

## ‘Trying To Destroy a Moderate Voice’

Many observers and Islamic leaders were astounded by the raids’ focus on a number of highly respected institutions in northern Virginia—the Graduate School of Islamic Social Sciences (GSISS) in Leesburg, the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) in Herndon, and the Fiqh Council of North America. The latter is an organization of Islamic clerics which issues religious interpretations for mosques and Islamic centers in the United States.

The GSISS, among other things, trains Islamic chaplains for the U.S. military; nine of the 13 Muslim U.S. military chaplains were trained there. The IIIT is a research group that publishes books and holds seminars; the U.S. State Department had scheduled a visit of Muslims from the Philippines to IIIT at the time of the raids. An official of IIIT described the raids as “trying to destroy a moderate voice in this country.”

Also publicly implicated in the network of organizations hit by the raids, was a Republican Party-linked organization formed to conduct outreach to Arab-Americans, called the Islamic Institute.

An insightful article published March 26 in the Lebanese *Daily Star*, was entitled “Moderate Muslims: The New Target?” It pointed out that the raids of the IIIT and the GSISS “are an attack on the most moderate of American Muslims,” and that the raids “have sent a shiver down the spine of the American Muslim community. . . . This is indeed a war against Muslims and not terrorists.” The article also noted that President Bush had made several appearances with U.S. Muslim leaders in the immediate aftermath of Sept. 11, but that since then, “Bush and his administration have systematically disengaged from the American Muslim community,” and that since the first of the year, “the White House has become completely inaccessible to Muslims.”

What the article does not cite, is that the White House disengagement occurred under heavy pressure from neo-conservative and right-wing Israeli-linked organizations in the United States, which attacked President Bush for his outreach to the Muslim community.

But it is still more insidious than that. The systematic attack on moderate Muslims is reminiscent of the policy of targeting—even assassinating—moderate Palestinian leaders carried out by the Israeli Mossad for years, and more recently by the Sharon government. It is not irrelevant to this, that Sharon was instrumental in creating Hamas in the 1980s as a radical counterweight to the Palestine Liberation Organization. For those such as Sharon who want a pretext for all-out war between Israel and the Palestinians, or the Brzezinski-Huntington gang in the United States and their co-thinkers in the Administration such as Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Defense Policy Board Chairman Richard Perle, Muslim moderates are an obstacle to their plans for a war of civilizations between Islam and the West. That seems to be the key to the strange pattern of the northern Virginia raids.

## Military’s CINCs Warn Congress on Iraq War

by Carl Osgood

During the 1990-91 Desert Shield-Desert Storm operation, the U.S. Air Force moved approximately 90,000 tons of cargo by air into Turkey and the Persian Gulf region, about 10% of the total moved by the all military forces. Though a huge operation, the job was simplified for the logisticians by the modern airports and seaports of Saudi Arabia and other countries, and the network of oil refineries and pipelines that provided a ready fuel supply for ground and air forces deployed in the region.

The current campaign in Afghanistan, however, is a completely different story, as recent testimony in front of Congressional committees, as well as other accounts, tends to show. The logistics system supporting operations in Afghanistan is probably as stressed as it was in 1990-91, even though there are only about 5,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, plus some tens of thousands in neighboring countries and in ships in the Arabian Sea, as opposed to the 500,000 that were deployed for the war against Iraq. Afghanistan is a landlocked country, with poor roads and no railroads, destroyed by 23 years of war. Everything that American and other foreign forces need has to be flown in by air, even aviation and motor vehicle fuel. Add the draw-down of the U.S. military during the 1990s, and the collapse of the U.S. industrial economy, and the impossibility of launching other major operations beyond the war in Afghanistan becomes clear.

### ‘Very Troubling’ Testimony

These realities, though ignored by factions pushing a prompt war to eliminate Saddam Hussein, have been reported to Congressional committees by senior military officers. Most recently, Adm. Dennis Blair, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Command, told the House Armed Services Committee on March 20, “We do not have adequate forces to carry out our missions for the Pacific, if the operations in [Afghanistan] continue at their recent past and current pace.” He, and Gen. Joseph Ralston—head of European Command and NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander, Europe—were asked by the committee’s ranking Democrat, Ike Skelton of Missouri, whether they had the forces they needed to carry out all of their current missions as well as a war against Iraq. Skelton found their answers “very troubling.”

General Ralston told the committee, “The answer to your question as you posed it is: I do not have the forces in EUCOM



*Gen. Joseph W. Ralston, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, was among the commanders-in-chief who gave what Rep. Ike Skelton called "very troubling testimony" about military preparedness to conduct another major operation such as a war on Iraq.*

today to carry out these missions. I will come back to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense and ask for additional forces. Then they are going to have to come up with a choice: Where are they going to take them away from?" He added that "I have not had a marine amphibious ready group since October of last year. . . . This is the primary unit that I use to evacuate Americans if there is a NATO operation taking place in one of those 91 countries [under his command]. And I don't believe I will have a marine amphibious ready group this year, other than just for a few days as they transit the Mediterranean."

Likewise, Ralston said he has not had an aircraft carrier in many months. He has also sent AWACS radar surveillance aircraft to support operations in Southwest Asia.

Admiral Blair's assessment was that "there are shortages of naval forces, of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance forces, in particular, that have to be made up for if we are to continue the current level of operations in the Central Command [which includes Afghanistan operations]." Asked by Rep. Jo Ann Davis (R-Va.) about the impact of retiring another aircraft carrier, Blair said that would require a shift to land-based air power, creating potential problems in the vast Pacific region. On March 5, he had told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Afghanistan war had "significantly reduced" the limited worldwide stocks of precision guided munitions, and that restoring the stocks of these weapons "must remain a priority." Other "major readiness concerns": aircraft availability rates in his command and cannibalization of aircraft parts.

Other commands face the same problems. At the March 5 hearing, Maj. Gen. Gary Speer, acting commander of the Southern Command, called the allocations of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets to his command "insufficient to meet the intelligence requirements that we have. . . ." He reported that many of the assets that his command

would have for anti-drug missions "have been diverted for both Operation Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle."

Complicating the picture for the regional commands is Operation Noble Eagle, the North American continental defense operation, which has been under way since Sept. 11. Simultaneous with the campaign in Afghanistan is an air defense mission over the United States, which has been comprised of primarily Air National Guard fighter squadrons flying round-the-clock air patrols over Washington, D.C. and New York City, with random patrols and continuous alerts in other parts of the country. NORAD commander Gen. Ralph Eberhardt told the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 20, that 19,000 sorties had been flown, including air refueling tanker support and AWACS surveillance missions. This mission, according to the Air Force, has involved about 275 fighters, 75 air-refueling tankers, and 40 C-130 cargo planes, and about 12,000 people; it included a contingent of NATO AWACS planes that deployed to the United States after the Sept. 11 attacks.

### **No New Capacity, But 'Magic'?**

In contrast to the concerns of the regional commanders, the Pentagon is not only downplaying the strains on the logistics system, but is also failing to implement any kind of economic mobilization, such as that led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II. Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Pete Aldridge reported, during a March 22 press briefing at the Pentagon, that the Defense Department has indeed accelerated the production of precision guided munitions, in response to a utilization rate in Afghanistan that was "certainly above what our peacetime stockpile would support." He could not say whether or not the current production rate could support a future such contingency, however.

Aldridge added that the Pentagon was not considering adding new production facilities, but would rather only "tool up within the facilities we currently have." Asked by *EIR* to comment on the stress on the logistics system, Aldridge admitted that it is, indeed, under stress, because the logistics agencies have had people working 24 hours a day, seven days a week since Sept. 11, to support the current level of operations. He claimed that those on the other end of the supply lines "are delighted" because they're getting everything that they need. When asked if there were any capacity in the system for expanded operations, Aldridge replied "The logistics systems meet the job they are asked to do and it's always been done. And how they do it, it's magic, but they always do it."

Of course, military operations, and the logistics that support them, are physical-economic processes, not magic, and must be supported by a mobilized economy. But for the Bush Administration to lead a proper economic reorganization in the current crisis, would mean abandoning its free trade-globalization orientation.