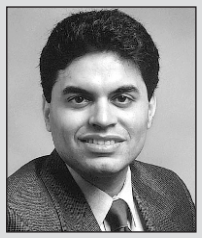


The 'republic of fear' is dead



FAREED ZAKARIA
writes from Washington

IN his wrenching book on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the dissident writer Kanan Makiya explained that the most powerful force keeping the cruel regime in power -- more important than brute strength -- was "an all-embracing atmosphere of fear." Aply, Makiya titled his book "Republic of Fear." Saddam inculcated fear at every level, explaining, for example, that he would often deal with traitors pre-emptively because "I know a person will betray me before they know it themselves." Well, he apparently didn't know this time. The Iraqi who gave the final tip that led to Saddam's capture was only one of the hundreds of Iraqis who have begun cooperating with American troops. They might not love the Americans, but they hate the Baathists, and increasingly they are not scared. And after the events of the weekend, they will be even less scared.

I spoke with a senior administration official after the capture of Saddam, and the official confirmed that the Coalition's intelligence has been improving markedly. "People in Iraq tell us that cooperation has gone up in the last few weeks. So Saddam's capture fits a pattern. This is because of a variety of reasons. We've been getting better at making contact with locals. We've been getting better at coordination between intelligence and analysis. As a result, we have more actionable intelligence than before. But there's one other factor. Many Iraqis have been turned off by the insurgency. They don't want to live in this kind of country. And that's meant they've become more willing to talk."

As to whether Saddam's capture would cripple the insurgency, the official admitted it was difficult to say. "I've always thought that he was spending most of his time saving himself. We have no evidence that he was in contact with the insurgents. He didn't have elaborate communications gear with him when the troops found him." The real effect, the official agreed, was likely to be psychological. "In societies like this, the mystique of the dictator's powers is enormous. After Stalin died, for days people did not believe it. They couldn't imagine that he had actually passed from the scene."

I believe that this will cripple the insurgency over the long term. The guerrillas' strategy was not to win militarily. They could not do that with their pinprick attacks. They sought to win politically by conveying the impression that the Coalition could not stabilise Iraq, disheartening people in Iraq and within America. That psychological warfare just suffered a catastrophic setback.

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If intelligence is getting better all round, it should have consequences beyond nabbing Saddam. "There's no question that the key problem we had was intelligence, so the fact that it is getting better should make a difference in the broader fight against the insur-

solve the political problems of Iraq, either."

If the Coalition's military strategy has taken a turn for the better, its political strategy also appears to be adjusting in one important dimension. Tony Blair used the occasion of his statement after the capture of Saddam to reach out explicitly to Iraq's Sunni community. The official confirmed that this is part of an attempt to "convince the Sunnis that they have an important place in the new Iraq."

that is not true."

The Sunni strategy will take three forms: improving security in the Sunni areas, creating money and jobs in those places, and including Sunnis in the political institutions of a new Iraq. "The problem," the official explained to me, "is that there are very few political organisations to work through. Saddam destroyed all of them. So we will help form professional associations, political parties, anything that helps them organise and advocate -- as we will with all Iraqis." There have been some in the administration who have wanted to win first and worry about this political strategy later. That struck me as a mistaken approach because the political problem was feeding into the military one. It would appear that a more sophisticated strategy is now in place.

The official is correct to note that none of this will change the political problem in Iraq. It will not solve the very thorny issues that the transfer of power in Iraq has already begun to raise. But Saddam Hussein's capture is a great and pivotal event. The "Republic of Fear" is dead.

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gents," the official explained. "And we hope this capture will further accelerate the pattern of intelligence cooperation. But by itself this is not going to solve the security problem. We will have to keep doing all the things we have to do anyway. And by itself it will not

It's essential to future stability. "They used to be 20 percent of the country and had 100 percent of the power," the official explained, "and now they are 20 percent of the country and believe that they will have zero percent of the power. We had to demonstrate to them that



Privileged patriots or desperate refugees?

NAEEM MOHAEMEN

PATRIOT II. CAPPS. Galileo. Cendant. The names keep coming -- acronyms we get used to and decode.

Although no one has heard of CAPPS and Galileo, they are part of an ambitious new system for screening passengers. This summer, a Palestinian youth dance troupe was performing in New York. One of the members, Rashed Abu, showed me his United Airlines Boarding Card. On the bottom of each seat was stamped the letters, "AAAA." We could only guess what it meant! Rashed joked that it stood for, "Arab! Arab! Arab! Arab!" Actually, it was probably the highest security-risk rating he could get under programmes like CAPPS. At every stop on their national tour, based on this "AAAA" stamp, the Palestinian teens were taken aside and searched. The word "Orwellian" has been used so often to describe these situations, it has lost its sting.

As Special Registration and other laws targeting immigrants took hold, not everyone is waiting around. Many have left for Canada, hoping to start a new life. Although traditionally more welcoming to immigrants (due to labour shortage), Canada has recently signed the "Safe Third Country" Agreement with the US. This new law states that if immigrants pass through a "friendly third country" (the US), they cannot apply for asylum in Canada. Still, people keep leaving for Canada, Europe, and anywhere they can manage. In parts of Queens and Brooklyn, entire communities of Pakistani immigrants have left, hoping to escape possible INS detention.

Class background is a crucial factor in who feels more vulnerable. Many of the immigrants who are fleeing are the working class backbone of America -- taxi drivers, fruit sellers, newspaper vendors, and waiters. One of my classmates from college also left the US

recently. But unlike working class immigrants, he left not out of fear, but "in protest." His return to Bangladesh was also far smoother than that experienced by many of his compatriots.

Saif Ahmed was my classmate at Oberlin College and graduated during the boom years of the 1990s. Saif ended up in the high-tech sector and became a sought-after commodity during the Internet boom. His reaction to the crackdown on terrorism was more relaxed and reflective. Not for him a furtive late night train across the border. Instead, Saif traveled on a

if not impossible, to get sponsorship. Weighing the risks of staying in America, Saif made a decision that was both patriotic and practical. As he explained, "Being treated like a criminal in my adoptive home of thirteen years. I suddenly felt an affinity for Bangladesh -- the nation that can't throw me out."

Most working class immigrants can't even afford the fare back to their home country. They end up in Europe or elsewhere, hostile rest stops on the quest for a friendly landing place. For Saif, a very different avenue opened up. Even before he boarded the British

down. It is a crucial factor in understanding a more privileged (and therefore largely silent) position.

But what of the thousands who were not as privileged, who were forced to flee America under the cover of night? Where will they end up? Will they be stuck in a permanent cycle of poverty as they run from one migrant destination to the next?

The original rationale behind Special Registration was to prevent terrorism. After spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money and disrupting the lives of Muslim immigrants, the programme has now been discontinued! The technocrats have already moved on to Patriot II and CAPPS. Under CAPPS, JetBlue handed over customer information in violation of privacy laws. When the airline was caught, passengers screamed bloody murder and threatened class action lawsuits. After being caught asleep at the wheel during 9/11, the US intelligence organisations are functioning in overdrive to compensate for past failures. Yet, their tactics are based on screening for terrorist strategies of the past, while agile terrorists are surely coming up with new tactics (does anyone really believe that hijackers will use shoe bombs again?).

In a misguided hunt for terrorists, the INS continues to target all Muslim immigrants -- antagonising millions around the world and creating new recruits for fanatical organisations. In the end, this crackdown will only force thousands of law-abiding, working-class families out of the country, spreading more ill-will towards America.

Benjamin Franklin said it best 200 years ago: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Will America remember those words in time?

Naeem Mohaemen is Editor of Shobak.Org and Associate Editor of AllMuslim.com

SHOBAK
Benjamin Franklin said it best 200 years ago: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Will America remember those words in time?

comfortable flight back to Dhaka and had time to reflect on an unexpected side-effect of the crackdown.

"The PATRIOT act has made a patriot out of me," said Saif. "I had never considered myself as belonging to any country." Even though Saif's adopted country was America, he rebelled at the Special Registration's focus on Muslim men. "When the choice was offered to fingerprint myself and put myself in a criminal database or go back to my 'home country', I had to go back to the place my parents were born."

Frustration with religious profiling was not the only factor in Saif's self-imposed exile. The Internet boom years had turned into a bust recession, and the high-tech sector was in ruins. Saif was still on an H1-B visa, which meant that future employers would have to sponsor him. Given the amount of scrutiny Muslim men were facing, Saif surmised that it would be difficult,

Airways flight back to Dhaka, job offers were pouring in. Arriving back in Bangladesh, Saif was able to pick and choose from competing job offers and, in the end, joined a small animation company as its CEO. Reflecting on the change in his fortune, Saif was sanguine: "I've had many opportunities to evaluate the positives and negatives of my return. What I left behind was a lot of friends and family, the opportunity to make more money, a very relaxed and carefree life-style. What I got in return was the opportunity to create opportunities. It was a fair trade."

Saif's story had some closure. Although he was forced to leave America, he found a place in Bangladesh. In talking about Saif, I am talking about others as well. Graduating from elite colleges, many other immigrants obtained green cards through corporate jobs. As a result, they were never personally subject to the post 9/11 crack-

Can Dean win the Democratic party's nomination for president?

RON CHEPESIUK

AL Gore did a virtual disappearing act after he was robbed of victory in the 2000 presidential election. But last week the former vice president in the Clinton administration burst on the national scene again in spectacular fashion by announcing his endorsement of Howard Dean's presidential candidacy.

"I am very proud and honoured to endorse Howard Dean to be the president of the United States," Gore told the press. His announcement came out of the blue and shocked the Democratic Party machine. No one was more stunned than Joe Lieberman, Gore's running mate in 2000. "I was caught completely off guard by the announcement," Lieberman complained. Gore claimed that he had called Lieberman's office and left a message, but Lieberman didn't return the call.

Gore's endorsement was a big surprise. After all, Dean is hardly running as an insider, and he and Gore don't seem to have much in common on many key issues. For example, Gore has been at odds with the National Rifle Association (NRA), while Dean has got along well with the gun lobby. Dean considered challenging Gore for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2000, but the Vice President's camp reportedly pressured him to back off.

Dean then quietly lobbied to be Gore's running mate, but he never made the short-list.

So why did Gore endorse Dean? Several reasons, it appears. For one thing, sources close to Gore reveal that he has become increasingly angry about Bush's handling of the Iraq war, and he liked the fact that Dean was the only candidate who had the intestinal fortitude to oppose the war from the beginning.

In endorsing Dean, Gore noted that Dean "really is the only candidate who has been able to inspire at the grassroots level all over the country." That statement, of course, is true, evident by the fact that no Democratic candidate has raised as much money as quickly as Dean. Moreover, many Americans who strongly oppose Bush's misguided policy on Iraq are galvanising around Dean's campaign.

Gore is also concerned about the infighting and bickering among the candidates and what it will do to the party's chances in 2004. Let's unite and back Dean and not attack him, is Gore's message in backing Dean. "We don't have the luxury of fighting amongst ourselves to the point where we seriously damage our ability to win on behalf of the

American people," Gore told the press before the presidential debate last December 9.

Further, Gore may also be distancing himself from Bill Clinton's big shadow by trying to stake out his own turf within the Democratic Party as a power broker. It's no secret that relations between Gore

oped that Al Gore and Howard Dean are fighting for the same thing: independence from Bill and Hillary Clinton.

That may not be easy to do, if Clinton decides to play the endorsement game. Clinton favours Wesley Clark, and one wonders if the former president will feel

INSIDE AMERICA
Joe Trippi, Dean's campaign manager, has said that biggest mistake Dean's opponents have made so far is to underestimate the Vermont Democrat... If that's true, then Dean will be tough candidate to beat come the primaries in 2004. The question then is: can Dean convince the electorate that he is the better man to lead the nation during this critical period in American history?

and Bill Clinton cooled after the 2000 elections over each man's performance in it.

In the wake of the election, Gore and Clinton reportedly had a showdown meeting where each was uncharacteristically blunt. Gore told Clinton that his sexual escapades were a major impediment to his campaign, while Clinton criticised Gore for not campaigning on Clinton's successful economic programme. Gore is not running in 2004, so he no longer has to defer to Clinton whose support would have been key to his chances for victory. Writing in the *New York Post*, savvy political consultant Dick Morris

compelled to leave the sidelines and endorse the general's candidacy. Interestingly, both Clinton and Clark are Arkansas natives and former Rhodes Scholars. Last week, Clark put together a 17-minute videotape biography, just as Clinton did in 1992. It chronicles his Arkansas upbringing and decorated military career and will be used to promote his presidential campaign. Meanwhile, dozens of former Clinton staffers are now working for Clark's campaign.

But it will take more than slick promotion and Bill Clinton's endorsement to stop Dean. Polls are showing that the for-

mer Vermont governor is widening his lead in key states, including New Hampshire. Several analysts have speculated that Dean's momentum should carry him to victory in the first major contests in Iowa and New Hampshire early next year. That will make the February primaries in my home state of South Carolina and half a dozen other key states crucial in the effort to stop Dean.

The conventional wisdom is that Dean can't win in the conservative South, but he has shown himself to be a consummate politician. So far, on the trail of election 2004, Dean has survived a flap over the confederate flag and apparent flip-flops on Medicare, social security and trade issues. Dean signed the country's only law allowing civil union between homosexuals, but that has not come back to haunt him yet on the campaign trail.

Joe Trippi, Dean's campaign manager, has said that biggest mistake Dean's opponents have made so far is to underestimate the Vermont Democrat. "We won't make the same mistake of underestimating them," Trippi vowed. If that's true, then Dean will be tough candidate to beat come the primaries in 2004. The question then is: can Dean convince the electorate that he is the better man to lead the nation during this critical period in American history?

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Howard Dean: How bright is the future?

Shutting the door against the setting sun?

A H JAFFOR ULLAH writes from New Orleans, USA

OPERATION "Red Dawn" was successful. As darkness fell near Tikrit, on Saturday, December 13, 2003, the Americans moved into position, 600 of them, from 4th infantrymen to elite special forces. This time they are looking for a very important person. They focused on two houses in this rural village of orange, lemon and palm groves. Someone big was supposedly inside; that is what was relayed to the soldiers.

By now, the US soldiers in Iraq are used to conduct many such raids. They have done so in the last eight months from Arbil in the north to An-Nasariyah in the south, from Baghdad in the east to Ar-Ramadi in the west. The soldiers taking part in the raid were told on Saturday, December 13, 2003, that they would be looking for a big fish in the proverbial pond. This time around, they indeed caught the very biggest fish one could find in Iraq. On that fateful day, the ex-dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was arrested. Saddam had been hiding ever since he was ousted from power in the second week of April 2003. The US-led coalition force was hoping that he might have holed up somewhere near Tikrit, a city on the bank of Tigris River, 110 miles north of Baghdad. Their prediction came true.

With the arrest of Saddam -- the one time Big Enchilada of Iraq -- the Americans are heaving a big sigh of relief thinking that this would dampen the insurgency movement carried by fedayeen under the watchful eyes of mid-level Baath Party leaders.

Just hours after Saddam was arrested, I learned from a press interview given by Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of 4th Infantry Division, that the army in the past had made over one thousand raids to capture Saddam but

Just hours after Saddam was arrested, I learned from a press interview given by Maj. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of 4th Infantry Division, that the army in the past had made over one thousand raids to capture Saddam but without any success. Nonetheless, they were relentlessly looking for him and finally they found him...Saddam was not in the best shape when the US army men found him in the coffin-sized hole. The digital photos of Saddam taken after his arrest that were posted in various news sites speak volume about the pathetic shape the ex-dictator was in at the time of his arrest.



without any success. Nonetheless, they were relentlessly looking for him and finally they found him in a hole underneath a small mud brick house in the village of Adwar, which is located 9-10 miles from Tikrit. In the parlance of the US military, Saddam was a "High Value Target" or HVT. Indeed he was. There was a bounty of \$25 million placed on his head. It is uncertain if anyone would come forward to claim the prize money. The US forces in Iraq are not revealing the source of their tip that

over the globe had a chance to see this medical check-up. The doctor was really trying to scrape some tissue from his mouth. Saddam however was pointing to some parts of his face. Most likely, the US authorities were trying to take enough samples to do a DNA testing of this arrested man. They wanted to make sure that he was indeed Saddam Hussein. At one point, we were told that Saddam's trusted lieutenant, Tarik Aziz, was led to him for positive identification. Aziz vouched to the US authorities in Iraq that the person he was looking at was none other than his big boss.

The following imaginary conversation took place between Saddam and Aziz albeit for a brief period:

Aziz: 'Long time no see', big boss? How have you been?

Saddam: Well, well, look who is here? I am just fine, Aziz. Pardon my look. It is so difficult to shave and groom when one is on the lam. So when did they get you?

Aziz: Not long after we were booted out of office. You did well though. Who helped you out?

Saddam: I have a loyal following; they belong to my tribe and extended family. But look. In the end, they got me.

Aziz: Yes, it's a zero sum game. You see, our loss is their gain. Sometimes I wonder boss, whether everything you and I did together was worth the effort.

Saddam: Come, come, Aziz, don't be sentimental now. The sun of Iraq has set. Our days are gone; clouds, dews, and dangers come; our deeds are done!

Aziz: When did you take up Shakespeare, boss?

Saddam: (Not paying attention to Aziz) Men shut their doors against a setting sun. We have seen better days.

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