

[BREAKING NEWS](#)[GLOBAL GORDIAN OUTLOOK](#)[DIALOGHI MEDITERRANEI](#)[EVENTI](#)[SALA STAMPA](#)[PUBBLICAZIONI ▾](#)[Home](#) > [Breaking News](#)

INTERVISTA CON IL DOTT. ARDAVAN KOSHNOOD

by Redazione — 8 Dicembre 2020

0
SHARES30
VIEWS

Condividi su Facebook



Condividi su Twitter



Condividi su LinkedIn

*Di Verdiana Garau*

Discutiamo insieme al Dott. Ardavan Koshnood, criminologo, analista strategico, non-resident associate del BESA Center (Centro Studi Strategici Begin-Sadat di Israele) dell'assassinio di uno degli uomini in assoluto più influenti al mondo, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, fisico nucleare iraniano e generale di brigata della Guardia rivoluzionaria iraniana, lo scienziato del Ministero della Difesa e della Logistica delle Forze Armate iraniane, considerato come la mente a capo del programma nucleare iraniano di arricchimento dell'uranio e dello sviluppo di ordigni atomici.

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, è rimasto ucciso in un agguato il 27 novembre scorso, mentre viaggiava a bordo della sua autovettura nei pressi della capitale Tehran, ad Absard. Il suo assassinio ha rappresentato un duro colpo per l'Iran e la sua intelligence che appare profondamente compromessa, oltre a costituire una vittoria netta per Israele ed implicare problematiche conseguenze per una possibile rinegoziazione degli Stati Uniti sugli accordi nucleari che il nuovo Presidente, Joe Biden, avrebbe voluto riprendere in considerazione. Resta inoltre confusa la posizione dell'Europa nei confronti della minaccia iraniana.

The Mohsen Fakhrizadeh assassination is the second biggest assassination after Qasem Soleimani have been killed and the seventh in about ten years to the detriment of Iranian nuclear scientists. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was considered to be among the 500 hundred individual most influential in the world. Many have been the reconstructions about this killing. BBC reported that he was killed by a remote controlled weapon, but apparently a gun fire also took place. The scenario appears unclear, and the Iranian system seems to be very vulnerable. Why?

All the details about what exactly have happened and how he was killed, we still do not know, because we have been given by Iran several different stories on what happened. Few hours later that Fakhrizadeh was killed, Iran stated that he was killed when assassins attacked his car.

The Ministry of Defense, Mohammad Javad Zarif, later said that Fakhrizadeh was killed because of the explosion and not because he was wounded with bullets. Suddenly later, from nowhere, some new information begins circulating about that were no assassins on the place, and asserting that was killed by remote controlled weapon on a car and that the car later exploded by a controlled gun from a place near by. Later, they said that it was controlled via satellite while someone was sitting maybe in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem during the fact.

That may be the case, but Iran is very difficult to trust when it comes to this kind of information. What we know, is that there have been an assassination, we know that Fakhrizadeh was killed and Iranian intelligence and counter-intelligence community is very vulnerable, poor organized, and this embodies Iranian Achille's heel, because this fact represents the seventh assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists since 2007 on Iranian soil, except for Qasem Soleimani that he was killed in Iraq. Another one, was the killing of Al-Masri, the number two man of Al-Qaeda, which happened also in Tehran. So, you have fully credit to say that Iranian counter-intelligence is very poor organized and highly vulnerable and this constitutes a huge problem for the regime.

Is Iran weakening both under the political and technological point of view?

Absolutely. Because we do not know how the assassins could find Fakhrizadeh. Is it about individual working of the Iranian intelligence giving out information? Or is it because Iran has such a deep technology that they could hack and see where he was in real time? For sure Iran is very weak in the area and one of the reason of that, in my opinion, is partly due to the fact that Iran has no training, no knowledge, no education in this area; secondly Iran system depends on loyalty, they only hire individuals that are loyal to the Islamic Republic of Iran and to its supreme leaders. An individual with skills in the area, but perhaps not so loyal, will never be a part of intelligence system and that is a problem.

Do you think the problem is that Iran is not a democracy and this bring about corruption to the entire system? So the system failed because this regime build itself on loyalty but ends up having a structure on corruption bricks?

Definitely the case. Iran has been a dictatorship since 1979 with the Islamic Revolution and it is not a "normal dictatorship", because normal dictatorship have sort of real stability at least, but in Iran we haven't seen that stability at all. There have been assassinations, assassination attacks, and the Israeli Mossad could do a raid in the centre of Tehran in 2018 stealing very important documents about the nuclear program so it means, that in every aspect, Iran shows its weakness and we do not doubt that Iran system is corrupted. Iran is one of the most corrupted country in the world.

They have been blaming Zionist straight away on Fakhrizadeh killing. But the Intelligence Minister of Israel, Eli Cohen, says they did not know anything about, where still someone, and it rests unclear

who, states that the entire world and particularly the Western world, should thanks Israel for this assassination.

This fix the Israeli modus operandi very well. The Israeli Mossad is much more enlightened than the British MI6 in these matters. They never tell what they have done and it is perfectly in accordance to how it should be. You do not tell what you have done, but everybody still knows that it is you. There is not organisation and not individuals inside Iran who are capable of conducting such high quality intelligence operations, on the soil. The only other option is that Fakhrizadeh was killed by the regime itself. Actually, there are lot of rumors going on in Iran that Fakhrizadeh was killed by the regime itself. True or not, we really do not know. I do not think so and I would put my penny on Israeli intelligence.

It sounds like a sort of sly diplomatic statement that “the regime itself killed Fakhrizadeh”, but let’s do a step backward: a few days before the assassination a secret meeting took place between Netanyahu, Pompeo and Bin Salman. Also a second visit of a Trump administration member, Jared Kushner, follows the assassination. This have been the second case where a Trump’s administration member shows up in Middle East taking care about normalization of relationships between Israel and Arabs. The Trump strategy goes on, despite USA has a new President now, Joe Biden.

We have two schools discussing how to deal with Iran in the US. One school have stated that one can not negotiate with Iran, can not discuss with Iran, because whatever is done Iran will continue its malign activity in the region, in Europe, in the US and so on. The other school, have said that diplomacy is much more stronger, and with negotiations is possible to force Iran to change its behaviour in order to become a more normal country. These are the two schools since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Currently, because of President Trump, the second school is given much power, putting hard against hard. I don’t think the discussion between Bin Salman, Netanyahu and Pompeo was about killing Fakhrizadeh, because I don’t think they discussed on such intimate intelligence operations. However, I believe that the meeting was about supporting Israel if something would happen. Netanyahu may have told them that Israel is planning something in Iran and if that happened would be a major blow to the Iranian regime and so: “would you then support us if Iran attacks?”. This also explains Jared Kushner trip later, because Iran will take a revenge for sure, there is no doubt about it.

The question is, how will Iran do that? Which manner?

For example, after Soleimani, Iran took some kind of revenge when attacked Al-Asad base in Baghdad by firing missiles. However, before firing those missiles, Iran told Iraq that they were about to fire them in Al-Asad. So we didn’t see any civil killed, and Iran showed restraint despite could act more vigorously.

But if they acted vigorously, the US could hit back and that is also the case now. I do not think that Iran will use Hezbollah and Hezbollah missiles toward Israel, because that could mean war. In order to show up, because they will do something, they will probably use their proxies to shot the low class missiles toward Israel.

You mentioned Iraq, could also be the Iraq another target?

Iraq is always an Iran target, because of the presence of US military. Especially the Green Zone, where we have a lots of American soldiers and also the American Embassy based in Baghdad. Iraq is always an option of the Iranian regime in discussing hitting American soldiers, however there are no Israeli soldiers nor Israeli interests in Baghdad or the rest of Iraq. I do not think Iraq will be the objective this time, Iran wants to demonstrate that has been Israel to kill Fakhrizadeh.

Netanyahu is claimed to dissolve Knesset soon, al least this is what his counterpart Benny Gantz asserts.

It is a melting soup when you look at this because the assassination of Fakhrizadeh represents a victory for Netanyahu and he can use this at home in order to gain more popularity and perhaps winning the election and finally setting stop for political disturbing and the catastrophic reality that

have been taken place in Israel. At the same time, Trump will be the President of the United States for one more month and Trump will definitely do what he can in order to go forward with his policy and politics. So it is not a surprise that in a time such this one, Fakhrizadeh assassination comes to place. It is actually, strategically, the best time for assassination to take place. If Iran does nothing, Israel wins. If Iran does something, Trump may use that as an excuse to wage a war against Iran. Because of the political lack of stability, both in the Middle East as well for Israel and the US, this was the perfect time to conduct that assassination.

If Gantz takes place and he wins the election, will be for Biden easier or not?

What Biden wants to do and what he asserts, is that he wants to renegotiate with Iran and go back to JCPOA, the Nuclear Deal.

This is what he wants to do, but it will be harder and harder because of this assassination and because the huge amount of uranium stockpiled in Iran, twelve times the agreed limit. How to step back to 2015 agreement?

I think that it will be impossible with what happened now to get back to that exact deal, however many in Iran say they want really to renegotiate, for example the Foreign Minister of the country, Zarif.

How far the Americans will go?

The deal does not discuss the issues of Human Rights. And the deal don't discuss Iran missiles activities. Iran missiles activity, I think, is something that USA is interested of.

But Iran is not interested on discussing that. By assassinating Fakhrizadeh, the Israeli made very difficult for Joe Biden to get back to the deal.

Let's talk about MEK, Mujahedin-e Khalq, and about who really can penetrate physically the Iranian system and soil. Their leader live in Paris now, correct?

The MEK, the Mujahedin organisation, was established back in the '70 in Iran, like the so called Marxist Islamic organisation. After the revolution they have been very active, supporting Khomeini, but then they could not come along about the question of power anymore and many of them were arrested and executed and some of them went to Iraq. The two leaders were Massoud Rajavi and Maryam Rajavi. More than a decade ago, Massoud Rajavi disappeared. Nobody really knows what happened. The MEK they do not talk about Massoud Rajavi, and it is rumoured that he has been killed.

The current leader is now Maryam Rajavi, she is living in Paris and she is the head of organisation. MEK is very well organised, perhaps the most organised opposition group in exile. Most of their followers and members live now in Tirana, Albania. Because after US invasion of Iraq, the Mujahedin have been expelled from Iraq and those 3000 individuals had not place to go and Albania took care of them. MEK has the resources to conduct the operations inside Iran.

So we say those who have done the assassination during the last fifteen years has been Israel, but what about the assassins which could easily operate on Iranian soil?

I think that assassins are Iranians, at least some of them in connection with the MEK.

MEK is also firmly against nuclear program

Yes. MEK, like other Iranian opposition organisations, stays against this nuclear program of the Islamic Regime. Every blow to the regime makes them happy.

I am quite certain that those operations are conducted by MEK, in cooperation with Israeli intelligence.

Where Israeli intelligence is the head and MEK is the harm?

Fully credit. In order to plan to have both an intelligence organisation and a surveillance team is not an easy task. So where the training and the brain could come from Mossad, the assassination itself

could be have conducted by Iranians.

A last more question on Europe-Iran issues: the verdict for Assadollah Assadi, alleged responsible over the bomb plot in Paris back in 2018, is expected on next January. How Europe should manage the tension arising?

The European Union have been one of Iran's closes allies and one of its main trade partners ever since the revolution. Currently, Iran has a very good relationship with the EU despite the fact that Iran has conducted thousands of terrorist attacks and espionage against European countries. The case of Assadi is not only a matter for Belgium, but it is important for the whole European Union. We must not forget that in it is not only Assadi who is standing trial, it is the Islamic Republic. Europe can either look at this incident as an isolated one-time incident and continue its close cooperation with the Iranian regime or try to put hard against hard.

Will be Europe exposed to other Iranian threats?

Europe have been exposed to Iranian threats ever since 1979. Most of the Iranians in exile who have been murdered by the Islamic regime, lived in Europe at the time of their assassinations. During the last years, Iran has tried to conduct both assassinations, terrorist attacks as well as espionage in Europe. However, this is the first time a Diplomat from Iran is standing on trial. How the EU replies to this, will without doubt send a message to Iran.

Could this one represent a diplomatic crises across Europe which demonstrates to be unable in maintaining a firm policy on IR?

For reasons connected to foremost trade, the EU have been reluctant in keeping a pressure on Iran and they have often looked through their fingers in regard to Iran's crimes against human rights and not least Iran's malign activities in the region. If Assadi is convicted, the EU have two choices: look through its fingers – once again – or take measures which in that case could imply another policy on IR. If, however, the EU decides to take another policy towards Iran, it must be in line with the Americans. Therefore, Biden's Iran policy will be of high importance for the EU.

Apparently many Iranian have been deported in the last years and seems to be the Iran's embassy in Berlin the main centre of intelligence activities for the regime. Moreover, Zarif have been invited in Rome a few days ago for an event.

Iran's embassy in Berlin have always been the Iranian regime intelligence and operation center. All assassinations, terrorist attacks and not least espionage, have been planned, organized and conducted from this embassy. And to be honest, the regime have been able to quite freely use its embassy in Berlin to conduct these operations. For almost 40 years, have the EU been to loose in regard to Iran. That is also the case with Italy which itself have been a victim of Iranian terrorism: 12 people were killed in an airport in Rome in 1985. The terrorists were trained in Iran. Just recently (in 2020) an Iranian with Italian citizenship – Danial Kassrae – was arrested for spying for Iran. And not least the assassination of Ettore Capriolo, the translator of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses". Just last month, the European Eye on Radicalization published a report of how Iran is radicalizing the Italian Shi'a community. Iranian threats are not any more only targeting Iranians in exile. Iranian threats are a matter of national security for EU, but it is unfortunately not taken seriously.

© RIPRODUZIONE RISERVATA

Tags: [ARDAVAN KOSHNOOD](#) [intervista](#)



Redazione

Il "Nodo di Gordio" è un think tank di geopolitica ed economia internazionale, promosso da una équipe di diplomatici, docenti universitari, giornalisti ed analisti in numerose discipline (geopolitica, storia, economia, finanza, politica estera, studi militari, letteratura, arte, marketing, comunicazione e gestione della rete internet)