Twitter Thread by Heshmat Alavi



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THREAD

1)

“Iranian Arms, Fighters Bolster Maduro Government in Venezuela, U.S. Says”

#Iran has a long history of meddling in #Venezuela with the U.S. in its crosshairs.

And Obama facilitated the mullahs’

2)
Iran has sent arms & dispatched paramilitary operatives to help Maduro remain in power.

“We see a growing Iranian influence in there,” said Adm. Craig Faller, head of the U.S. Southern Command, citing the “alarming & concerning” presence of IRGC Quds Force military personnel.



3)
“We’re concerned about what we see…It’s not just oil shipments, it’s arms shipments as well,” Adm. Craig Faller said. “We saw an uptick in that this year. We are watching the rate of change very carefully.”

More on Iran's malign role in South America.
https://t.co/U3jSOj7ePv

4)
“… flotillas are often accompanied by Iranian naval vessels, including an intelligence ship that U.S. officials say has been used to transport missiles to Iranian proxies in the Middle East…”

More on Iran's gaining a dangerous foothold in the region.
https://t.co/fWglbJzO0Y

5)
“Iran’s Mahan Air, an airline sanctioned by the U.S. for transporting men, money & arms for the terror-designated IRGC, has also restarted flights between the two countries…”
https://t.co/Sq7suZQIs3

6)
“Earlier this year, an Iranian conglomerate owned by the country’s military and tied to its missile program established a retail foothold in Venezuela, according to Western officials and records detailing the move.”

> In addition to providing a potential avenue for evading sanctions, the retail link may be a way for Tehran to export military expertise and technology, U.S. officials say.
>
> Another concern for the U.S. is that Iran might use its presence in South America and its ties to Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group also operating in the region, to retaliate against the U.S.
>
> “We’re real concerned about what Iran is up to, not just globally, but here in this hemisphere,” Adm. Faller said, adding that some members of the large Lebanese diaspora in South America had ties to Hezbollah.

7)
Iranian oil tankers en route to Venezuela despite US sanctions

Digging into why #Iran’s mullahs will forever be grateful to Obama for the windows provided to establish ties with Maduro’s regime in Venezuela.
https://t.co/fegjnvS0NY

8)
Iran has been bailing out Maduro by sending:
-blending components used for producing gasoline
-workers, equipment for oil refining
-and gasoline cargoes into Venezuela

(All the while, Iran says it needs money to address COVID-19.)
https://t.co/gTDdYWCWDF

9)
IRGC-affiliated Mahan Air’s (terrorist-designated) has direct flights between Iran and Venezuela.

a. Flight W5138 from Tehran to Las Piedras
https://t.co/RtQnHGcsww

b. another Mahan Air Airbus A340-600 from Iran to Venezuela

c. April 27—Mahan Air A340s landing in Caracas



10)
Iran did not establish such strong ties with the Chavez/Maduro regime in Venezuela overnight.

Back in 2011, former president Hugo Chavez agreed to permit Iran build missile bases in the South American country.

And the Obama admin denied everything.
https://t.co/o8XA78KpU0

FOREIGN DANGEROUS ALLIANCE

Iranian missile base in Venezuela at the planning stage

Published on 13.05.2011 | Reading time: 5 minutes

From **Clemens Wergin**



Good friends who scare the rest of the world: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez
Source: REUTERS

11)
This is interesting from the Obama years (& of course reported by CNN).

“The U.S. State Department said Saturday that it reviews all information pertaining to Iranian military involvement in the hemisphere, but that it could not vouch for the report.”
https://t.co/hT8fvVApDT

12)
"We have no evidence to support this claim & therefore no reason to believe the assertions made in the article are credible," Obama’s State Dept. said.

Maduro described the allegations as an "extravagant lie."

(Here with his then Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki)



13)
This goes all the way back to the early days of Obama’s tenure.

“The missile base is part of a pattern that began in March 2009, when President Obama met Chavez at an Organization of American States meeting in Trinidad.”
https://t.co/4e2p2Ypiy7

14)
Appeasement 101

“President Obama shook hands with the dictator, as usual, and said he wanted to be friends and reset US-Venezuelan relations. Chavez responded by presenting Obama with a book that claims the United States plunders Latin America.”



15)
"… the radicals ruling Iran are emboldened by the confusion of the Obama administration in confronting Iran's nuclear program."
https://t.co/L9eYoEx87O

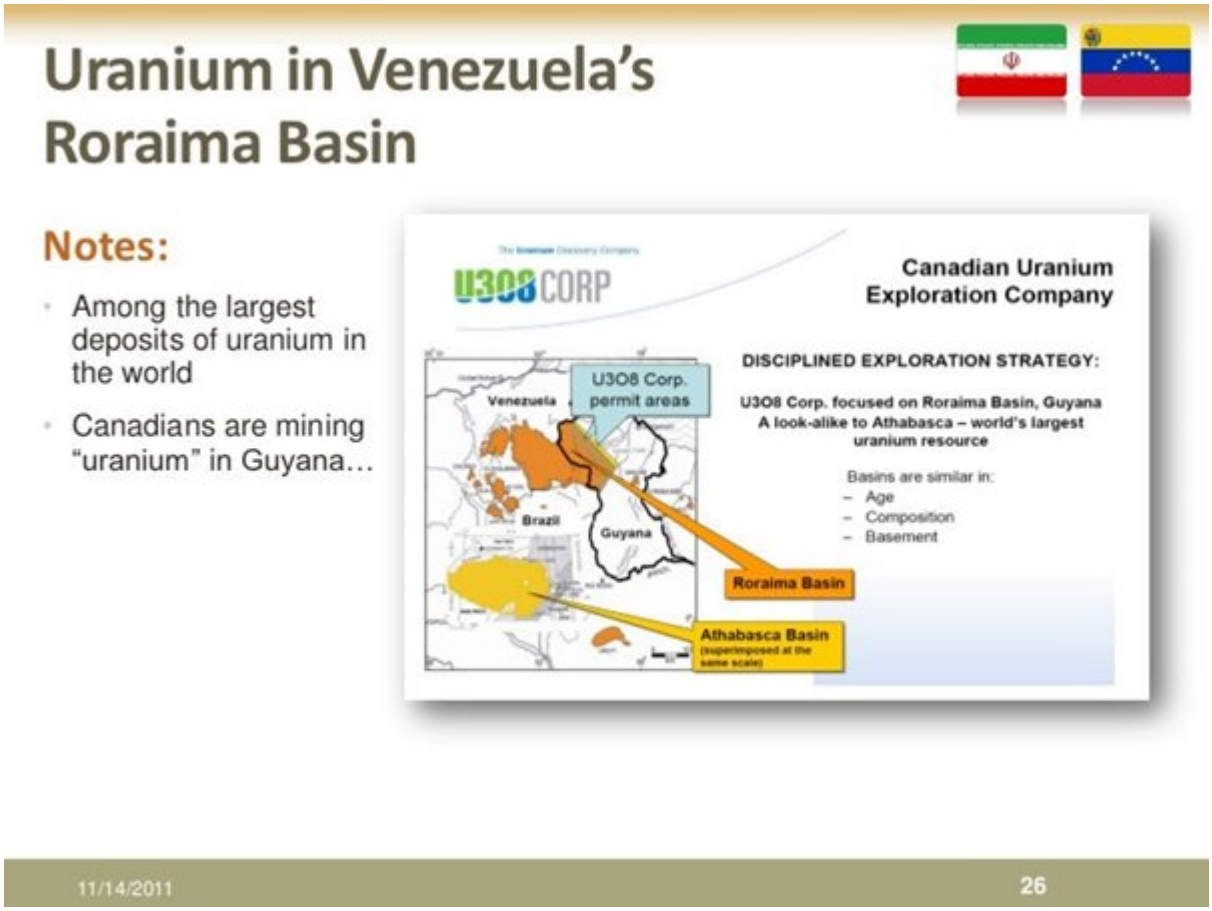
Obama, of course, had broader issues in mind with Tehran & went the distance to prevent any interruptions.



16)
Under Obama's watch, Iran was establishing a very dangerous relationship with the Chaves/Maduro regime in Venezuela, involving uranium & Hezbollah sleeper cells.
https://t.co/4e2p2Ypiy7

And at least three Iranian missile bases in Venezuela.

https://t.co/EDu7vr5ZxK



17)
The Trump administration, however, does understand the risk of Iran-backed Hezbollah being active in Venezuela.



18)
“The secret backstory of how Obama let Hezbollah off the hook”

"… the Obama administration derailed an ambitious law enforcement campaign targeting drug trafficking by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah."
https://t.co/Lnf1rIwBsh

19)
“The eight-year investigation came to a head just as the Obama administration was negotiating a deal for Iran to put aside their nuclear ambitions.”
https://t.co/NJXVU3wyh2

20)
“Obama protected Hezbollah drug ring to save Iran nukes deal”
https://t.co/kldivdI4j4

21)
“This was a policy decision, it was a systematic decision,” said David Asher, an illicit finance expert. “They serially ripped apart this entire effort that was very well supported and resourced, and it was done from the top down.”

22)
When appeasement enters dangerous sectors of a government:

“John Brennan, Mr. Obama’s counterterror chief who later led the CIA, had argued in May 2010 that Hezbollah was evolving into a political party.”
https://t.co/A80gGjQaPN

23)
Here's a look at what John Brennan calls a "political party"...



24)
“Project Cassandra officials told Politico that they were transferred to other assignments after Mr. Obama’s deal with Iran was announced in January 2016.”
https://t.co/vMAGdGo6lN

25)
“... the Obama Justice Department refused to pursue Abdallah Safieddine, the leader in charge of coordinating Hezbollah’s global drug trafficking operations, who also serves as Hezbollah’s liaison officer in Tehran”
https://t.co/f2TzS5kyE5

26)
Obama’s appeasement vis-a-vis Iran/Chavez/Maduro gets even more disturbing:

https://t.co/xuNBTe8zSv

1. The Justice Department did not file criminal charges against Hezbollah members because of tacit White House pressure;
2. The U.S. government refused to press hard for the extradition of a key Hezbollah weapons supplier in Czech custody, allowing his eventual release;
3. The United States allowed “an entire Quds force network” in the United States to function and otherwise did not aggressively target Quds Force members;
4. The administration did not target a Lebanese bank linked to drug laundering; and
5. The administration stymied the DEA’s effort to go after Hezbollah. Over time, the agency’s task force was denied permission to expand its efforts, and its personnel and resources were steadily drained.

27)
And:

1. “Multi-ton loads of cocaine” entered the United States;
2. Hezbollah procured hundreds of millions of dollars from illegal drug money;
3. The United States lost track of various networks and associated conspiracies with adversaries such as Russia, Syria and Venezuela; and
4. Drug networks were allowed to flourish and also served as overall logistics hubs. These networks also “procured parts for Iran’s illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programs” smuggled in night-vision goggles and even Bell helicopters.

28)
And talking about links & ties, we all remember how Obama had good relations with Chavez.

In my opinion, as Obama betrayed the people of Iran in 2009, one could say he betrayed the people of Venezuela, too.



29)
While I haven’t done the research, I wouldn’t be surprised that Assad in Syria also benefited from Obama’s appeasement of Iran’s regime in Venezuela.

Of course, we all remember how Obama backed off from his Syria “red line” …



30)
The most effective method to support the people of Iran & Venezuela in their struggle for freedom & democracy is to bring a complete end to the appeasement policy once & for all.

This thread explains why I despise the appeasement policy.
https://t.co/W3kgbQCYm6

> What I remember about President Obama:
>
> - Turning his back on #Iran's 2009 uprising
> - Allowing Assad gas innocent civilians in #Syria
> - Selling off America's Middle East allies
> - Bending over backwards to reach a highly flawed #IranDeal with Tehran's mullahs
>
> Need I say more? pic.twitter.com/vKgRijv3ub
>
> — Heshmat Alavi (@HeshmatAlavi) September 7, 2018