

Using Alleged Terrorism To Escalate War And Homeland Repression

By Stephen Lendman

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Much about the New York bomb incident is worrisome, besides the media already pronouncing sentence, biasing future jurors to convict or face the wrath of public opinion, their communities, friends and even family.

As a result, Faisal Shahzad doesn't stand a chance, guilty or innocent, regardless of his alleged confession and the plausibility that he was set up - used as a convenient dupe with his device rigged not to go off but to emit smoke to be found. Why not, given America's history of using false flag incidents for political advantage.

Again, the possibility is real, given the incident's similarity to the Christmas 2009 airline one involving Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. He was also used as a convenient dupe, his explosive device no more powerful than a firecracker.

Understand also how involved CIA operatives and assets are globally, especially in Eurasia. Pakistan's ISI (its intelligence service) is a de facto adjunct, both working together destabilizing the region for US geopolitical interests. So-called terror incidents in America or the West are directly connected, perhaps the New York one the latest using Shahzad as a convenient dupe.

Inflammatory Political Rhetoric

On May 4, political venom spewed from New York, Washington and elsewhere, including Mayor Michael Bloomberg calling Shahzad a "homegrown terrorist with a political agenda," and New York Governor David Paterson, the White House, and

Attorney General Eric Holder calling the incident a terrorist act, Holder saying in a May 4 news conference:

"We anticipate charging (Faisal Shahzad) with an act of terrorism transcending national borders, attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction, use of a destructive device during the commission of another crime, and explosives....Based on what we know so far, it is clear that this was a terrorist plot aimed at murdering Americans in one of the busiest places in the country.....

Make no mistake - although this car bomb failed to properly detonate - this plot was a serious attempt. If successful, it could have" been a mass casualty event. (It's) a stark reminder of the reality we face today in this country....a constant threat from those who wish to do us harm simply because of our way of life."

He went on to cite terrorist networks, lone agents at home and abroad, the continued threat as a result, and implication, of course, for needing stern measures, including sacrificing (more) liberty for security, mindless of Benjamin Franklin once saying that "Those who would sacrifice freedom for security deserve neither," and won't get them because the scheme is to deny them.

At the same news conference, New York Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly reminded attendees of the 1993 World Trade Center incident, adding:

"I think New Yorkers can rest a little easier today, and that's due in no small measure to the investigative muscle of FBI agents and New York City police detectives (as well as JFK Airport) customs officials."

Perhaps they had advance knowledge. Perhaps also the likelihood of more repressive laws, stepped up militarism and wars, stripping social services to pay for them, and distracting public attention from the looming Gulf disaster, Goldman Sachs, and impending financial reform to institutionalize business as usual, while claiming real change.

Provocative Media Reports

Besides inflammatory round-the-clock TV and radio reports, The New York Times, like other corporate publications, left no doubt where it stands.

In a Shahzad profile, it stressed his role in a terrorist plot, citing a criminal complaint that "militant strongholds" gave him bomb-making training in Pakistan, and that he's been charged with conspiring to use "weapons of mass destruction" - hardly an apt description for gasoline, propane, firecrackers and fertilizer not considered by The Times.

It also said the car he "apparently" drove to the airport was found with a "Kel-Tech 9 millimeter pistol, with a folding stock and a rifle barrel, along with several spare magazines of ammunition." How convenient to be easily found in plain sight.

Born in Pakistan, Shahzad is a naturalized US citizen with a University of Bridgeport, CT bachelor's degree in computer science and engineering as well as an MBA. Before resigning in mid-2009, he worked as a junior financial analyst for Affinion Group (a marketing services company) in Norwalk, CT. Authorities said he was unemployed at the time of his arrest. They also said he confessed and is cooperating. He's yet to be arraigned in court.

Since the May 1 incident, The Times headlined numerous feature stories, including on May 5 by writers Mark Massetti and Scott Shane called "Evidence Mounts for Taliban Role in Car Bomb Plot," saying:

"American officials said Wednesday that it is very likely that a radical group (the Taliban) once thought unable to attack the United States played a role in the bombing attempt in Times Square, elevating concerns about whether other militant groups could deliver at least a glancing blow on American soil."

Remember that blaming bin Laden and Al Qaeda for 9/11, and the Taliban for sheltering them, became justification for attacking and invading Afghanistan, then Iraq 18 months later based on bogus weapons of mass destruction claims and suggesting Saddam's involvement in 9/11.

Today, the Obama administration "cautions" about the Pakistani Taliban's involvement with Shahzad, one step short of accusing them, Al Qaeda, and other so-called terrorist groups (including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, the Haqqani Network, and Kashmiri elements) to have pretext for stepped up war and increased homeland crackdowns, for sure coming with the public being manipulated to accept them.

Pakistani Taliban spokesperson Azam Tariq, however, claimed no involvement in the Times Square incident or information about the video claiming it. "We don't even know (Shahzad)," he said. Pakistani (ISI) intelligence officials also expressed skepticism about the Taliban's ability to attack America.

No matter, according to a May 9 AP report headlined, "Pakistani Taliban Behind Times Sq. Plot, Holder Says," quoting the Attorney General claiming it was "intimately involved" in the May 1 incident. They "directed the plot," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press" and ABC's "This Week."

That despite an unnamed Islamabad-based Western diplomat telling CBS News that "The Taliban have no demonstrated ability to strike distant places. Structurally, they are far from being a global organization like Al Qaeda," that's, in fact, a 1980s CIA creation - "Islamic brigade" (mujahideen) freedom fighters against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Today, they're America's "outside enemy," terrorists against "democratic freedoms" and the rationale for imperial wars and repressive homeland security.

Later in the day, AP reported that "Holder said changes may be needed to allow law enforcement more time to question suspected terrorists before they are told about their Miranda rights. (He) said the White House wanted to work with Congress to

examine the 1966 Supreme Court" ruling to give law enforcement agents "necessary flexibility to gather information from suspects in terror cases."

For sure, this is a dangerous slippery slope down which the end game is grim - full-blown despotism once constitutional rights are ended. Post-9/11, they've been incrementally stripped away.

In a May 3 editorial titled, "Luck and Vigilance," The Times called the city "lucky this time....no one wants to bet their security on it," so to prevent a future disaster "Officials in New York and Washington also need to take a hard look at what, if anything, might have been done to head off this earlier." The implication is clear - more repressive laws, sweeping surveillance, and police state crackdowns against suspects to tell others what to expect.

Clear as well are the targets - Muslims and people of color. Rarely ever are white persons charged with terrorism, no matter the offense.

For example, white supremacist Paul Schlesselman pleaded guilty in January to conspiring to kill Barack Obama and dozens of other Blacks in 2008. He got 10 years in prison on:

"one count of conspiracy, one count of threatening to kill and inflict bodily harm upon a presidential candidate, and one count of possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence," not terrorism that surely would have been charged if he was black, Latino or especially Muslim, the main target of choice in the "war on terror."

According to AP, authorities described Schlesselman and co-defendant Daniel Cowart (awaiting sentencing) as "white supremacist skinheads who hatched a plan to go on a cross-country robbery and killing spree that would end with an attack on Obama in 2008. Their plan was to kill 88 African-Americans and behead 14 others before trying to take out Obama. The numbers 88 and 14 are symbolic in the white supremacist movement."

Proposed Homeland Crackdown Measures

They're coming so be prepared, the New York incident used as justification. On May 5, New York Times writer Scott Shane headlined, "Government Tightens No-Fly Rules," saying:

"Homeland Security officials on Wednesday ordered airlines to speed up checks of names added to the no-fly list," and to check for updates every 24 hours. Look for an expanded list ahead, and stepped up airport security, making travel even tougher, perhaps to include interrogations, body searches, and other repressive measures against anyone officials target.

Pervasive Use of Surveillance Cameras

Post-9/11, cities began installing networks of surveillance cameras in public areas downtown, at airports, in shopping areas and elsewhere. Though experts doubt their effectiveness and studies bear this out, significant privacy and civil liberties concerns are raised, including stereotyping and racial discrimination by those in charge of monitoring.

Among global cities, London by far is the most camera-surveilled with as many as 1.4 million in place, no one saying for security reasons. They're everywhere - on streets; in business, shopping, and government areas; in parks; schools; in hallways; on elevators, in cabs and police cars; even in public rest rooms, so there's no place to hide.

American cities have theirs and are adding more, a 2006 ACLU report titled, "Who's Watching?" saying post-9/11, their numbers in New York City alone "skyrocketed. And our lawmakers have failed to keep up: video surveillance cameras can be operated with almost no legal constraint or consequence," despite scant evidence they deter crime on a cost-per-crime solved basis.

For example, for every 1,000 London cameras, less than one crime per year is solved for an average cost of \$30,000. At best, other cities report mixed results, but in all cases too poor to justify installation, monitoring and other associated costs.

According to AP, Chicago is the most video-surveilled city in America, former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff saying, "I don't think there is another city in the US that has as an extensive and integrated camera network..."

Over the past decade, they're everywhere across the city, including on streets, poles, buses, business and shopping areas, in train tunnels, schools, local landmarks, and elsewhere, in a network linking private and public entities to police. Yet a May 6 Chicago Tribune Steve Chapman article headlined, "Surveillance cameras a flop," said that in Chicago, New York and other cities, their results are unimpressive, and "The more cameras (and) cops watching (them), the more potential for waste."

Yet it doesn't deter zealots like Mayor Richard Daley, planning them for "almost every block," despite their high cost and low return.

After the New York bomb incident, expect that attitude throughout the country, in Manhattan for certain reported AFP's Sebastian Smith on May 4 headlining "Police cameras to flood Manhattan to prevent attacks," saying:

"New York officials say they could stop attacks like (the Times Square one) by expanding a controversial surveillance system so sensitive that it will pick even suspicious behavior" without further explanation. Mayor Bloomberg supports a high-tech system, modeled after London's "ring of steel" in its financial district. The Lower Manhattan Security Initiative way exceeds traditional surveillance. It will constantly watch, collect license plate numbers, video pedestrians and drivers, as well as detect explosives and other weapons.

A complementary system, called Operation Sentinel, will log every vehicle entering Manhattan by scanning license plates and checking for radiation.

Analytic software will analyze raw data in real time for fast results and follow-up. Alarms would signal unattended bags or a car circling a block more times than normal or operating unconventionally. It's a brave new world, a new level of privacy invasion and civil liberty intrusion, soon heading everywhere across America to a greater or lesser degree.

For the ACLU, it raises serious "privacy, speech, expression and association concerns. Troubling examples of that come from (NYPD) video archives."

Headlining "Ready.Fire.Aim!?", the ACLU highlights a growing video surveillance infrastructure with virtually no oversight or accountability, its proliferation impinging on civil liberties and personal freedom "in the most intimate, and most public, sense."

If authorities abandon these principles, everyone's rights are at risk, the ACLU saying its study documented "the nature and magnitude of the harm posed by the unregulated proliferation of video surveillance cameras." Unless new legislation balances their use against civil liberty and privacy protections, democratic freedoms will be sacrificed for public safety that, in fact, won't be offered or gained.

[Proposed Repressive Legislation and other Measures](#)

Senator Scott Brown (R. MA) will join Senator Joe Lieberman (I. CT), Rep. Jason Altimire (D. PA), and Rep. Charlie Dent (R. PA) in proposing a Terrorist Expatriation Act to strip naturalized Americans of their citizenship for having committed terrorist acts or aiding a designating foreign terrorist organization (FTO). Lieberman said persons called terrorists "should be turned over to the military" for prosecution, denying them their rights in civil courts. More on that below:

AFP reports that Senator Chuck Schumer (D. NY) signaled his support, saying: The measure "sounds like something I'd support, but I'd have to look at the legislation." Senator John McCain (R. AZ) said Americans should lose their citizenship rights "if they're designated an enemy combatant."

McCain also supports denying alleged terrorists their Miranda Rights, based on the Supreme Court's *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) ruling that both inculpatory and exculpatory police-obtained statements are admissible as evidence only if defendants were informed of their right to an attorney before and during questioning, against self-incrimination, and that they understood them. Denying them is a clear violation of constitutional freedoms, being lost at an alarming rate post-9/11.

Lieberman supports McCain saying:

"The first thing you want to get from (a suspected terrorist) is information about other co-conspirators, perhaps other attacks that are planned at the same time, and then (decide) whether he should be read his Miranda rights."

With inflammatory media reports, other lawmakers from both parties may offer support when legislation is introduced, perhaps enough to get these or similar measures passed. If so, anyone charged with terrorism or conspiracy to commit it, with or without proof, will be vulnerable.

[Police State Terror since 9/11](#)

Because of its relevance, material from a March 26 article is repeated below. For the complete article, see:

<http://sjlendman.blogspot.com/2010/03/mccain-lieberman-police-state-act.html>.

Straightaway post-9/11, George Bush signed a secret finding empowering the CIA to "Capture, Kill or Interrogate Al-Qaeda Leaders." He also authorized establishing a

covert global gulag to detain and interrogate them without guidelines on proper treatment.

Other presidential directives ordered abductions, torture and indefinite detentions. In November 2001, Military Order Number 1 empowered the Executive to capture, kidnap or otherwise arrest non-citizens (and later citizens) anywhere in the world for any reason and holds them indefinitely without charge, evidence, due process or judicial fairness protections of law.

The 2006 Military Commissions Act authorized torture and sweeping unconstitutional powers to detain, interrogate and prosecute alleged suspects and collaborators (including US citizens), hold them (without evidence) indefinitely in military prisons, and deny them habeas and other legal protections.

Section 1031 of the FY 2010 Defense Authorization Act contained the 2009 Military Commissions Act, listing changes that include discarding the phrase "unlawful enemy combatant" for "unprivileged enemy belligerent." More on that below.

Seamlessly, Obama continues Bush administration practices and added others, including:

- greater than ever surveillance;

- ruthless political persecutions;

- preventively detaining individuals ordered released - "who cannot be prosecuted," he said, "yet who pose a clear danger to the American people;"

- a secret "hit list" authorizing CIA and Pentagon operatives to kill US citizens abroad based on unsubstantiated evidence they're involved in alleged plots against America or US interests;

- weaker whistleblower protections;

-- state secrets privilege to block lawsuits by victims of rendition, torture, abuse or warrantless wiretapping; and

-- other anti-democratic measures, including continuing Patriot Act violation of First, Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendment protections, and a more repressive than ever Homeland Security apparatus.

Then on March 4, John McCain introduced S. 3081: Enemy Belligerent, Interrogation, Detention, and Prosecution Act of 2010 to interrogate and detain "enemy belligerents who commit hostile acts against the United States to establish certain limitations on the prosecution of such belligerents, and for other purposes."

Senator Lieberman and eight Republicans co-sponsored it, a measure that if enacted will target anyone worldwide, including US citizens, on the mere suspicion that they engage in or materially support terrorism. They'll be placed in military custody, interrogated and denied their constitutional rights if designated an "unprivileged enemy belligerent" - a political, not criminal, classification that has no judicial standing in civil proceedings, ones conducted fairly, that is.

"Unprivileged enemy belligerent" status places designees in legal limbo, denies them due process in civil proceedings, and condemns them to military prosecutorial injustice with no right of appeal, even if sentenced to death. Torture-extracted testimonies will be allowed, despite their illegality and unreliability. Henceforth, judicial fairness will be null and void, replaced by political expediency that condemns innocent victims to prison hell.

Linking incidents like New York's to designated terrorist groups makes it more likely. So does suggesting guilt by supposition or alleged association, with or without proof, let alone entrapment - what the Lectric Law Library defines as:

"Enduc(ing) or persuad(ing someone) to commit a crime that he (or she) had no previous intent to commit; and the law as a matter of policy forbids conviction in such

a case." If evidence "leaves a reasonable doubt whether the person had any intent to commit the crime except for inducement or persuasion....then the person is not guilty." Prosecutors "must prove beyond a reasonable doubt" that entrapment didn't occur.

On May 6, McClatchy Newspapers Jonathan Landay headlined, "US officials: No credible evidence that terrorists trained Shahzad," saying:

"Four (unnamed) intelligence and counterterrorism officials and two other US officials with knowledge of the case said 'There is nothing that confirms that any groups have been found in this (case) for certain. It's a lot of speculation at this point....at the most, (Shahzad may have) had incidental contact with a terrorist organization, and he may have been encouraged to act.'"

Yet media reports scream it, like the Wall Street Journal's May 5 editorial headlined, "From Peshawar to Times Square," saying:

Shahzad's arrest is "proof that the world's jihadists are still targeting the US homeland....We will no doubt learn a great deal more about Shahzad and his links to radical groups in Pakistan, where he reportedly spent several months last year, including two weeks in or around the Taliban-saturated environs of Peshawar....One regrettable part of this investigation (is that he) has been allowed to lawyer-up and told of his right to remain silent, rather than being subjected to more thorough interrogation as an enemy combatant."

Unfortunately, accounts like the above are more commonplace than exceptional, the media pronouncing sentence before indictments. They also suggest other "jihadists" lie waiting for their chance to attack, meaning Muslims, of course, at the wrong time to be one in a nation vilifying their religion, heritage, race and ethnicity.

With that cross to bear, bills like S. 3081 may pass, Miranda and citizenship Rights may be stripped, and constitutional protections rendered null and void for targets

chosen not worthy to have them. When the rule of law no longer applies, police state justice follows, the path America's dangerously headed down, perhaps on a fast track.

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