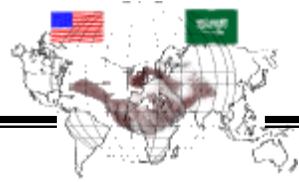


Saudi-American Forum



SAF Item of Interest

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Playing Into the Enemy's Hands

By Patrick J. Buchanan

Editor's Note:

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Playing Into the Enemy's Hands

By Patrick J. Buchanan

While America has the weaponry and resources to win the war against Islamic terrorism, there remains a question as to whether we have the wisdom and maturity.

Watching reaction to the beheading of Paul Johnson by an al-Qaeda cell in Saudi Arabia, one is reminded anew of Burke's insight that great empires and small minds go ill together.

When the news hit on June 18, some talking heads on cable TV demanded immediate U.S. retaliation. Others urged withdrawal of all Americans from a kingdom that could not or would not protect them. Still others began hectoring the Saudis and demanding instant reform and democratization. Otherwise, we get out.

Adopting any of these courses would have made the al-Qaeda atrocity a success. For while these acts of terror are satanic, they are also diabolical. They were purposeful. They were designed to provoke Americans into reacting emotionally, in a way certain to injure ourselves and damage our interests in the Arab world.

Al-Qaeda knows it cannot defeat the United States. Only Americans can do that—as we did in Vietnam. Yet, again and again, as with our invasion of Iraq, we respond as al-Qaeda could only hope we would. We must begin to ask ourselves not only "Why do they hate us?" but, "What are their war aims?" and "How do they expect us to respond to this outrage?"

With the beheading of Johnson, that al-Qaeda cell seems to have had several tactical goals: to show the Arab street that al-Qaeda at least was paying America back for Abu Ghraib by executing an enemy who kept the Apaches flying; to terrify Westerners into fleeing the kingdom, thus crippling its economy and advancing the revolution; to drive a wedge between

Riyadh and Washington.

Al-Qaeda's strategic goal, which even Saudis belatedly realize, is to humiliate, isolate, and bring down the monarchy and deliver up the world's oil storehouse to an Islamist regime that will use it as a weapon against the hated infidel, the United States of America.

Thus, al-Qaeda's acolytes in the Arab world must have rejoiced at the reaction the beheading provoked in the United States. For any American attack on Saudi Arabia or any hectoring of the monarchy or any wholesale withdrawal of Americans would advance their goal of isolating and dethroning the government and replacing it with an Islamic revolutionary regime.

But why would Americans, unless they are unthinking, stupid, or malicious, advance the very outcome al-Qaeda seeks? Can anyone believe that, should the 7000 princes go to the wall, 7000 liberal democrats will replace them? After Afghanistan and Iraq, do we still not know that when a state is destroyed, it requires years to rebuild, and the men with guns fill the vacuum? In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia is Big Casino. Lose that one, and we have lost the game.

Yet there are forces building both here and in the Middle East that seek precisely that outcome.

Islamic radicals preaching revolution and purification, who have won the hearts and minds of many of the devout Saudi and Islamic young, want to bring down the monarchy. The Israeli Right loathes the House of Saud for its support of the Palestinians and uses every opportunity to undermine it in the United States.

Sharon's neoconservative allies here in America have called for the overthrow of the monarchy, declaring it an enemy, not an ally, in the War on Terror. And, after 9/11, when 15 Saudis were used in the attacks that killed 3000 people, Saudi Arabia has few vocal friends and defenders among America's elites or the people.

And, indeed, past Saudi support of Hamas, Islamic extremists, and radical Wahabbi clerics has helped put them in the situation they are in today.

Yet, that does not excuse Americans for a lack of thought. If the Saudi monarchy goes down, who and what do we think is going to replace it? History has shown repeatedly that mindless support of revolution almost invariably leaves Western Man worse, not better off. The progressive world rejoiced in the overthrow of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and got revolution, Robespierre, the Terror, and Napoleon.

Progressive opinion, including Woodrow Wilson, was delighted we no longer had the embarrassment of Czar Nicholas II as an ally in the war to make the world safe for democracy. We were soon coping with Lenin and Stalin. That blunder almost brought an end to Western civilization. Now the idiot savants are calling for the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy.

Again, the question: do we Americans have the maturity and wisdom to lead the West, let alone run an empire?

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http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters2004/SAF_Item_Of_Interest_2004_05_25.htm

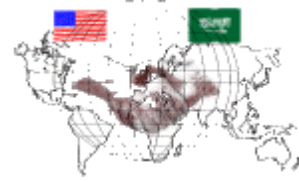
Terrorism Timeline - Saudi-US Relations Information Service

http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/Fact_Sheets/TimelineTerrorism.html

Pat Buchanan has been an advisor to three presidents and has thrice sought the office. A founding panelist of four political television shows, he currently hosts MSNBC’s daily news program, “Buchanan & Press” and appears on “The McLaughlin Group.” He writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column and is the author of six books including the recent bestseller, *The Death of the West*, which sold over 200,000 copies.

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