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ASSASSINATION IS MURDER, EVEN WHEN THE CIA DOES IT

Jacob G. Hornberger
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An article in last Friday's *New York Times* provides a perfect demonstration of what the conversion of the federal government to a national-security state has done to the mindsets of many Americans, especially with respect to assassination.

The article, entitled “Masquerading as Reporter, Assassin Hunted Putin Foes in Ukraine,” details an assassination attempt by a man posing as a reporter against a couple in Ukraine, Adam Osmayev and Amina Okuyeva. The couple are leaders in Ukraine’s fight against pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. Because Ms. Okuyeva was armed, she was able to foil the assassination attempt.

According to the *Times*, “The attack was the third high-profile killing or attempted killing in Kiev that the Ukrainian authorities have attributed to Russian security services....”

Note the operative term: *Russian*.

Now note this excerpt from a succeeding paragraph in the article: “The [reporter’s] cover was good but not flawless, Ms. Okuyeva said in an interview, her first with a foreign news organization since the attempted murder.”

Note the operative term: *murder*.

Translation: An assassination carried out by Russia constitutes murder.

Let's now examine an op-ed entitled "The New York Times Recklessly Exposes a CIA Operative's Identity" by *Washington Post* columnist Marc A. Thiessen, which appeared in the June 7, 2017, issue of the *Post*.

Notice an important omission in Thiessen's op-ed: Not one single mention of the word "murder." As I explained in my article "Why Should CIA Murderers Be Protected by Secrecy?," that's because the U.S. mainstream press, while able to recognize that assassination by Russian agents constitutes murder, is psychologically unable to recognize that the same applies to assassination by CIA and other U.S. agents.

That's the power of indoctrination and propaganda by the most powerful government in history, one that wields the omnipotent power to assassinate anyone in the world it wants, including American citizens, and not be held to account, not even by the federal judiciary, which has held that it lacks jurisdiction to interfere with U.S. state-sponsored assassinations.

Here is another example of this phenomenon, this one from the *New York Times*. In an article dated March 1, 2017, entitled "Senior Qaeda Leader Is Killed in Drone Strike," there is not one single mention of the word "murder."

Or consider this *New York Times* article dated August 27, 2015, entitled "The Lessons of Anwar al-Awlaki," which is about the U.S. assassination of an American citizen, an assassination that the U.S. federal judiciary declined to prevent or punish, notwithstanding the express prohibition against the taking of a person's life without due process of law found in the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In the article, there are plenty of references to the term "assassination" but not one single reference to the word "murder."

Now, compare the article about the U.S. assassination of al-Awlaki with a *New York Times* article about an assassination in Malaysia that was purportedly carried out by North Korea against Kim Jong-nam, the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. It begins with "Two women were charged with murder in a Kuala Lumpur court on Wednesday in connection with the assassination...."

Does the *Times* article question the murder charges arising out of that assassination? Nope. That's because when communists commit assassination, it's murder. It's only when the CIA commits assassinations that they are considered, well, protecting "national security" or "keeping us safe" or "defending our rights and freedoms."

But in reality CIA assassinations are murder, just as Russian and North Korean assassinations are.

The CIA responds that its victims are deserving of assassination, but we can be reasonably certain that that's also how Russia and North Korean authorities also feel about their

assassination victims. The fact that an assassin feels that his victims deserve to be killed does not remove the killing from the category of murder.

Our American ancestors understood this principle. The last thing they wanted was to bring into existence a government whose officials wielded the power to kill people without first going through a legal process that established that the killing was justified. That's what the term "due process of law" is all about — to ensure that a person is provided notice, hearing, and an opportunity to show he isn't guilty of what the authorities want to kill him for. It's also what trial by jury is for — to enable an accused to have ordinary citizens, not government officials, decide whether he's guilty or not. It's what the government's burden of proof in a criminal case — "beyond a reasonable doubt" — is all about—to provide a judicial process where the government must prove that a person has committed an offense before they can kill him for it.

Under the system of government devised by our ancestors, if a jury returns a verdict of "not guilty," the accused walks free, no matter how convinced U.S. officials are of his guilt. Under the federal government as originally devised, they are prohibited from killing him once he is found not guilty.

That is what once distinguished the United States from most other countries. Not anymore. The conversion of the federal government to a national-security state changed all that. Now, the U.S. government, operating through the CIA or the Pentagon, wields the omnipotent power to do what totalitarian states throughout history have been empowered to do — kill people with impunity — murder them.

An excerpt from that *New York Times* article about the assassination attempt on Adam Osmayev and Amina Okuyeva is revealing: "In 2006, the Russian government legalized targeted killings abroad of people posing terrorist threats, resuming a Soviet-era practice."

When you start to read that sentence, you're tempted to think that in 2006 the Russia government decided to copy the U.S. government's policy of assassination ... until you arrive at the last phrase: "resuming a Soviet-era practice."

And there you have it. The communist regime in the Soviet Union engaged in assassination. So did the communist regime in North Korea.

It was the CIA and the Pentagon who copied the tactic from the communists. That's how they justified the conversion of the U.S. government from a limited-government republic to a national-security state after World War II. U.S. officials believed that to defeat the communists in the Cold War, the U.S. government needed to become like the communists. Since the communists engage in assassination, they felt, so must the United States.

It was the worst thing Americans could ever do, and, as we have seen, it ended up warping and distorting the mindsets and consciences of many Americans. One does not fight evil with evil. One fights evil with good.

Assassination is murder and, therefore, evil, whether it's committed by the CIA, Russia, or North Korea. The second-best thing that Americans could ever do is stop their government from continuing to assassinate people, even if Russia, North Korea, or any other country engages in it. The best thing they could ever do is restore a constitutional republic to our land.