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"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

October 7, 2001



Insanity

After we have dispatched the Taliban and the al-Qa'ida group, could we then have a calm and rational discussion of our disastrous foreign policy?

I thought it insanity several decades ago when a company that was paying me a handsome sum, and ALL of my expenses, named me to a very large lawsuit - and for two years paid Gray, Carey, Ames and Fry to sue me and paid Luce, Forward, Hamilton and Scripps to defend me!

A similar situation has been going on in the world for many decades. Do you know who is the largest donor of financial aid to the Taliban regime? The United States! The amount of "foreign aid" from the U.S. to the Taliban in the past year is \$125 million. Just five months ago, Secretary of State Colin Powell delivered \$43 million to the Taliban as a result of the Taliban announcing that the growing of opium is "against the Will of God."

Now \$125 million may not seem to be a lot of money in our jaded view, but in Afghanistan it can buy a lot of bread and bullets - and our troops will face the bullets from troops fueled by the bread.

If this was an isolated instance we could simply mark it up to an anomaly, but this happened to us recently in Iraq, and Haiti, and Somalia, and Panama. It may happen to us again soon in Pakistan, and Indonesia, and ...

Commentary



Now I understand the reasons we thought it desirable to give countries both money and military training - we wanted to defeat Communism, and "the enemy of our enemy is our friend" was the standing precept. The problem is that we do not have many reliable friends, reliable in the sense that when bought stay bought.

We tried to woo India for decades, when any rational person could see that Russia would have bankrupted itself years earlier if we had just let India go communist!

Right now we are befriending Pakistan with a vengeance, trying to keep them out of the Taliban camp...while Pakistan teeters politically on the edge of the radical Muslim world and owns the only known stockpile of nuclear weapons. We are going to soon face some entity that has bought/stolen/blackmailed one of those bombs from Pakistan, and you can bet that Iraq and some terrorist will explode it on American soil. Against whom will we retaliate?

We need to think more than one jump ahead in this modern world, because the one jump ahead continues to make us face our own money and training. We need to stop renting friends, and ally ourselves with only those whose ideology reflects our values, so that we can stop funding both sides of the continuing conflicts.

While President Bush was absolutely right when he said, "You are either with us or with the terrorists," he has acted as though there are many, many shades of gray. Like Aduo Annie in Oklahoma, they are always true to us in their fashion, always true to us in their way.

Like Curley in that musical, it is time to lay down the Law. Lets choose up sides and settle it. Waiting until Iraq or Osama bin Laden has the BOMB is called, "You Bet Los Angeles."

I don't want to play that game.

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"A good plan violently executed NOW is better than a perfect plan next week." —

General George S. Patton Jr, "War as I Knew it",

