

[BELTWAY]

CONTRA-IRAN

Someone in the Defense Department has been taking orders from Michael Ledeen instead of President Bush, and the results threaten to undermine administration policy toward Iran. In August, *Newsday* reported that Pentagon officials, including Ledeen protégé Harold Rhode, had held secret, unauthorized meetings with Iranian expatriates, both shortly after the World Trade Center attacks and again in June of this year. Among those with whom Pentagon officials met was Manucher Ghorbanifar, the famously untrustworthy arms dealer who acted as a go-between in the Iran-contra affair. *Newsday's* source believed that the meetings were aimed at undercutting back-channel talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Now the *Washington Post* has reported that State Department officials have been complaining to the Pentagon about the operations of an Iranian dissident group in Iraq. President Bush had given orders for U.S. forces to disarm and control the Mujaheddin-e Khalq, or "People's Mujaheddin," but it turns out that the group, officially designed as a terrorist organization by State, has not been disarmed and has even been allowed to cross the Iraqi border into Iran to carry out attacks.

These incidents are indicative of more than just a turf war between State and the Pentagon. Elements within the Defense Department seem to be conducting their own foreign policy without the president's knowledge or permission. The reappearance of Ghorbanifar should serve as a warning to the White House that the same kind of people who dragged the Reagan administration down into the Iran-contra scandal are up to their old tricks. President Bush would do well to reassert control over the situation. He might begin by closing down the Pentagon's Northern Gulf Affairs



Office, formerly known as the Office of Special Plans, which has long been a breeding ground for such mischief.

[POLITICS]

GOOD-BYE, COLUMBUS

Cruz Bustamante—California's lieutenant governor and now a fair bet if the recall is held Oct. 7—has what most would call a radical past. As a student at Fresno State in the 1970s, he was a member of MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), a Latino group that has called for the murder of federal immigration officers and generally supports a radical ethnic agenda including the return of most of the American West to Mexico. (Its symbol is an eagle clutching a dynamite stick and a machete; its Spanish mission statement translates, "For the Race, everything, for those outside the Race, nothing.")

We doubt very much of MEChA's ideology remains in today's Bustamante, a dour and liberal Democrat, and to tell the truth, the ideology of MEChA itself can be taken mostly as sophomoric posturing. But it is remarkable what this tale of Bustamante's past reveals about racial etiquette in today's multicultural America.

A prominent white politician with past ties to a David-Duke-type youth

group (or even a more sober Southern-rights type of group) couldn't run for office without being hounded by reporters' questions about the link, and we doubt simple renunciation would put a stop the story. But with the exception of one or two Internet columns, Bustamante has been given a free pass by the California media.

A rule holding that a type of association that is ritually condemned in whites is fine and dandy in Hispanics strikes us as a wobbly foundation upon which to build 21st-century America.

[POSTWAR]

BRING 'EM ON

Andrew Sullivan is peddling a conspiracy theory so cold-blooded that its revelation should send his fellow hawks flying in the opposite direction. But far from seeking distance, he struts the genius of a plan—dubbed "Operation Flypaper"—that would make American soldiers bait for a thousand terrorist blows.

Sullivan wrote, "Some time before the Iraq war, I found myself musing out loud to someone close to the inner circles of the Bush administration. ... I voiced some worries about what might happen if an occupied Iraq became a target for international terrorism. Wouldn't U.S. soldiers become sitting ducks?" Came

the answer: "If the terrorists leave us alone in Iraq, fine. ... But if they come and get us, even better." Thus enlightened on the finer points of roping all terrorists into a single corral, Sullivan gushed, "The extra beauty of this strategy is that it creates a target for Islamist terrorists that is not Israel." No sympathy for servicemen caught in the shooting gallery.

It's unlikely that this scheme is true—"bring 'em on" rhetoric notwithstanding. To vindicate its war before the world, the U.S. cannot simultaneously make Iraq a democratic exemplar and a global terrorist trap. But the reaction—far short of logical repulsion—gives an ugly view into the War Party's mindset: chaos is constructive, terrorists are a fixed quantity, and the blood of our soldiers comes cheap.

[ELECTION]

UNFAIRNESS DOCTRINE

One definition of "gaffe" is when a politician inadvertently speaks the truth. Democratic insurgent Howard Dean crossed into gaffe territory when he said, "It's not our place to take sides" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adding that many Israeli West Bank settlements would have to come out in a final peace deal.

A reduction in settlements is a no-brainer for experts of all ideological stripes who focus on the now moribund peace process. Yet this did not stop Dean rivals Joe Lieberman, Richard Gephardt, and a clique of Democratic Congressmen (mindful, no doubt, of their lifeline of Israel-lobby campaign contributions) from exploding with denunciations of what an awful thing Dean had said.

We wonder what these anti-Dean Democrats think Washington's attitude towards peacemaking in the Holy Land should be. President Clinton came near to forging a final settlement in great part

because of his moving public acknowledgement of Palestinian national aspirations. Any mediator, to get even to first base, would need to win comparable credibility with both sides.

The current Mideast impasse and the seemingly endless Israeli occupation that eventually gave rise to barbaric Palestinian terrorism are festering wounds that have been corroding America's standing in the Mideast for decades and are now an important recruiting tools for anti-American terrorists. The Democrats' expression of shock at the idea that a peacemaker must strive for fairness calls into question their own fitness for elective office.

[ECONOMICS]

THE BOMBAY COMPANY

Last spring, the *New York Times* reported that American food-stamp recipients, unbeknownst to them, were having their inquiries answered by operators in Bombay. No isolated incident, this is part of a widening phenomenon that, according to some estimates, will ship 3.3 million American jobs overseas by 2015.

In his Labor Day speech, President Bush promised a new administration position to stem the employment export—about 700,000 jobs last year. Perhaps he should have first checked his own party's position on outsourcing, for it seems the RNC has interests in India. *The Business Standard* reports from New Delhi, "The U.S. Republican Party now has a band of young and enthusiastic fundraisers in Noida and Gurgaon. ... These operators are required to call up people in the U.S. seeking their support for President George W. Bush and a donation to the Republican cause."

What are the odds one of those 75 Indians dialing for dollars will ask for a contribution from an American whose job they're doing? Increasingly high, if trends continue apace. ■

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What is Victory?

Exasperated, Rush Limbaugh spelled out for his caller America's goal in Iraq. "It's a seven-letter word," roared Rush. It "begins with 'v' and ends in 'y.'"

"Define victory," the caller retorted. Rush went to a break.

Excellent question. How do we know when we've won the war in Iraq? How do we define victory?

We know who we are fighting against—Ba'athists, jihadists, unreconstructed Saddam-loyalists, America-haters. But what are we fighting for?

"Freedom," comes the retort, "democracy." But Iraq is already free of Saddam. And what do we mean by democracy? If it means one-man, one-vote majority rule, Iraq will be governed by a Shi'ite majority that looks to Iran for inspiration and guidance.

Is that worth \$87 billion and a daily toll of American dead?

Some of us would settle for an Iraq free of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, where no attack on America is planned and no terror plot by al-Qaeda is tolerated. But it now appears—after four months of inspections by a 1,400-man Anglo-American team—that that is what we had under Saddam Hussein.

What the enemy is fighting for seems far less gauzy. His goal: expel the Americans from Iraq. If we cannot define victory, our enemy can. And it is a sobering thought that no Arab or Islamic revolution that fought hard to expel a Western power has been defeated in 60 years.

The French were run out of Algeria after an eight-year war, and the allies they left behind were slaughtered. The Russians were expelled from Afghanistan after an eight-year occupation by

an Islamic *jihad* and nationalist uprising. The Israelis abandoned Lebanon after an 18-year occupation, unwilling to pay the continuing cost in Jewish blood of battling Hezbollah guerrillas.

Moreover, pro-Western monarchs in that part of the world—King Farouk in Egypt in 1952, King Feisel in Iraq in 1958, King Idris in Libya in 1968, Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia in 1975, the Shah of Iran in 1979—have all been overthrown in anti-Western coups.

Thus, while there are many models for how a Western power can be driven out of an Arab country, or a Western vassal overthrown, where is the model for an enduring Western victory in the Arab and Islamic world—in the last 50 years?

Kuwait, 1991, appears the best example. What were the elements of the triumph of Bush I in Desert Storm? First, his goal was to liberate an Arab nation, Kuwait, from an invading power. Second, he had the support of almost all Arab regimes. Arab troops from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria even fought alongside Americans. Yet, even then, the "Arab Street" seemed to side with Saddam. In this new war, however, Bush II suffers drawbacks his father did not.

First, America has never been so widely hated in the Arab world.

Second, the U.S. war on Iraq is seen in the Islamic world as a war of aggression waged on falsified charges that Saddam's Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and played a role in Sept. 11.

Third, where the U.S. was on the offensive in Desert Storm and in Operation Iraqi Freedom, we are now on the defensive. It is we who are the occupying power. Ours is the detested presence in an Arab capital.

Moreover, the tactics being used by the enemy are the same tactics used against the French in Algeria and the Israelis on the West Bank. Assassinate collaborators with terror attacks, such as on the UN headquarters and Jordanian embassy. Sting and infuriate the occupier by killing his soldiers, provoking him into lashing out and wounding and killing non-combatants, or even allies, like the Iraqi police in Fallujah. Thus, radicalize the people and polarize the nation between collaborators who side with the Americans and patriots and nationalists who gravitate to the resistance. Thus do we convert a terror war into a guerrilla war into a people's war. And down that long bloody road lies victory: the expulsion of the Americans and a regime of their own choosing.

It is the formula used by anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements from the Irish in 1919-1921, to the Irgun in Palestine, to the Mau Mau in Kenya, to the FALN in Algeria, to ZANU and ZAPU in Rhodesia, to the ANC in South Africa, to Hezbollah in Lebanon, to Hamas on the West Bank. The only way such movements have been defeated—in Puerto Rico in the 1950s and El Salvador in the 1980s—was when the Western power was able to enlist nationalism on its side.

In Iraq, we have not yet done that. Indeed, we appear to be losing the battle for hearts and minds. Nonetheless, to quote Dean Rusk, "We are there and we are committed." ■