaker.is/iran-vs-saudi-arabia-its-game-over/>

"[...] I have recently watched the series "The Vietnam War" on Netflix, and I remembered how back then when the truth about that war was exposed, I believed that American hawks would never get away with lying to their people and the rest of the world again, or ever invade another country in the way that they did with Vietnam. In less than two decades however, they moved full throttle into Iraq, and the masses

believed their story. Perhaps some things will never change, and after the losses in Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, America seems still determined to fight Iran. This time around, the biggest loser may not end up to be America itself, but its Arab allies; namely Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and the recent attack on ARAMCO is only a prelude to an inevitable outcome, because the writing is already on the wall and it clearly reads: GAME-OVER."

5f)

Why Evidence of Iran's Role in Attack Doesn't Matter

By Gareth Porter

September 19, 2019

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/evidence-of-irans-culpability-in-the-attack-isnt-important/>

"[...] The United States has carried the practice of secondary boycott (sanctions against states trading with a state the U.S. government has targeted as an enemy) to put pressure on Iranian policy for nearly a quarter century, beginning with the passage of the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) in 1996. Now the Trump administration has pushed the use of that instrument to its ultimate conclusion by seeking to reduce Iran's oil exports—its single largest source of export earnings—to "zero," as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo proudly declared last April. The administration further plans to reduce Iran's gas and metal (iron, steel, aluminum, and copper) exports to a minimum as well. In his public presentation of the famous "12 demands" on Iran of May 2018, Pompeo said that the real purpose of the entire exercise was to force the Iranian people to rid the United States of the adversary regime in Tehran.

The Trump policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran thus represents an extreme violation of a state's right to participate in the global economy, without which a modern state cannot survive. It is the equivalent in trade terms of a naval blockade to starve a nation, and it would be universally recognized as an act of war if carried out by any other state in the world. Iran calls it "economic terrorism." [...]"

"[...] The urgent task for opponents of any coming war is not to be distracted by the issue of forensic evidence pointing to Iranian responsibility. It's to focus on the urgent problems with American policy that are being swept under the political and media rug."

5g)

Q&A: Why Did Iran Attack Saudi Arabia?

Guidance

Stratfor's geopolitical guidance provides insight on what we're watching out for in the week ahead.

September 20, 2019

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/qa-why-did-iran-attack-saudi-arabia>

"The Sept. 14 attacks on Saudi oil facilities highlight how quickly the Middle East's conflicts can threaten global energy markets, underscoring the new reality that Saudi oil production is not immune to external geopolitical forces and that its oil customers can no longer count on uninterrupted access to the country's oil exports. Meanwhile, regional and global powers like the United States face difficult choices in responding to provocative behavior without igniting a broader conflict.[...]"

5h)

What the reactions to the ARAMCO attacks reveal about the vulnerabilities of the anti-Iran alliance

Growing and unaddressed antagonism against Saudi Arabia in the United States created a "blame the victim" response following the ARAMCO attacks.

By Irina Tsukerman

September 18, 2019

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2019/09/18/what-the-reactions-to-the-aramco-attacks-reveal-about-the-vulnerabilities-of-the-anti-iran-alliance/>

5i)

The Systemic Problem of "Iran Expertise" in Washington

By Negar Razavi

(September 4, 2019)

<https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/39946>

"[...] In this piece, I want to draw attention to the systemic problem of "Iran expertise" in Washington, which is neither new nor limited to the hawkish political factions now running this country's foreign policy. I assert that the US foreign policy establishment has collectively created a culture of expert impunity when it comes to Iran, which has contributed in no small part to the unstable and dangerous policy conditions we see under Trump today.

I come to this issue having closely followed US policy debates toward Iran since 2006. For three years, I worked for a major foreign policy think tank and saw how knowledge on the Islamic Republic is produced first-hand. Later, as a researcher, I studied the role of think tank experts in shaping US policies toward the Middle East. During two years of ethnographic fieldwork in DC from 2014 until 2016, I interviewed over 180 foreign policy actors inside and outside the government, attended hundreds of policy events, and followed think tank experts working on Iran in person and through their writings.[...]"

5j)

Science Under Maximum Pressure in Iran

From travel restrictions and publishing bans to currency collapse, the restoration of US sanctions has left researchers in Iran reeling.

By David Adam

September 13, 2019

<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/science-under-maximum-pressure-in-iran-66425>

5k)

China's oil imports from Iran rise despite US threats

Aug 27, 2019

[http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i109023-china%E2%80%99s oil imports from iran rise despite us threats](http://parstoday.com/en/news/iran-i109023-china%E2%80%99s%20oil%20imports%20from%20iran%20rise%20despite%20us%20threats)