

The Political Forum

*A review of social and political trends and events
impacting the world's financial markets*

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THEY SAID IT

"It was a ceremonious procession stepping to martial music, carrying flags and deadly weapons--a reminder, cast into a form as ritualistic and devotional as the ceremonies of a church, that the process of government, laboratory science, liberalism, and expertism must be depended upon sometime, somewhere, to reach a breaking point, at which breaking point the army takes over and the ancient battle begins once more. For this reason a military parade has a certain order and decorum that are tradition and unalterable."

From a short story by Donald Davidson entitled, "Some Day, In Old Charleston."

WHERE IS THIS MESS HEADED? I was born in 1940, so while I have no memories of World War II as it was actually happening, it was very much a part of my youth. My father returned from serving on a destroyer in the Pacific when I was five, and needless to say that was a big event in the lives of my mother, my sister and I. Many of the first movies I saw dealt with World War II – John Wayne, Van Johnson, William Holden, etc. And in the late 1940s, I spent hours in the public library looking at pictures of planes from that war. I knew them all, the Corsairs, the Mustangs, the British Spitfires, the dreaded Zeros. I built what were then called “stick models” of them.

I also spent many nights in that quiet and, as I remember it, dark Carnegie library reading novels about the war. One I remember well was called *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, about Jimmy Doolittle’s daring raid on the Japanese mainland early in the war. I was enthralled. And I listened while my Father and other men told stories about the war, and about other people they knew who, like my Dad, had “been in the thick of it.” I also remember overhearing discussions between my father and mother about the Holocaust when details of it began to be made public. I didn’t really understand it at the time. But, of course, I don’t today either.

I bring this up because I have been thinking lately about one observation that was commonly made back then, which for some reason has always stayed with me. That was that Hitler had

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telegraphed his intentions in his book *Mein Kampf* and nobody had listened, and that if people had listened, and acted on what they were hearing, much bloodshed could have been avoided.

It turns out that this wasn't entirely true. Many people in the 1930s did listen and understood exactly what Hitler was planning. The problem was that no one in a position of power had the courage and will to confront the aggressor before he was able to kill millions of innocent people.

So, when on March 8, 1936 Hitler violated the peace treaty that ended World War I and sent his army into the demilitarized Rhineland the world was "taken by surprise." Yet Hitler himself later noted that "My program from the first was to abolish the Treaty of Versailles . . . I have written it thousands of times. No human being has ever declared or recorded what he wanted more often than me."

What followed was three and half years of appeasement in the face of numerous other outrages to the norms of international behavior. Finally, Hitler's troops invaded Poland, and the world was once again "taken by surprise," much the way Americans were "taken by surprise" when a gang of maniacal Muslims attacked the world trade center *the second time* on Sept. 11, 2001.

Of course, this is all history now, which numerous wise men have been given credit for having defined as "just one damn thing after another." Yet another wise man, George Santayana, once said, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." And that is my subject for the week. You see, I believe that it is becoming increasingly obvious that once again those who are in positions of power around the world are drastically underestimating the threat facing them from an enemy that can collectively and truthfully proclaim, just as Hitler did, that "no human being has ever declared or recorded what he wanted more often than me."

These proclamations of hatred for and threats against America, Americans, and "the West" spew forth daily from remote caves in the mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan, from mosques in Brooklyn, Detroit, Tampa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Seattle, London, Paris, Riyadh, Cairo, Karachi, Manila, and thousands of towns and cities in between; from Islamic schools throughout the United States and the world; from a vast web of militant organizations and internet sites dedicated to radical Islam, and from newspapers and radio and television stations worldwide.

One by one the imams, sheiks, preachers, teachers, muezzins, muftis, mutawaa, "discerners of good and evil," "spiritual leaders," "visiting scholars," "jihadist warriors," and everyday nobodies from the "Arab Street" proclaim their intentions to deal "death to America." Osama bin Laden put it this way in his famed fatwah of February 1998.

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies--civilians and military--is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it . . . We – with God's help – call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson.

But one need not look to Osama for such insights. Check out this story dated May 13, 2004 from the website of the *Middle East Media Research Institute*. This particular murderous “holy man” is from that great and well-known citadel of love and peace, the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sudayyis, the Saudi government appointed imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, will give a series of lectures in Canada next week and attend the Islamic Studies of North America conference in Toronto. Al-Sudayyis’s position is one of the most prestigious in Sunni Islam. Thus, his sermons hold significant weight throughout the Islamic world.

The themes of his sermons are characterized by confrontation toward non-Muslims. Al-Sudayyis calls Jews “scum of the earth” and “monkeys and pigs” who should be “annihilated.” Other enemies of Islam, he says, are “worshippers of the cross” and “idol-worshipping Hindus” who should be fought . . . yadda, yadda, yadda

Or try these two paragraphs from a recent column by Mark Steyn in the April 24, 2004 issue of *The Spectator*.

The other day, Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad [known as “bin Laden’s man in London”] told Lisbon’s *Publica* magazine that a group of London Islamists are “ready to launch a big operation on British soil.” “We don’t make a distinction between civilians and non-civilians, innocents and non-innocents,” he said, clarifying the ground rules. “Only between Muslims and unbelievers. And the life of an unbeliever has no value.” The cleric added he expected to see the banner of Islam flying in Downing Street. “I believe one day that is going to happen. Because this is my country, I like living here,” he said. “If they believe in democracy, who are they afraid of? Let Omar Bakri benefit from democracy!”

Or take a look at this excerpt from an April 27, 2004 article in the *New York Post* by Amir Taheri concerning the poison that is spreading throughout Saudi Arabia.

From the moment they wake up until the moment they sleep, Saudis are bombarded with religion, with not a single day of respite. Every evening they watch television that sings the praises of martyrdom, which means killing some Israelis, Americans or more recently, Iraqis in suicide attacks.

Saudi state TV now devotes long programs to the effects of terror attacks on the kingdom itself. It gives officials unrestricted air time to lament the attacks and to condemn “the evil does.” But all such programs are immediately followed by others in which fire-eating preachers talk about “our Palestine,” “the beauty of martyrdom” and the ugly soul of the Western powers. The 9/11 attacks and the suicide-murder of Israelis sitting in cafes or riding buses to work are presented with a mixture of admiration and awe. The criminals who are killing Iraqis in the name of Islam are presented as “fighters against occupation.”

Now I know that the United States is spending billions of dollars in the fight against this threat; that it has fought one war in Afghanistan and is fighting another at this moment in Iraq; that it

has established an entirely new cabinet-level department to take the lead in defending the homeland from terrorists; that the FBI, the CIA, all the various components of the new Homeland Defense agency, as well as state and local law enforcement agencies across the country have committed massive resources to the challenge; and that many other nations around the world are taking similar, if somewhat less ambitious actions.

Thus, I am aware that the argument could be made that this threat is far from being ignored; that, on the contrary, the United States, at least, is responding to it aggressively.

To which I would respond with three questions, Will Americans be “taken by surprise” when these murderers hit once again on U.S. soil, this time possibly with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, or perhaps with an onslaught of suicide bombings? Will those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting Americans from such an attack be able truthfully to say if it happens that they had “done enough” in response to past attacks and to the continuous threats of more to come from the same people? And finally, is Europe doing enough? For, regarding this last question, it is certain that despite the friction that exists today between America and some of the major countries in Europe, the United States could ill afford to have any one of them thrown into social and economic turmoil by unchecked attacks of terrorism from their resident Muslims.

Steve and I have addressed the European problem with militant Islam numerous times in these pages, so I won't belabor it this week, except to note that there is no question that there is a growing fear among Europeans that the large, unassimilated Muslim populations in their cities are becoming increasingly radicalized. The *International Herald Tribune* put it this way in an April 27, 2004 article entitled “Call to Jihad Rising On Europe's Streets.”

On working-class streets of old industrial cities like Crawley, Luton, Birmingham and Manchester, and in the Arab enclaves of Germany, France, Switzerland and other parts of Europe, intelligence officials say a fervor for militancy is intensifying and becoming more open . . . Hundreds of young Muslim men are answering the call of extremists into groups affiliated or aligned with Al Qaeda, intelligence and counter terrorism officials in the region say . . . Even more worrying, said a senior British counter terrorism official, is that the level of “chatter” – communications among suspected terrorist figures and their supporters – has markedly increased since bin Laden's warning to Europe this month. The spike in chatter has given rise to acute worries that planning is advanced toward another strike in Europe . . .

Some Muslim recruits are going to Iraq, counter terrorism officials in Europe say, but more are remaining home, possibly joining cells that could help with terror logistics or begin operations like the one that came to notice when the British police seized 540 kilograms, of 1,200 pounds, of ammonium nitrate, a key bomb ingredient, in late March, and arrested nine Pakistani-Britons, five of whom have been charged with trying to build a terrorist bomb . . .

Of course it is possible that these angry Islamists are all talk and no action, incapable or unwilling to launch a truly devastating strike or series of strikes that would kill tens of thousands

of people and/or seriously disrupt the society and economy of either the United States or a major European nation.

It is possible that terrorism future will look much like terrorism past, i.e., long periods of relative inactivity punctuated with an occasional spectacular, horrific event, severe enough to kill several hundred, or perhaps even a few thousand people, but not bad enough, in the grand scheme of things, to prompt either the United States or the Europeans to take actions that are significantly more aggressive than those that are already being taken. Perhaps Northern Ireland is the model.

It is also possible that the Islamist movement will simply peter out, like a particularly noxious fad; that these young religious zealots will collectively grow tired of the fight, get jobs, marry and raise families like some sort of aging, beer-bellied gang of Hell's Angels. Or possibly America's current efforts, as described above, will lead to their defeat. My guess is that most Americans, who tend to be an optimistic lot, subscribe to one or a combination of several of these reasonably pacific outlooks.

But frankly I doubt that that is what the future holds. This enemy is, after all, the largest and the deadliest quasi-religious cult the world has ever seen. It is a cult that has virtually unlimited financing, coming from millions of individuals worldwide who give small amounts of their income to the cause via a variety of Islamic "charities," as well as from the oil-rich individuals and Middle-East governments, many of which at the same time feign friendship with the United States, thus lending credence to old fable about the fox and the scorpion.

It is a cult that has a presence in every corner of the globe, including every major city in the United States; access to some of the most dangerous and destructive weapons ever known to man; and is fed by a vast, international recruiting network that introduces thousands of new zealots to the cause each day. It is a cult whose most militant members consider all who do not subscribe to their uncompromising and homicidal worldview to be non-humans who can and should be killed without remorse or pangs of conscience

I would be more optimistic about the future if there were signs that a significant, moderate element was gaining strength within the worldwide Muslim community. Surely there are large numbers of Muslims in the United States and around the world who disagree with the purveyors of militant Islam and wish to live in peace and harmony with individuals of other faiths. In fact, I think one can safely assume that a vast majority of Muslims worldwide are appalled at the militant movement that is metastasizing within their ranks.

The unfortunate factor, in my opinion, and the one that feeds my pessimism, is that the great majority of these moderates would appear to be the modern day equivalent of the "good Germans," who in the years leading up to World War II did not personally approve of the excesses of the Nazi regime but remained silent as they occurred, not wanting to "get involved," hoping against hope that the storm would pass without affecting them.

Thomas Mann, in his great novel about Germany's descent into evil, *Dr. Faustus*, portrays this "good German" in the character of Dr. Kranich who, while watching Adrian Leverkühn, Mann's metaphor for Germany during that period, says the following.

This man is mad. There has been for a long time no doubt of it, and it is most regrettable that in our circle the profession of alienist is not represented. I, as a numismatist, feel myself entirely incompetent in this situation.

I do not make this observations with rancor, but with a cold recognition of the eerie silence that engulfs the Muslim world, from Riyadh to Detroit, from Paris to Washington, following each act of outrageous barbarism committed by the militant murderers; the eerie silence that prevails when these individuals make Islam out to be nothing more than a barbaric cult each time they cry “God is Great” as they sever the head of an innocent man, or defile the dead body of another. Where, one wonders, is the outrage among the “good Muslims?” Or do they just not want to “get involved?”

I make this observation because I have studied the large organizations like CAIR, AMC, and numerous others that purport to represent Muslim interests in the United States and whose websites proclaim their loyalty to America and its values, but whose senior ranks are filled with men whose rhetoric and actions reveal them to be strong proponents of militant, murderous Islamic movements and enemies of America’s efforts to protect itself from these gangs of thugs.

In short, it does not appear, to me at least, that militant Islam is inclined to give up easily or commit mass suicide around a giant pitcher of poison-laced Kool-Aid. Instead, I am coming to believe that somewhere in the future looms what Samuel Huntingdon described some years ago as a true “clash of civilizations,” brought on by a terrorist spectacular that prompts a practical and emotional response from the United States that is much more comprehensive and aggressive than anything seen to date.

And when it comes, my guess is that Americans will, once again, be “taken by surprise.” And the politicians in Washington, no matter which party occupies the White House, will once again proclaim, as they did after September 11, 2001, that they had done “everything they could,” while at the same time agreeing to implement extensive new measures to prevent future occurrences. Most probably these new measures will involve the expulsion of vast numbers of militant Muslim’s who are living in the United States, pre-identified by the FBI under the provisions of the Patriot Act; military attacks on nations such as Syria and Iran, who are known to provide safe harbor, money, and training to terrorist groups; and a policy, such as that already adopted by Israel, of assassinating leaders of terrorist organizations around the world, whether they are residing in a “friendly” nation or a hostile one.

And no one will ask why these and other newly adopted measures weren’t taken earlier, given that, to paraphrase Hitler once again, no evil movement has ever declared or recorded what it wanted more often than militant Islam has. One of America’s great political parties will avoid the issue because everyone will know that its members would have fought tooth and nail to prevent any such actions. And the other party will avoid the issue because everyone will know that its members lacked the political courage to challenge the other party.

There will, of course, be a commission to investigate who dropped the ball. And the sons-a-bitches in one party will blame the sons-a-bitches in the other, and vice versa, while the rest of us will be left to mourn the dead and wonder how such a great nation came to be led by such a pathetic batch of fools.

ABU GHRAIB: ASK WRONG QUESTIONS, GET WRONG ANSWERS.

Generally speaking, I have little sympathy for those who cry that Washington has become too negative and too politicized. More often than not, such complaints are little more than the whining of pampered prima donnas, unhappy that things are not going their way. When, for example, politicians and pundits complain about “negativity,” they are almost always merely upset that someone has had the temerity to disagree with them, or to challenge them on the merits of their beliefs. As for politicization, what, pray tell, do they expect? This is Washington, after all, and politics and ideology lie at the heart of every issue that legislators choose to pursue.

Occasionally, though, the negativity and political jostling can get to be too acute, thereby affecting policy adversely. I would argue, for example, that the recent public hearings held by the 9/11 Commission provided strong indications that this potentially important inquiry is going to yield few important insights, due primarily to the fact that the commission itself has become seeped in political posturing and personal enmities.

The ongoing political debate over the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison would appear to be another good example of an important inquiry being buried in political garbage. Yes, questions are being asked and answers are being offered. But they are neither the right questions nor the right answers. For a variety of reasons, including political correctness, the Democrats’ desperation to retake the White House, and Republicans’ desire to shield the President, much of the nattering, debating, and “reforming” has produced nothing that helps the nation and its military address the real issues raised in that Baghdad prison.

For starters, there is the question of whether the events captured on film at Abu Ghraib might indicate that there is a problem with the modern military’s policy of indiscriminately commingling the sexes.

Last week, I noted that there were clearly problems with the over-sexualization of the guards at Abu Ghraib, and I suggested that perhaps the fact that men and women were in such strange and tense circumstances with one another might have had something to do with that. Given what we have learned over the past week, I tend to believe this even more strongly.

Throughout the week, tales of lurid sexual behavior at Abu Ghraib have been made public. After lawmakers on Capitol Hill were shown the additional pictures and videos taken at the prison, many described scenes of group sex, soldiers having sex with multiple partners, and the performance of sex acts in front of prisoners. On Thursday, *The New York Post*, quoting military sources, described the events at Abu Ghraib as a veritable “orgy.”

At the beginning of the week, budding porn star Lynndie England, the infamous “woman with leash” denied that she had done anything wrong, and told the media that she was a helpless victim who was “just following orders.” By the end of the week, with lawmakers, Pentagon sources, and media types all describing her various and sundry sexcapades, her defense had changed a bit. The pictures and videos of young Pfc. England, her family claimed, did not reflect the nasty, awful scenes others alleged, but merely Lynndie and her boyfriend – whom she “loves very much” – enjoying one another’s company, so to speak. And while such a distinction might make her poor parents feel better about their daughter’s behavior, it doesn’t change the fact that what she did was grossly inappropriate, violated the Army’s code of conduct, damaged

the credibility and effectiveness of our forces in Iraq, and *likely never would have been possible if the sexes were segregated in active duty combat situations.*

As I noted last week, columnist Linda Chavez was raked over the coals by the traditional coalition of feminists and other liberals for even suggesting that military “cohabitation” might not be such a great idea, especially under wartime conditions. Never mind that this has little or nothing to do with old arguments about women’s fitness for combat (e.g. Newt Gingrich’s infamous contention that women in fox holes would suffer yeast infections), and has everything to do with men and how differently they behave when women are introduced into a previously all-male condition.

Yet, observers can rest assured that no one on either side of the aisle in Washington will risk being viewed as “anti-woman” or radically reactionary by raising the question as to whether the policy of commingling sexes might be in need of some modifications. Thus the forces of political correctness will triumph once again,

These same forces, again in the manifestation of feminists and other liberal agitators, will likely also silence any questioning of what role, if any, that gender-based promotion played in this mess. We know, for example, that General Janis Karpinski was in charge of the soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison. We know as well, from the various military reports on the torture there, that a great part of the problem was that Karpinski had no control over those soldiers. As the AP noted in its story on Major General Antonio Taguba’s report on the torture, “the mistreatment resulted from faulty leadership, a ‘lack of discipline, no training whatsoever and no supervision.’ . . . Without mentioning names, Taguba pointed to . . . Karpinski of the 800th Military Police Brigade for failed command leadership.” General Taguba recommended that Karpinski be dismissed for cause.

Now, we also know that Karpinski worked her way up in the military hierarchy throughout the 1990s, and that a number of groups, some more credible than others, have suggested that this was a decade during which a good number of women officers, like Karpinski, were promoted beyond their abilities in the interests of political correctness.

Given all of this, it might be worthwhile to ask several related questions, the most important being whether, during the 1990s, DACOWITS (the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services) pushed the Clinton administration to pursue a feminist agenda in the military, as many critics have alleged. If so, one might ask whether gender-based promotions were part of that agenda. And if so, whether the Clinton administration complied, again as many critics have alleged? Should Janis Karpinski have been promoted to Brigadier general? Did political correctness play a role in the promotions of any other officers whose competence (or lack thereof) might further damage the American efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere?

Of course, there is no chance that anyone anywhere will ask such questions. To do so would be tantamount to political suicide, as the questioner would be instantly and forever branded a sexist, misogynistic boor.

It is quite possible that such inquiries would show that the critics are wrong and that the military, despite the political influences exerted upon it over the last decade, resisted the inclination to

promote less-competent women in the interests of gender equity. This would, in turn, bolster the confidence of both lawmakers and the public in the current leadership of the armed forces. But no one will ever know if the critics are right, and if the officer corps is fit, because no one will ever dare to ask the question.

Another question that will not be asked is whether the fact that Abu Ghraib was under the control of a Reserve unit played any role in the abuse scandal there. As above, we know from various military reports that a number of the soldiers at Abu Ghraib were not properly trained, either in the specifics of the Geneva Convention or in the specifics of their job responsibilities. And we also know that a number of well informed critics believe that Reserve units are notoriously unprepared to be thrust into high-stress, high-responsibility situations such as running a prison filled with significant prisoners. An anonymous “active duty Army officer” put it this way in an e-mail posted to the *National Review* web site by Jonah Goldberg:

The Guard/Reserve simply has lower levels of standards in every area, from entry to retention to promotion. I said to my wife as soon as I saw the first picture, before I knew who they were, “Those are guard or reserve.” Putting reserve units in these kinds of situations is a bad idea. It is one thing to put them in Iraq doing support – another thing entirely to have them doing full time prisoner control.

The problem here is that no one will want to be the guy who faults the Reserves. The last thing that anyone on the Democratic side of the aisle wants is to be seen as questioning the contributions of any American soldier, particularly while troops are on foreign soil and during an election year. The Democrats aren’t stupid, and they know that to criticize America’s soldiers, Reservists or otherwise, would be to play to type and to provide the GOP ammunition to question their dedication to the military.

On the Republican side, there is even greater incentive to avoid the issue of Reservists. For starters, during his recent Senate testimony, side by side with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, Joint Chiefs Chairman General Richard Myers declared emphatically that Reservists and active duty soldiers are all held to the same standards, receive the same training, and are expected to perform at the same level. That, of course, is what he has to say. This administration could hardly confess that it deliberately placed unprepared or under prepared troops in harm’s way. In any case, based on Myers’ assertions, it is the administration’s official position that Reserve units are every bit as capable as active duty units.

More to the point, President Bush spent the entire spring essentially defending the honor of Reservists and Guardsmen everywhere. Recall that Senator Kerry, DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe, and a host of others accused Bush of dodging his duty by joining the Texas National Guard, rather than serving on active duty in Vietnam. The President’s reply, which is that he served his country ably and honorably in the Guard, has proven sufficient for most Americans. But for a member of the GOP now to question the combat fitness of Reservists – albeit not their general fitness to serve but their fitness to serve in a high-profile, non-support role – would be to concede the opposition’s claim that the President did “something less” thirty years ago.

Finally, it appears unlikely that anyone will ever ask what are perhaps the most pertinent questions of the entire Bush Presidency, namely what is wrong with American intelligence

gathering and how do you fix it? Everyone is now keenly aware of the crucial lapses in intelligence that both permitted the 9/11 hijackers to perpetrate their murderous plans and led the Bush administration to justify the war with Iraq on the grounds that Saddam was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction. Among other things, Abu Ghraib shows that these intelligence failures were hardly flukes, and that even with all of the resources of the nation mustered in pursuit of the same end, American intelligence services are too ill-equipped, ill-trained, ill-prepared, and poorly managed to be effective.

The Taguba report confirms that the abuses at Abu Ghraib took place in an environment in which military intelligence was desperately seeking any information that might help to quell the Iraqi insurgency and thereby to keep American soldiers safe. But we know that the vast majority of prisoners at Abu Ghraib were held by mistake. And those who were actual insurgents (or terrorists), those who were held in cellblocks 1-A and 1-B where the infamous pictures were taken, were generally lower level functionaries who quite likely knew very little about planning and organizing operations. There is no question that many of those abused were murderous thugs, but even today, the best that military intelligence can claim is that these prisoners “could” have information important enough to justify aggressive interrogation techniques. Of course, we also know that the “interrogation techniques” developed there were more creepy than menacing.

Now, I am hardly a bleeding heart who objects to turning the screws on detainees if doing so will yield useful information, particularly information that might save American lives. But I’m not entirely sure how getting a bunch of Arab men, who likely know nothing, to pretend to have sex with one another will yield anything useful. If these were the best ideas these guys could dream up, then the effort in Iraq is probably in deeper trouble than we know.

But no one appears likely to ask how exactly these shortcomings in intelligence might be remedied. Indeed, everyone on Capitol Hill is too busy trying to determine whether it’s too mean to keep terrorists awake for a couple of days to ask why our intelligence gathering techniques are so transparently pathetic. It is more important, apparently, for us to know what Donald Rumsfeld knew and when he knew it than it is to determine why, for example, George Tenet is still Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is clear from what happened before 9/11, during the buildup to war in Iraq, and at Abu Ghraib prison that the American intelligence community is woefully unable to penetrate Arab culture to gather human intelligence, either at home or abroad; woefully unable to analyze what information can be gleaned from non-human intelligence sources; and woefully unprepared and unwilling to take the steps necessary to fix its shortcomings.

But no one will ask about any of those things. Apparently, there are more important things about which to worry.

THE POLITICAL FORUM

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