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West, Saudi Arabia relieved at death of al-Majed

By Finian Cunningham

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One thing is for sure about the death of al-Qaeda commander Majed al-Majed in a Beirut hospital this weekend – Western and Saudi intelligence will be relieved at his demise.

Dead men don't talk, as they say, and that fact may spare the United States, Britain and Saudi Arabia from incriminating disclosures that could have surfaced if he had stayed alive – disclosures that would expose their collusion in terrorist violence raging across the Middle East.

Inevitably, there will be suspicions that al-Majed – a Saudi national – was killed while in Lebanese custody. He was arrested by Lebanese intelligence personnel reportedly in the southern

port city of Sidon only days before his death was announced on Saturday. During his brief period in custody he was undergoing questioning while suffering from chronic kidney disease.

Al-Majed's career as a terrorist certainly gained him enough enemies seeking revenge. But keeping him alive would have been of more advantage to the Lebanese – and to his Hezbollah, Syrian and Iranian enemies – for the valuable information that could have been obtained about his al-Qaeda group, known as the Abdullah Azzam Brigade.

This so-called brigade was involved in terror attacks across the region, including Lebanon and Syria. While al-Majed's outfit was on official terror lists of the US and Saudi Arabia, there is evidence that the group was less of an outlaw to these states and more of an agency for their covert aims.

Al-Majed's group claimed responsibility for the deadly bomb attack on the Iranian embassy in Beirut on November 19. That attack killed at least 25 people, including the Iranian cultural attaché, Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Ansari, and injured more than 150 others.

Of pressing interest about al-Majed's organization are the covert links between his group and al-Qaeda generally, and its Western and Saudi sponsors. Any disclosures would have been acutely damaging to US, British and Saudi state intelligence.

Such information could have shed more light on the shadowy role of Saudi and Western intelligence in their covert support of the al-Qaeda terror network, not just in Lebanon, but also in neighboring Syria and Iraq. Violence in these countries has been escalating over the past three years, with a combined death toll well over 100,000.

For nearly three years, Western governments and the corporate media have been hawking a narrative that Syria's violence is the result of the government forces of President Bashar al-Assad cracking down on a pro-democracy movement. Somehow, mysteriously in the Western version, the anti-government forces in Syria have now become dominated by "extremist jihadists", whose violence is, in turn, "spilling over" into Iraq and Lebanon.

The Western narrative also lays blame on Iran and Russia for supporting Assad, as well as Shia Hezbollah as a factor provoking violence inside Lebanon.

However, despite this threadbare Western depiction, an increasingly more plausible account for the upsurge in regional violence is that systematic covert Western support for al-Qaeda affiliates has fuelled the growth of a Frankenstein terrorist monster, which is now running amok.

Testimony by the deceased al-Majed could have further substantiated the collusion of Saudi Arabia and Western intelligence in the escalating terrorism plaguing the region caused by these al-Qaeda militants.

This mercenary terror network was at first enlisted covertly by Western governments and their regional proxies – Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Israel – for the purpose of destabilizing Syria and instigating regime change, with the added intention of trying to isolate Iran.

But this Western criminal regime-change campaign in Syria has not gone according to plan, as it had previously in Libya. The Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad has remained resolute, partly due to popular support among the Syrian people, and partly due to the steadfastness of its foreign allies, Iran and Russia.

Faced with frustrating defeat in Syria, the Western-backed al-Qaeda terror network appears to be lashing out in neighboring countries in a desperate bid to ignite a regional sectarian war, with the aim of achieving its regime-change objective through engendering regional chaos.

Whether Western governments still remain on board to pursue such an explosive, reckless scenario is debatable given the way it is spinning out of control.

Nevertheless, these Western powers are at least culpable of detonating the dynamic of terrorism – a dynamic that has now moved well beyond Syria and is threatening to engulf Iraq and Lebanon as well.

Western regional proxies, Saudi Arabia and the Israeli regime, can be safely assumed to actively want to see the very kind of regional chaos and conflict we are witnessing. The sectarian strife between Sunni and Shia and between Arab states plays into their existential geopolitical interests.

Al-Majed's Abdullah Azzam Brigade is known to have organizational links with Saudi military intelligence. His interrogation could have revealed damaging specifics on that liaison. The disclosed involvement of Saudi Arabia in the recent bombing of Iran's Beirut embassy, as well as other atrocities, would have had hugely damaging political repercussions for the Saudi monarchy and its Western allies.

Other damaging revelations could have substantiated suspected collusion of Western and Saudi covert operations with al-Qaeda militants in the chemical weapons attack near Damascus last August. That atrocity killed hundreds of civilians and was attempted as a pretext by the Obama White House to launch air strikes against the Syrian government.

The regional dimension to al-Qaeda terrorism was underscored this weekend by the takeover of towns in Iraq's western Anbar Province. The group responsible for that onslaught is the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It has emerged as one of the dominant militant forces destabilizing Syria and it also claimed responsibility for the car bomb attack in a southern suburb of Lebanese capital, Beirut, last Thursday, which killed five civilians and left dozens wounded.

It is understood that al-Majed was in particular close liaison with Saudi Arabia's state intelligence chief, Prince Bandar bin Sultan al Saud. Bandar has a long history of collaboration with US and British intelligence dating back to the creation of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan from the late 1970s until the present day.

Latterly, the Saudi spymaster has played the role of the point man in the region for Western intelligence in the setting up and arming of a new wave of al-Qaeda outfits, such as ISIS, Jabhat

al-Nusra and the Islamic Front. Al-Majed's brigade was just one of the many cogs in the Western and Saudi-sponsored al-Qaeda terror machine.

Officially, these groups may be on terrorist lists issued by the US and Saudi Arabia. That anomaly – the so-called “war on terror” – is just part of the deception to hide the real involvement of these governments in waging state terrorism for their geopolitical ends by using the very same groups they are supposed to be fighting against.

For that reason, it is a pity al-Majed met an untimely death. Possible revelations would have uncovered much of the dirty business that the West and its regional proxies are up to their necks in. And no doubt there is quiet satisfaction among these covert sponsors that this potential source is now dead and buried.