



What Bush and Obama Accomplished

Guest: Scott Horton

January 21, 2014

Scott Horton is the host of Antiwar Radio on KPFK 90.7 FM in Los Angeles, and hosts the Scott Horton Show every weekday from 3-5pm ET at LibertyExpressRadio.com.

[start 00:02:23]

WOODS: Let's start off with the situation with Iran and diplomacy and foreign policy. I just had Daniel McAdams on, so we have gotten the basic contours of what's happening with Iran and with the proposed nuclear deal, with the talks going on, but I want to get the Scott Horton take on that. Do you think there's any prospect of peace here? Do you think the neocons are swarming? Do you think the terms are reasonable? What's the Scott Horton take on what's going on there?

HORTON: You know what, Tom? I really want badly to believe at this point that it's about 60/40 in favor of a real nuclear deal. I say that because the Iranians have been offering the same deal all along, which is come on, we'll do whatever you want. Let's just get along. They said that in 2003. They said that in 2005. They said that in 2009 and in 2010. Now they're saying it again. They've been very flexible on this, and what's changed is that their new president is a guy who is not so easy to demonize like Ahmadinejad, with his big mouth and his horrible crass slogans that he says all the time and all that. This new guy Rouhani sees people like him. I guess the State Department weenies and stuff. He's educated in the West and so is his whole team. They're looking at this as their chance.

The breaking news on this, the most important piece of news on this, is by our friend Phil Giraldi in *The American Conservative* magazine from I think just yesterday at www.theamericanconservative.com, and it's "Intel Community Makes Peace." This is about how they had these secret negotiations going on in Oman under William Burns at the same time that they had the above-board negotiations under Lady Ashton and Secretary Kerry. What was going on in Oman was William Burns and his Iranian counterparts were really working out this Iranian deal, the long and the short of it in advance in deep background. They brought the CIA with them. The CIA worked with the Iranian intelligence agents, and they ran through every scenario. I mean, these are CIA analysts. They ran through every scenario. If you had this many centrifuges, and they spun it this speed for this long, you could have this much uranium enriched to this much purity, and we would be happy if you only had this and not that and whatever. They ran through it all and worked it all out together already.

The interim deal and the upcoming final deal, hopefully, are really just the surface, and the deal has virtually already been made. And the deal being the extra, super, absolute verification of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. It's already a safeguarded nuclear program. As the former IAEA Director Mohamed Elbaradei put it, there's not a shred of evidence, there's no indication that they've ever diverted any uranium to any military or weapons purpose of any kind whatsoever. All this deal would do, basically, is the Americans in the West lift our sanctions in exchange for them limiting the amount of enrichment that they're doing, stopping enriching up to 20 percent, which is for the medical isotope reactor, and they have

plenty that they've already made anyway, that's 20 percent pure uranium 235. Limit it only to 3.6 percent, and limit the amount being produced, etc. So there's no good reason in the world why not to do the deal. There's every good reason in the world why to do it.

The Israel lobby just had a complete go at it at 100 miles per hour, did everything they could in the House and the Senate, and Obama faced them down. Obama went to the Democrats, and I guess to the Republicans, too, and said, do not pass these sanctions. They were gathering an almost veto-proof majority of co-sponsors, and Obama went and told them do not mess this up right now. They backed down at least for now. Hillary Mann pointed out today that the AIPAC meeting, their big meeting in D.C., is still coming up. So it's not over yet for them. But that's basically the interim deal, and the postponing at least of the new sanctions in the Congress are two real big victories for Obama on this.

This is the only good thing he's ever done, by the way. It's the only thing that I could applaud him for whatsoever. I guess he signed that thing reducing the disparity in the mandatory minimum sentences a little. But other than that, this is the only thing I support him on whatsoever. It really is a good thing. It really could be the first step toward ending the cold war with Iran. That being said, there are a lot of professional Iran haters in America whose jobs and whose lives are at stake here that will do anything to keep the cold war going, and that includes people in the State Department whose job it is to work things out. It's far from a done deal. Even if we get the nuclear deal, that doesn't necessarily mean we'll have a normalization of relations. The single big, fake, outstanding issue is their nuclear program, and if that's resolved I think it very well could be a major turn in American foreign policy over there.

[time 00:08:26]

WOODS: Let me jump in here because of an item that was up the other day linked on the Drudge Report. You click on it, and it takes you to World Net Daily, so I don't know. But they're talking to a former Deputy Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA, who is saying, and this is a paraphrase, that if Iran breaks its deal with the West tomorrow the country would be only two to three weeks away from producing enough highly enriched uranium to assemble a nuclear weapon. What do you say about that, Scott Horton?

HORTON: No, that's absolutely not true. In fact, that article by our friend Phil Giraldi former CIA Officer in *The American Conservative* magazine directly takes that on. He says it would take them five years from breakout. World Net Daily—these are the guys who, if we listen to them, or if what they said was true, Iran would have had nuclear bombs all these years. I mean, what are they talking about? They never have even begun to start making nukes. If they did, what they would need is they would have to convert the uranium metal they've already got back into hexafluoride gas and then run it through their centrifuges again to get it up to 94 percent pure uranium 235. And then they'd have to get the metallurgists to actually even make a bomb out of it. Then the only kind of bomb they'd probably even be able to make at that point would be a very simple gun-type nuke like the Hiroshima bomb, which they couldn't deliver. It sat in the back of a flatbed truck or something, and then what? They're going to drive it across Iraq and Jordan to Israel or some nonsense? This thing is ridiculous.

Even if they did have a couple of nukes, they couldn't do anything with them except hope to try to keep us out with them, which is really what they're doing with their peaceful nuclear program, too. They have their electricity program, but they're trying to create for themselves a nuclear capability as a pseudo nuclear deterrent. Instead of going all the way to a nuclear bomb to try to keep us out, they've got it set now so if we did attack them, then we'll know that they have the capability to go ahead. I mean, it's not like we can really invade and sack the place and occupy it. If we bomb them, then that's going to turn their civilian nuclear program into a nuclear weapons program. If the West doesn't want that, they need to back off. That's the strategy on the Iranian side.

As far as technically speaking, the Likudniks and their sock puppets in the United States have been crying that the Iranians are about to have nuclear weapons any day now since 1984. They're liars, and they've been in lying this whole time. If you just go and read *Haaretz*, the liberal daily out of Tel Aviv, they have all the quotes of the Mossad professionals—not the lying, windbag politicians, but the Mossad professionals—using the exact same language as the CIA, which is that we judge with high confidence that they are not making nuclear weapons, that they have not made the political decision to begin to make nuclear weapons. That's the truth about Iran's nuclear program right there.

[time 00:11:33]

WOODS: All right, Scott, I want you to run down where in the world right now the U.S. is most heavily involved in the war on terror. Where has the war taken the U.S. as of this moment in 2014?

HORTON: First of all, Afghanistan; we've still got north of 50,000 troops occupying that place, and Obama of course is trying to strike a deal with Karzai to keep more troops after that for so-called training and counterterrorism missions. Of course the entire surge is a failure, and the Karzai government is basically just a collection of the communists that America used to back mujahideen back in the 1980s, who were on the eve of absolute defeat when they lost their leader on September 10, 2001. But then America came in and installed the rest of them in power in Kabul. They have no natural power in the country at all. The CIA put out a new intelligence estimate just the other day trying to scare us into staying. Their point being that, if we leave, the government in Kabul cannot stay, cannot be the government in Kabul. It's a Potemkin village, the whole thing, a 12-year war for nothing and tens of thousands dead for nothing.

Also next door in Pakistan, the covert drone war continues, as well as in Yemen. And in Somalia the *New York Times* just published a thing last week about how back in October Obama—and I bet the *New York Times* probably knew about this all along too but covered it up for him—expanded the Special Forces mission in Somalia. The CIA, of course, has been running around there killing people since 2001, destroying everything. That's a whole other show, I guess. Then in Libya and in Mali the consequences of our 2011 war there rage on, although the actual number of boots on the ground, that kind of thing, are limited, thank goodness. That could get much worse. Anytime our establishment wants to turn their attention toward Libya, boy, do they have a bunch of excuses for intervention there. It turns out the country tore itself completely apart after we overthrew the wacky colonel there. So now we have to clear, hold, and build and give them purple-fingered elections and train them up, and then we'll stand down and all of that. If they want they could break off that direction into Libya this minute.

Of course there's Syria, where American is trying to figure out which al-Qaeda group we want to back the most. Is it the Islamic Front or is it ISIS or is it the Jabhat al-Nusra? As these different al-Qaeda groups fight amongst themselves, others in Washington D.C. wonder whether maybe now isn't the best time to go ahead and switch back to Bashar al-Assad, who after all in the Bush years was a loyal employee of the CIA, where he did nothing but torture people to death all day for him. In fact, Michael Hayden, who used to be his supervisor in the torture program, was saying maybe we should go back to Assad at this point. This whole backing al-Qaeda thing is getting a bit out of hand.

You might wonder why would Obama back al-Qaeda in Syria, including al-Qaeda in Iraq, in Syria against Bushar al-Assad. The answer is because that's what Israel wants. The answer is because Israel hates Hezbollah, and Hezbollah is backed by the Shiite government in Syria. They're allies with Iran, and so that's why we hate Iran. Well, it's a big part of why the American state hates Iran, and that's absolutely why the U.S. has been absolutely backing a regime change. That's why John Kerry to this day is insisting that any peace deal begin with Assad's stepping down and a regime change there, because as Michael Oren, outgoing American Israeli ambassador to the United States put it, if it's Hezbollah versus al-Qaeda I'd choose al-Qaeda. Because Hezbollah's backed by Iran. That's why Obama is committing the highest treason in backing the brothers of the September 11th attackers against Israel's enemy, Hezbollah, which hadn't

attacked the United States really ever, because even the Beirut attack of 1983 of the barracks bombing was the Amal militia. It was not Hezbollah even then. So that's the motivation, because they're Israel's enemy. That's the motivation for Obama and the Democrats and the CIA backing al-Qaeda in Syria.

[time 00:16:17]

WOODS: Scott, I want to ask you about the drone issue. Opponents say, look, drones are killing innocent people. The response you get, even from some ordinary Americans—I expect it from the neocons—is well, of course we're going to occasionally hit a wedding. We're not perfect. You can't hold us up to an impossible standard.

So my questions are: what is the point of these drones? Whom are they going after? And what do you say to the person who says, look, obviously if you're going to make an omelet you're going to break some eggs, and brides and grooms are the eggs?

HORTON: If you're making an omelet that is the American empire then that's absolutely and completely unjustifiable. If omelet was the legitimate defense of the United States, and as accurate as we can possibly be in defending ourselves from the onslaught of the Islamofascist caliphate, and occasionally some civilians would die then at least they would have some kind of argument. I would still argue against it and say killing innocent civilians is killing innocent civilians, and it's not okay ever. But they might as well be targeting innocent civilians. A lot of times they are targeting innocent civilians. The so-called signature strike: it sounds like, oh, they had to get the president's signature. No, that means he drives a truck, and he owns a rifle. That's the signature of a bad guy, so kill him and whoever he happens to be with. That's what makes him a militant.

When you're at war for an empire and your enemies are the civilians in their own countries who dare to resist you then yeah, that's the profile of a bad guy, a male between the age of ten and 70 and may or may not be carrying a rifle. That's the fighting-age male. That's a possible enemy. Even in the establishment, it's 2014 now, so come on. Even David Gregory on Meet the Press, Tom, he said to Panetta back when he was the head of the CIA a year ago: we're doing this drone war in Yemen, we keep killing innocent people, and we keep hearing reports in the media from Yemen where people are saying listen, we never liked al-Qaeda. We never even heard of them, but we hate you now. We're friends with them now because of what you've done here. So are we creating more enemies than we had in the first place and is it worth it? The best Leon Panetta could answer—and that's David Gregory talking, for crying out loud—talk about a three-by-five card of acceptable opinion. Panetta said, hey look, these are the tools that we have. So we have to keep using them, so yeah, we'll keep using them.

I'm no statist, and I'm really not in favor of giving the state permission to do any of what it calls defense anywhere at any time, because I just don't really believe in that. But this would at least be a different argument, Tom, if the truth was that they started it, and the best we can do is try to defend ourselves the very best way we know how, and sometimes it's a little bit messy in there, so there are some unintended consequences. The truth is that the U.S. started it, not them, and history didn't begin on September 11, 2001. It began on September 11, 1990, back at the end of the Cold War when George H.W. Bush announced that America's going to invade and occupy the Middle East and stay there in the name of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The troops stayed there, and they waged their empire of benevolent global hegemony and blockade against the Iraqis there ever since.

That's what provoked the terrorists' war against us, starting back with the first World Trade Center bombing, with the Khobar Towers attack in 1996, with the embassy attacks and finally September 11. This was the enemy that we created for ourselves out of all of our old friends, the mujahideen, who worked for Ronald Reagan in Afghanistan in the 1980s, turned them against us by invading and occupying their territory. Now that doesn't make them the good guys, but it does mean that we started it.

The fact is that al-Qaeda are such bad guys that they create enmity everywhere they go. The Iraqis let them be their allies for a little while, making themselves useful, but really they just made things worse for the Sunni insurgency by bombing marketplaces and cutting people's hands off and acting crazy. The Sunni tribes turned on al-Qaeda in Iraq. The same thing is happening in Syria right now. These are the worst people in the world. They have no support, except sometimes some people in the Middle East are happy to see them attack us because of all the evil that our government commits against them. So the truth of the matter is if America just stops supporting dictatorships and stops supporting revolution and stops supporting containing this government or helping that government torture its citizens to death for daring oppose them or whatever it is, and we would take a Ron Paulian, hands-off attitude toward the Middle East, all of the terrorist war against us would dry up.

You don't need drone strikes making more and more terrorists every time you kill or claim to kill one and take out a wedding party and create a hundred more enemies. It doesn't have to be that way. If it was Ron Paul in office right now or Harry Browne, who ran for president as a Libertarian back in 1996 and 2000, the way that they would have handled the whole thing—I know Harry Browne told me on my show back in the day that he would have just given the world his great Statue of Liberty speech and said we are a light, a beacon of liberty, not a laser designator for high explosives. He would have hired some bounty hunters to kill Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their dozen closest friends and that would have been the end of that. It would have ended the empire, and the war on terrorism would have been over by Christmas 2001 and we would be free and prosperous and happy right now.

WOODS: It's so anticlimactic after what you just said for me to ask you anything further, but I still feel compelled to do so as long as I have a few more minutes with Scott Horton. I remember Ann Coulter, who likes to take positions just because they're contrarian positions, because she likes to annoy people, taking the position that the war in Iraq has actually been a great success, and that we should quit apologizing for it. It's been a real success.

Now that would be a whole show. In fact, maybe we should have a whole show on that. But one aspect of it that she thought was successful, and a lot of the neocons on the radio would call successful, was the surge. When we had the surge, goes the conventional wisdom, things really did begin to turn around. That just showed that what we needed was just a little more oomph in the offensive there. What was the real story of the surge?

HORTON: That whole point of view, as you can tell when you repeated it just now, it's all based on glittering generalities, right? If Ann Coulter had to break down for a moment who is actually who and whose side was America ever fighting for in that war from this year to that year, her argument would completely fall apart. All these people have is a bunch of slogans. The surge is working. The surge is working. And then: the surge worked, the surge worked.

Well, let's see. The definition of the surge in the first place was supposed to be to create such a good security situation in Baghdad that all the various factions could come together in the capital city in a democratic fashion and work out their differences peacefully through the rule of law in their wonderful new democratic system.

I'm sorry, because does anybody think that those benchmarks were met? Does anybody even remember the term "benchmark"? David Petraeus said we've got these "benchmarks," and they just went away. The benchmarks were replaced by "the surge worked." Well, what did the surge work at? What the surge worked at was ethnically or the sectarian cleansing basically of almost every last Sunni Arab in Baghdad. The majority in Iraq are the Shiite Arabs. They were oppressed by the minority Sunni Ba'athist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. When the Americans came in, they tried to set up a little caucus system of their sock puppets and handpicked chosen people. But then the Ayatollah Sistani in 2004 said we want one man, one vote, or you're going to have to start this war all over again against the people who stood out of the way

while you got rid of Saadam. So George Bush had to back down, had to give them one man, one vote.

What's democracy mean, really, Tom? Majority rule. And what's that mean? That means the Iraqi National Alliance of the Shiite parties. The Dawa Party, the Supreme Islamic Council, the Muqtada al-Sadr. They took Baghdad, which was about 50/50 Sunni and Shia Arab, and is now an approximately 85 or 90 percent Shiite city, the Shiite United Iraqi Alliance. That was why 4500 Americans died. That was why somewhere between 500,000 and a million Iraqis died in that horrible civil war: America was fighting to accomplish the sectarian cleansing of Baghdad and the handing of the capital city over to the Shiites. The first time the Shiites controlled an Arab capital city in a thousand years. They controlled Cairo for a little while a thousand years ago, and they destabilized every nation in the region. The war party had to debase America's currency and therefore the currency of every state in the region in order to do it, too, which is what helped lead to the Arab Spring. All these people suffering under their American torture dictators. Now they're broke. They can't even afford bread. They hate their government more than ever before, and that was a big part of what caused the uprising there. Now the mujahideen war of the Sunni-based insurgency that rose up to fight the Americans' invasion, they're losing battle against the Americans and the Shiites. The Americans, the Iranians, and the Shiite Arabs, I should say. They've now gone on to fight in Libya and in Syria where America under Obama has taken their side; the Sunni-based insurgents from Iraq, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and Ansar al-Sharia.

These guys are veterans of the Iraq War. They were the Sunni-based insurgents, the al-Qaeda in Iraq. They went home to Libya; Obama and McCain fight a war for them. Then they send them on to fight the war in Syria, like we talked about before, where America is actually on the side of the al-Qaeda in Iraq guys. So now the news is America is going to go train. We're going back to Iraq. Well they're going to Jordan to train the Iraqi army in fighting al-Qaeda now, because they're still the bad guys in Iraq while were backing them, arming them, and the mujahideen, CIA and the Saudis have been backing them and arming them for two and a half years just north of the border in Syria. The border that hardly exists anymore, as the jihadists are attempting to finally create that bogus, ridiculous Islamofascist caliphate that never existed. Jihadistan that never existed in the Middle East. The Ba'athists are, as Lew Rockwell put it, the last countries in the Middle East where you could get a drink until America's wars and revolutions over there.

So what has Ann Coulter's war done? It's given the south of Iraq to the Iranians and increased their power and influence in the region more than anything anyone could have ever done for them, including if the prophet Muhammad came down from the sky with magic wishes. He could have never given them the south of Iraq the way America's given it to them. And then it spread the Saudi-style, bin Laden jihad across North Africa. Right, Ann Coulter, the surge worked as long as nobody asks what "the surge worked" means.

[end of interview 00:29:41]