

## WorldWatch February 2004

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### U.S. Foreign Policy

Since the events of September 11, 2001, which initiated the current U.S.-Islamist tensions, the U.S. has had only marginal success in influencing the geopolitics of the Middle East—until recently. Now, from North Africa through the Middle East and South Asia, even to the "rogue state" of North Korea, the U.S. has had an amazing series of geopolitical successes:

- » Saudi Arabia, in order to align itself with the certain victor, began coming into alignment with the U.S. even before the undeclared Iraq war began.
- » Iran agreed to inspection of its nuclear programs before the fall of 2003, when it became clear that the U.S. was prepared to create a Shiite-dominated government in Iraq, which would be friendly to Iran.
- » In December 2003, with the televised capture of Saddam Hussein, the power of the Ba'athist guerrillas in Iraq appeared to have been broken.
- » Shortly thereafter, Libya made the surprising pledge to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program and allow inspections of its weapons sites, and advised other states to do the same. It has also recently had diplomatic meetings with Israel—significant because Libya has never recognized Israel and has condemned Egypt and Jordan for doing so.
- » North Korea also made an unusually conciliatory offer to freeze its nuclear program (under certain conditions) and has already allowed some inspectors in. This is at least partially because the U.S. has demonstrated to China that a nuclear-armed Pyongyang would lead to missile defenses in Japan and Taiwan, a potential challenge to China's hegemony.
- » The leaders of India and Pakistan, nuclear-armed rivals at the brink of war in 2002, are beginning formal peace talks. The U.S. says its efforts to push Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to combat terrorism helped move him to seek peace with India.
- » In Afghanistan, bickering warlords in a culture of conflicting tribes and languages have come together and produced a rudimentary constitution that holds the promise of a better future.
- » Syria, free from the threat of Iraqi oil being shut off, seeks to re-open talks with Israel.
- » After 25 years of diplomatic "cold war," Iran and Egypt have agreed to resume full diplomatic ties.

» Syria and Turkey, with decades of frosty relations and a near-war six years ago, have likewise decided to shore up their ties under the auspices of "shared concerns about the territorial integrity of Iraq."

» Official U.S. spokesmen have recently stated that 70% of al Qaida has been "neutralized," and that the U.S. military expects to have Osama bin Laden in custody "by Christmas" 2004.

There is more to each of these events than meets the eye, and it will likely be some time before all of the details and motivations come to the fore. In addition, a great deal of "spin" is involved in the reporting of these dealings. On one hand, it is clearly too early to announce that the enemies of Western interests are "spinning into control." But on the other, a tremendous amount of geopolitical upheaval is being wrought, and it is impossible to know how these things will ultimately shake out. U. S. foreign policy appears to be effecting great change on its own behalf, but history proves that a period of "peace and safety" usually precedes war and destruction.

### **Political Correctness (PC)**

Ever hear the story about the student who was punished because he built a snowman? Seems his university's thought-police deemed Frosty to be a "white 'male icon' that perpetrates 'a gendered spatial/social system.'" No joke. A British university actually outlawed building snowmen on campus last winter.

PC is everywhere:

» "Learning disabilities" has become "learning differences" so as not to offend little Johnnie.

» The BBC has duly notified its employees that they must refer to their "partner" rather than their husband or wife, since those more conventional terms connote the "obsolete belief" that heterosexual marriage is "somehow preferable to other possible models of sexual cohabitation."

» Some major American newspapers will reject a rental AD if it mentions the property's "good view" (unfair to the blind), suggests that it is in close "walking distance" to schools (unfair to the lame), or situated on a "quiet street" (unfair to the deaf).

Roger Kimball, in a lecture delivered in Wales, May 2003, asserts that PC stems from today's intellectuals, those he defines as "characterized by a certain lofty moralism—smug, progressive, abstract, activist." They possess a "self-infatuated conviction of virtue." These "more-enlightened-than-thou" people seek "to bring about a moral revolution by changing the way we speak and write about the world: a change of heart instigated and embodied by a change of language. . . . The secret hope is that by refusing to speak the truth, we can change the truth." Sacrificed is the common man's freedom to speak and write; for, "the imperatives of political correctness are at odds with the principles of open debate." The result? PC becomes an elitist "campaign to legislate virtue, . . . to smother individuality, to barter truth for the current moral or political enthusiasm."