

# Letters from our readers

19 November 2003

*Below we post a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.*

*On "US "turning point" in Iraq—deeper into the abyss"*

It would appear we are going the same way as the Israeli's with Operation Iron Hammer. If your distant cousin who you knew nothing about does a terrorist act we will destroy your home. Such Israeli policies have created for them a cycle of violence that seems to have no end. Are we seeking a never ending cycle of violence in Iraq? The real question is how much pain will the American public suffer for cheap oil?

B

15 November 2003

*On "Gore issues warning over 'Big Brother' regime in US"*

Mr. Vann:

Perhaps former vice president Gore should be reminded that it was under the Clinton regime that the anti-terrorism act was signed into law (April 20, 1996) "for the protection of the people and the state." Clinton also said that "We can't be so fixated on our desire to preserve the rights of ordinary Americans." (March 1, 1993, *USA Today*)

The Clinton-Gore presidency played a lead role in the destruction of the Bill of Rights. Mr. Gore should have spoken up 10 years ago when he had the chance to make a difference in the rights of American citizens.

JS

Phoenix, Arizona

12 November 2003

*On "The Saudi bombing—who benefits from this atrocity?"*

Dear Bill Vann,

The forces of reaction always stand to gain from this form of terror, but, once we have determined which particular forces benefit on this occasion, another question comes to mind—even more so if Al Qaeda is the actor responsible—that question is, how were US intelligence agencies able to have prior knowledge of this attack? And, since they had prior knowledge of the attack, why were they not able to prevent it?

For three days before the bombing, most newscasts here in the US, as well the newspapers, were carrying warnings of an impending attack that was to take place in Saudi Arabia. The US embassy was, for all essential purposes, evacuated, and a travel advisory was in affect. Interrogations of terrorists captured months ago would not likely yield information leading to prior knowledge of this particular attack. That being so, one of the following has to be the case:

1. A member of the organization that launched the attack tipped them off in advance.
2. The US has infiltrated said organization.
3. The US has contacts with another intelligence organization that has infiltrated the organization that launched the attack.
4. The US, or one of its allies, are actively engaged in operations

with the group that perpetrated the attack.

In analyzing these four possibilities, the first one can be discounted. If it was a tip by someone who was not an active agent or informant, coming as it did, within a week of the actual action, he would have had to provide more information on the attack than the city and the date of the attack to be considered credible. And, given that Riyadh is essentially a police state, the kind of information that would have proven credible, would also have led to the prior apprehension of the terrorists. Unless, of course, they wanted to let the action go ahead as planned.

If the second possibility is correct, then, again, enough information would have been able to be gathered, even on such short notice to prevent the attack from taking place. This possibility also raises further issues: if the US has agents or informants inside Al Qaeda, why aren't there mass arrests of the remaining members? Do they intend to let them run free and only arrest them after they carry out an attack? How do you arrest someone after carrying out a suicide attack? Why can they not capture bin Laden when they have someone on the inside?

The same things can be said of the third possibility as for the second, but with one addition. If one of the allies of the US has an agent working inside a terrorist group, how are we to be sure that said agent is not a provocateur, or, for that matter, the entire group?

The fourth possibility speaks for itself. If that one is correct, we wind up no longer speaking of a government that operates on a gangster model, but, rather, one that is actively engaged in fascistic methods of terrorizing their population at home, and finding pretexts for aggressive wars abroad.

Another issue I think that needs to be discussed is this: granting that the US and Saudi forces (military, police, intelligence) want to stop terrorist attacks, why were they unable to do so in this case (in a police state) with prior knowledge of at least the relative time and place? If they are unable with their combined forces to put a stop to a terrorist attack with at least three days notice there, how do they propose to do so here in the US?

Obviously, what we have seen for the past two years is a progression towards a police state, however, the bombing in Riyadh clearly demonstrates that this does not offer the protection from terrorism that the Bush administration would like to project to the American populace.

HR

13 November 2003

*On "Washington Post shrugs its shoulders over torture victim case"*

I sent the following comments to the *Washington Post* in response to their editorial about Maher Arar. They did not publish it.

DP

Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada

14 November 2003

In your editorial of November 9, 2003, "Freedom vs. Torture?", you

state that the US immigration authorities had two equally unpalatable options when deciding how to handle Mr. Maher Arar in September 2002. They could deport him to Syria, where he would be subject to torture, or they could deport him to his home country of Canada, where he would likely be set free.

You rightly condemn the authorities for having sent Mr. Arar to Syria as at least giving the appearance of the US subcontracting torture.

But you also say that it would have been unreasonable to return him to Canada because he would have been set free. Why do you find the concept of living up to Canada-US treaty agreements so difficult? This is the treaty that specifies that Canadians deported from the US must be deported to Canada.

By sending Mr. Arar to Syria in a clandestine manner the US immigration authorities in effect said that they have the right to decide whether or not he or I, as Canadian citizens, may live in Canada. The strong implication is that if I were to again travel to your country, US immigration authorities could decide at their whim—a whim not subject to any judicial review—that I may not return to Canada but must go to some third country.

This is not acceptable. Your government would not accept other countries applying this practice to US citizens, nor should they.

The only options the authorities at New York airport should have considered in Sept. 2002 were to arrest Mr. Arar and charge him with some offence, deport him to Canada or leave him be. The last two were effectively the same as he was waiting for a connecting flight to Montreal when he was apprehended. Since there was not at that time, nor any time since, any evidence on which to base any charge, the only reasonable course would have been to let Mr. Arar continue on his travel home to Canada.

What has happened to the concept of the rule of law, due process and the presumption of innocence? Has fear in your country made you discard those hard won principles? In the process have you decided to treat your friends the same as you treat your enemies?

On “The crisis of American democracy: its social and political roots”

I would just like to commend Mr. Grey for his article. His analysis of the state of the American democracy today is right on the mark. One can only wonder what’s going to happen in the coming months as a critical mass of Americans wake up to find that the democracy they have taken for granted has devolved into a fascist police state while they were sleeping.

BD

14 November 2003

On “New York Times on the Reagan series controversy: in praise of cowardice”

This is the text of my letter to the *New York Times* on the subject of Alessandra Stanley’s column on “The Reagans.” I have little doubt that it will not be published.

AB

Madison, Wisconsin

7 November 2003

Now that Alessandra Stanley has deftly exposed the flawed nature of the CBS miniseries on the Reagans, perhaps she will turn her keenness for historical accuracy to the Jessica Lynch story, soon to appear on NBC. Ms. Lynch is the young woman who was injured in a vehicular mishap in Iraq, treated by Iraqi doctors whose attempt to return her to American forces was rebuffed, and retrieved at last to put her name on a potted memoir and to be marinated in Diane Sawyer’s

chin-on-hand sincerity. The evidence supplied by TV critics who have seen the NBC program suggests that accuracy will extend no further than spelling Ms. Lynch’s name correctly. The difference, of course, is that the Reagan program is clouded by a “preachy, liberal agenda” whereas the Lynch affair for the moment keeps at bay the reality of the Bush administration’s disastrous policy in Iraq.

On “US: Democrats lose two more governorships in off-year elections”

Dear Mr. Martin,

I was very happy to see your article on the recent GOP gubernatorial victories in Kentucky and Mississippi. I’m one of many Kentuckians faced now with a state under the control of Republican Ernie Fletcher.

Until now Fletcher has been my representative in Congress, taking every opportunity to promote an agenda which can only be described as anti-human.

As you have pointed out, his latest victory owes a great deal to the Democratic Party’s own brand of uselessness.

You’re absolutely right to say that the Democrats put forth no real alternative to the Fletcher-Bush line of reasoning. Watching Fletcher debate his Democratic opponent Ben Chandler was like watching identical twin brothers fight over which had the ugliest face. A truly bizarre display.

As Kentucky’s attorney general, Ben Chandler has been an aggressive supporter and ally of the death penalty, even supporting it as an option in cases involving juvenile offenders.

Chandler has also given his support to the recent ban of so-called partial birth abortion. Indeed his entire platform was virtually identical to that of Ernie Fletcher.

The whole election played out like a cruel joke on the people of this state. There was not one candidate on the ballot who spoke to the working class. Not one person we could get behind. As bad as Fletcher most certainly is, I can’t see how we would’ve been much better off had Chandler actually won.

It’s high time we abandoned the Democratic Party once and for all. They have nothing of value to offer.

Thanks for your time and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

HL

Lexington, Kentucky

8 November 2003



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