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THEY SAID IT

The phrase “energy security” has evolved in great measure since the 1950s when it was used to address the need to safeguard adequate supplies would be available in the event of war. Today, the focus of energy policy has moved beyond the military to include the effect of supply interruptions and oil price shocks on economic performance in the US and in other major importing countries. It is now a popular wisdom that the events of the 1970s, including the Arab oil embargo and the Iranian revolution, reduced Western GDP growth rates and generated the highest rate of inflation in US post war history, throwing the West into recession. This line of reasoning enlarged the scope of energy security concerns. In addition, the term energy security also reflects longer-term concerns for the continuing availability of inexpensive oil....For the US, energy security means both guarding the domestic economy for changes in prices, inflation, economic growth rates and wealth transfers but also protecting the international economy and international financial systems. However, energy security is not solely an economic question but enters the realm of the political to the extent that large increases in income are distributed to countries that will use the money to facilitate their support for terrorist and dissident groups, to increase the size of their military and to speed the pace of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

“The Political, Economic, Social, Cultural, and Religious Trends in the Middle East and the Gulf and Their Impact on Energy Supply, Security and Pricing,” The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, April 1997.

ALL ABOUT OIL? SAY IT ISN'T SO, ALAN.

To put it mildly, Captain Renault’s “shock” over learning that gambling was going on at Rick’s Café Américain doesn’t even compare to the shock we experienced last week when we learned that former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan believes that the war in Iraq is “largely about oil.” “Mein Gott, ” we moaned. “Who knew?”

Or more appropriately, who didn’t know? Of course, it is all about oil. Does anyone think the United States would give a damn about the Middle East if there were no oil there? Does anyone believe that the Saudis would be tinkling in gold toilets and financing terrorist schools all over the world if they weren’t sitting on all that oil? Or that anyone except a few scholars who study arcane religions would know any more about Wahhabiism than they know about the snake handlers in Appalachia? Come on. For the record, we discussed this shocking revelation as follows in the August 8, 2005 issue of this newsletter.

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Another goal that is said to be high on the list of the terrorists is to drive the “infidels” out of “Arab lands.” Now, this too seems to me to be a bit of a stretch, somewhat akin to getting the “Princes” of the “Royal House of Saud” out of the high priced warehouses of the Upper East Side of New York City.

After all, the “Arab lands,” from which these people want to expel everyone except Arabs who do not subscribe to the same outlandish beliefs as they do, happen to be located on top of the richest oil deposits in the world, at a time when the world happens to be especially thirsty for oil.

J. Paul Getty, who knew something about oil, once noted that while it may be true that the meek shall inherit the earth, he felt that it was unlikely that they would inherit the subsoil rights.

And this way, two weeks later.

In the meantime, Iraq is going to be a bloody hellhole. After all, the wealth and power that the winners there will eventually control is beyond dreams of avarice. The wonder isn't that people will kill each other attempting to win this prize, it is that some Americans are surprised by this . . . And every day I find myself wondering at the dopey American liberals who smugly charge that “it's all about oil,” but who are really too stupid to grasp what it means to be “all about oil” in a world where oil sells for \$60 a barrel and both price and demand are increasing daily, where armies no longer run on their stomachs but on oil, and where the largest economies in the world would collapse overnight if the oil supply were to slow, much less cease.

Yes, of course, American involvement in Iraq is about democracy too. President Bush didn't lie to us about that. But, whether he knows it or not, he cares about democracy in the Middle East because the Middle East has oil, lots of it. After all, he's not all that

broken up about the lack of voting booths in, say, Zimbabwe. And this isn't because the Zimbabweans are descendents of Ham and the Arabs from Shem. It's about oil.

And this, whether liberals know it or not, is why they are losing the on-going political war in Washington over the on-going hot war in Iraq. Because the fact is that it was a lot easier to walk away from the falling dominoes in Southeast Asia than it would be to walk away from the oil in Iraq. And, not coincidentally, it is also the reason that the United States military is going to be in Iraq for a long time, no matter who sits in the White House. Once again, we've said this numerous times in these pages, including the following from an article that ran last May entitled “The Long War.”

It may be true that armies run on their stomach. But the American economy runs on oil, imported oil, lots of it, and this requires that the pumps keep pumping throughout the Middle East. More and more, the American economy also runs on trade, international trade, lots of it, and this requires open markets and open societies in all corners of the globe, unhindered by terrorists and terrorism. American politics runs on prosperity, which requires continuous economic growth in the same way that a shark requires forward movement to breathe, and economic growth requires imported oil and international trade, lots of it.

It doesn't matter who occupies the Oval Office in January 2008, that person's first political consideration will be to keep the American public continuously happy, and happiness in America today is fueled by continuous prosperity, which, as we said earlier, is fueled by imported oil, international trade, and security for American persons and property, both at home and abroad. And this means aggressively engaging al-Qaeda, not just day-to-day, but year-to-year, for many years to come, whether the Democrats like it or not.

Now we want to apologize in advance for quoting ourselves at length in this piece. But, in light of the controversy swirling around General Petraeus' Congressional testimony last week, we thought this week would be a good time to drag out some of our past statements about this conflict and how it is likely to unfold. Which brings up the following.

Last week, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an op-ed piece by Kimberley A. Strassel entitled "Political Surge", which began with the following statement: "Had anyone suggested six weeks ago that the GOP would emerge from the Petraeus hearing on the political front-foot, they'd have been laughed at all the way to Anbar."

Now we have the utmost respect and admiration for Ms. Strassel. But we would like to point out that, seven weeks and three days prior to the date of her column, we wrote an article entitled "Dare We Say That Things Might Be Looking Up" in which we answered the rhetorical question, "What could go right?" with the following: "that public opinion about the war in Iraq could begin to swing in President Bush's favor this fall, and this could discombobulate the Democrats enough to put them on the defensive going into the 2008 election." Expanding on this thought, we said the following.

A decisive battle will be joined in September when General Petraeus comes to town to defend America's involvement in Iraq against those who claim that the war is lost. Democrats know that the outcome of this fight will not be determined by the facts on ground in Iraq. It will be a public relations war, pure and simple. General Petraeus will portray the initiative as a success to date. Democrats will charge that it is a failure. Both sides will use the same facts in support of their contention. The pollsters will tell us who won.

Several months ago we would have bet on the Democrats. After all, when it comes to defending the war, President Bush and

his fellow Republicans have proven to be exceedingly inept, tone deaf to the pride, patriotism, fears, concerns, hopes, dreams, and traditions that shape the attitudes of the average American when it comes to war and the wages of war.

But in the past few months, the Democrats have climbed way out on the limb of defeatism, competing with each other for who can make the most convincing case for surrender. And while this may play well with the folks at Moveon.org, our guess is that as ordinary Americans focus on the practical ramifications of such a move, more and more of them will view it as a radical and disgusting choice. Our belief is that Democrats are beginning to sense this. They are getting edgy as "the surge" moves forward, which makes them gloomy, which makes them edgier, which makes them gloomier, which historically has not been a winning trait among American politicians.

The White House, on the other hand, has sharpened up its act a little on the public relations front with the recent deployment of Frances Fragos Townsend, the photogenic, articulate, and exceedingly well informed White House Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. In case you missed it, Ms. Townsend is a steel magnolia, if there ever was one. And while we don't expect her to win the PR war single handedly, we do expect her to soften up the already befuddled Democrats in the days before the cavalry arrives in the form of General Petraeus, whom we expect to more than hold his own against the likes of Nancy, Harry, Jack, Hillary, John, and Barack.

Now our purpose here is not entirely self-congratulatory, although we must admit to an occasional need to sing our own praises. But more importantly, we want to stress, in light of all the news last week about General Petraeus' visit to the

United States, the main thought contained in all these passages, namely that this war is going to go on for a long time yet. We put it this way in an article published last April.

The fact of the matter is that the United States military is likely to be in Iraq for a long time yet, regardless of who wins the election in November '08. Indeed, it is improbable that even Barack Obama, as president, would be able to effect a speedy withdrawal from that beleaguered nation. Our guess is that after having the requisite visits with the leaders of America's allies in the Middle East and having been fully briefed by his own military on the dire impact that the collapse of a friendly government in Iraq would have on the security of the region, he would decide upon a "flexible timetable of withdrawal." This timetable would acknowledge his pledge to "get out" but would have the practical effect of guaranteeing a U.S. military presence in Iraq for a very long time.

A Democrat would handle things in Iraq differently, of course. There would be negotiations. Peace talks. Shuttle diplomacy. Obsequious visits to the lairs of tyrants and killers. Admissions of Western guilt dating back to the Crusades, accompanied by apologies and concessions, probably in the form of forcing Israel to further weaken its defenses.

But a Democratic president would quickly learn, among other things, that it is one thing to give speeches about pulling out of Iraq to friendly crowds during an election campaign, and it is quite another to take on the full responsibility for the consequences of abandoning a friendly Iraqi government in face of considerable strategic danger and little or no strategic advantage. He or she would also learn that despite being the "the most powerful leader in the world," the president

of the United States does not call all the shots in the "war on terror," that this task is shared by the nation's enemies.

In short, he or she would have to deal with the cold, hard reality that this war is like Sartre's delightful little play, *No Exit*. In Sartre's case, hell was being in a small room with "other people" forever, with no way out. In this case, hell is being stuck in an increasingly small world with Islamic fanatics. And no way out.

Our message here is not that the future will be little more than a simple, line-graph extension of the past. There are surprises yet to come, probably some very big surprises. What can be said, however, is that one of these surprises is not going to be that the Americans will turn the oil riches of the Middle East over to militant Islam. It may be politically incorrect to say so, as Allan Greenspan noted, but everything Americans do from the time they get up in the morning and plug in the coffee pot until they watch the late news and go to bed at night is "all about oil," so it shouldn't surprise anyone that they would do anything it takes to keep the world's oil supply out of the hands of people who wish them ill.

THE MANCHURIAN PARTY.

In 1959, the author Richard Condon published a work that would make him famous, *The Manchurian Candidate*. The book was successful enough in its own right, but became a true sensation three years later when the film version, starring Frank Sinatra, Janet Leigh, and Angela Lansbury, was released. The movie became an instant classic and today is included on scores of "Top 100 motion pictures of all time" lists, including the American Film Institute's celebrated "100 Years, 100 Films" compilation.

For those of you who don't know, *The Manchurian Candidate* is a psychological thriller in which a group of American soldiers fighting in Korea is captured, brainwashed, and then released by Soviet agents.

The soldiers are implanted with false memories and come to believe that one of their own, Sergeant Raymond Shaw, is a war hero who saved the lives of the men in his platoon. As it turns out, however, Shaw, the unlikable scion of a prominent family, is really a “sleeper agent,” acutely brainwashed by the Communists in a plot to infiltrate one of their own into the White House and thus to takeover the United States.

Now, if the plot of *The Manchurian Candidate* sounds to you like the life story of the junior Senator from Massachusetts, John Forbes Kerry, then you’re not alone. Though there are a few notable differences between the two tales, the similarities are indeed striking. Kerry, like Raymond Shaw, is the unpleasant heir of one of the nation’s most prominent families who fought in Asia against the communists and returned a “hero.” His tale, like Shaw’s, centers on the White House and the ultimately unsuccessful pursuit of this nation’s (and the world’s) most powerful political office. Most notably, of course, both Kerry’s story and *The Manchurian Candidate* involve brainwashing and the extensive use of communist mind-control.

Or at least we assume Kerry’s story does. How else, exactly, would one explain the Senator’s penchant for making the communists’ arguments, for citing their sources, and for tirelessly pursuing their goals?

Take, for example, that Kerry’s actions in support of (and as a leader of) the group Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). VVAW was an organization with communist sympathies that had, according to various reports, some level of contact with the Soviets. There is no question that the VVAW, principally through its Winter Soldiers Investigation, supported the communists’ goals in Indochina by convincing the American people and indeed the world that U.S. servicemen were guilty of gross misconduct and horrific war crimes. Kerry et al helped to turn domestic public opinion against the American military and against the war in Southeast Asia, leading eventually to American withdrawal from the region and total victory on the part of communist North Vietnam. As Kerry’s fellow former

swift-boat commander John O’Neill put it, Kerry’s “misrepresentations played a significant role in creating the negative and false image of Vietnam vets that has persisted for over three decades.”

We now know that Kerry met with the notorious Madame Nguyen Thi Binh at the Paris Peace Accords, *while still a Naval Reserve officer*, and then returned to the United States to champion Madame Binh’s plan and to urge President Nixon to accept her terms. Kerry’s testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee in 1971 was devastating, both to the war effort and to troop morale, and was even reportedly played repeatedly by the North Vietnamese to help break the will of their American prisoners. Today, the politically ambitious Kerry concedes that at least some of his testimony was the result of youthful exuberance and was “over the top.”

After the war, Kerry continued his support of communists and communist goals, meeting early in his Senate career with the Nicaraguan Marxist and the leader of the Sandinistas, Daniel Ortega. Kerry, along with fellow traveler (and fellow Senator) Tom Harkin, carried Ortega’s cease-fire proposal back to President Reagan in Washington, declaring that he was willing “to take the risk in the effort to put to test the good faith of the Sandinistas.” Kerry spent most of the rest of 1980s opposing the nuclear weapons programs and other national security initiatives introduced by President Reagan that we now know were critical in defeating communism and destroying the Soviet empire.

Of course, the fall of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union didn’t exactly stop the good Senator from using his old, dog-eared copy of the Marxist handbook as a reference guide for his public policy positions. Last month, Lt. General Ion Mihai Pacepa, a self-described “old KGB hand,” the onetime head of Romanian foreign intelligence, and the highest-ranking Soviet-bloc official ever to defect, wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* column that the effort undertaken by Kerry and his fellow Democrats to discredit and smear President Bush is textbook Soviet misdirection:

Sowing the seeds of anti-Americanism by discrediting the American president was one of the main tasks of the Soviet-bloc intelligence community during the years I worked at its top levels. This same strategy is at work today, but it is regarded as bad manners to point out the Soviet parallels. For communists, only the leader counted, no matter the country, friend or foe. At home, they deified their own ruler -- as to a certain extent still holds true in Russia. Abroad, they asserted that a fish starts smelling from the head, and they did everything in their power to make the head of the Free World stink.

Also last month, Kerry, in the grand tradition of communist genocide deniers, declared that after American troops pulled out of Southeast Asia, the "bloodbath" many predicted simply "didn't happen." When he was called out for his ignorance of or duplicity on the matter of the slaughter, "re-education," torture, and massive dislocation that took place at the hands of various communist regimes after American withdrawal from Vietnam, Kerry hedged a bit, but then justified himself with the claim that as bad as the "killing fields" were, they were not nearly as awful as the hell wrought by the Americans prior to 1973. According to Kerry, 450,000 civilians and 1.1 million soldiers were killed in Vietnam in the eight-years prior to American withdrawal.

R.T. Barber, a reader of and correspondent with James Taranto, the editor of the *Wall Street Journal's* OpinionJournal.com, thought Kerry's numbers sounded strange, and after a little digging, he discovered why. Barber reported the following:

I just got around to reading Kerry's attempt to extract himself from his latest verbal quagmire and was stunned at his statement that "450,000 civilians and 1.1 million soldiers were killed" in the eight years preceding the U.S. withdrawal. One of your readers, Betty Tolsma from Shertz, Texas (home to many airmen serving at Randolph Air Force Base),

wrote that "Mr. Kerry needs to give academic sources for the civilian (450,000) and military (1.1 million) war deaths which he cites in his response to James Taranto's account of the post-Vietnam debacle."

The Department of Defense figures on U.S. Vietnam War casualties show 47,424 "total hostile deaths" and 58,209 "total in-theater deaths." So from where was the 1.1 million figure derived?

I suspected that South Vietnamese military casualties exceeded U.S. military casualties, but the U.S. Army reported that "South Vietnamese military deaths exceeded 200,000," which if added to U.S. casualties falls far short of the senator's number. A May 2004 report on the differences and similarities between the Vietnamese and Iraq conflicts published by the U.S. Army War College includes the following passage on page 13:

"In April 1995 the government in Hanoi announced that Communist forces during the 'American period' of the Vietnam War had sustained a loss of 1,100,000 dead, a figure that presumably included the Communists' 300,000 missing in action. (Hanoi also estimated 2,000,000 civilian dead.) This passage includes a citation for the *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War* (Spencer C. Tucker, ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)."

Sadly, we think we could probably go on like this for quite a few pages. John Kerry's proclivity for communist propaganda is apparently interminable.

That said, we think we've made our point. Besides, Kerry is, by and large, a political nonentity. His moment has passed. And more to the point, we should probably stop damning Kerry with his own words before someone calls us "McCarthyites." For the record, we do not really believe that John Kerry is a Manchurian candidate-esque Soviet "sleeper agent."

We don't believe that he thinks the Soviets were right and the Americans were wrong. And we do believe that he is a good and loyal American whose political motives are considerably more honorable than those of the Soviet communists. Furthermore, we believe that he pursued various political ends not because they overlapped with the communists' goals, but in spite of that fact.

But so what?

The whole point of this exercise was to help form an answer to the following questions: If an individual or group uses the rhetoric of the enemy, makes the same arguments as the enemy, cites the same figures as the enemy, and pursues policies that seek the same ends as those sought by the enemy, does it matter if they do so for different, more "honorable" reasons? Pope Paul IV famously wrote that "it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it," which is to say that ends cannot justify the means. But can the means justify the ends? In short, do motives matter?

Certainly, John Kerry and his fellow anti-Iraq-war Democrats would argue that they do. They would argue that it doesn't matter that they want the same thing in Iraq that Osama bin Laden wants, or that they are pursuing the same goals in the war terror, i.e. ending the war phase and beginning the "law enforcement" phase, as are sought by al-Qaeda and its affiliates. That, they would claim, is pure coincidence. It does not matter that Osama's speeches these days sound as if they are cribbed from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's daily talking points or that Ayman al-Zawahiri releases statements for which Democratic favorite and MSNBC host Keith Olberman could undoubtedly sue for plagiarism. Pure happenstance, we are told.

In a very real sense, of course, they are right. One cannot be held accountable for the deranged beliefs of others who just happen to share their ultimate goals.

But at the same time, consequences matter. And one cannot simply wash his hands of the evil ends that

will follow an action (or inaction) simply because his motives are pure. Motives may have some bearing on an action, but ultimately, it's the end that counts.

Let's look at this another way.

Today, most of the world and indeed even various factions in elite American institutions, from government to business to academia, believe that the predominant Muslim attitude towards the Jews is justified for a variety of reasons. First, Arabs and Persians are the "oppressed victims" of colonial predations and are thus entitled to be hostile to Westerners, including the Western Jews who, by the way, still "occupy" Muslim lands. Second, Jews – or "Zionists," if you prefer – have been subjugating Muslims for the last six decades, and some frustration in response is both legitimate and inevitable. Finally and most importantly, Muslim anti-Semitism is religious and cultural in nature and thus different from and more acceptable than the blind, raging, mass murdering anti-Semitism exhibited by the white, oppressor Nazis last century.

Yet we know that the definitive goal of many Middle Eastern Muslims, including those who represent the politically dominant factions in both Sunni and Shiite Islam, is precisely the same as the Nazis', namely the elimination of the Jews from the face of the earth. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reminds us of this goal repeatedly, though it should be understood that this was the policy of the Islamic Republic long before Ahmadinejad and will continue to be so long after Mad Mahmoud has passed from the scene. We know as well that Amin al-Husseini, the "Grand Mufti" of Jerusalem and one of the founding fathers of modern Islamism, was a Nazi ally who spent the war in Berlin, was close to both Eichmann and Himmler, directed the Muslim SS, and was, according to the historian Paul Johnson, the man "who first recruited Wahabi fanatics from Saudi Arabia, transforming them into killers of Jews . . ."

The end pursued by the Islamists, then, is precisely the end pursued by the Nazis. Does the fact that the Islamists' pursuit of this end is based on religious

and post-colonial grievances rather than on fascist utopianism? Of course not. And only a moral deviant could even dream of harboring such a rationalization.

Ultimately, what we are talking about here is what Eric Voegelin termed the liberal “dream world,” the mistaken and delusional belief predominant among today’s Western political thinkers that intentions are all that matter and that the morality of an action can be judged strictly by the actor’s motives. This type of faulty moral reasoning is responsible in part for facilitating untold suffering in this country and elsewhere, in domestic politics as foreign policy alike, ranging from the destruction of the black family and the creation of the culture of dependence to the aforementioned killing fields of Southeast Asia.

We would like to believe that the political realities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the Muslim world would be enough to compel all political parties in this country to embrace policies that take into account long-term consequences rather than merely immediate gratification and the mollification of guilty consciences. But we are not hopeful. As long as today’s “liberals” (who, incidentally, exist in both political parties) live in the dream world in which intentions are all that matter, such political maturity is unlikely, if not impossible. Though their motives may be “noble” or at least less ignoble than those of the enemy, their ultimate goals are unjustifiable and their decisions morally corrupt.

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