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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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by DAVID SWANSON
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U.S. Troops Back in Saudi Arabia: What Could Go Wrong?



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The First Gulf War back in 1990 was a big huge success. One of the things it accomplished was a major U.S. troop presence in Saudi Arabia. Muslims around the world were outraged. Bombs were repeatedly set off at Khobar Towers where troops were stationed. In 1998 Osama Bin Laden declared:

“For over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers,

humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples. . . . The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim.”

In 2001, the World Trade Center in New York was destroyed and the Pentagon damaged. A year and a half later, the United States removed most of its troops from Saudi Arabia, leaving some behind with various excuses and under various euphemistic labels. When Barack Obama was president, the CIA opened a drone base in Saudi Arabia from which to murder people in Yemen with missiles from robotic airplanes. This, of course, stabilized Yemen which has known peace and prosperity ever since, or something. Now, in 2019, the United States is sending more troops into Saudi Arabia again.

What could go wrong?

Well, let's state the obvious in order to move on to stating the obvious. Killing people is insane and evil. Religion is insane and evil (except yours, dear reader). Killing people because of your religion is insane and evil. Nothing whatsoever, no insane and evil killing, can justify any other insane and evil killing.

Now, moving on to the obvious, let me quote from Peace Science Digest: “Deployment of troops to another country increases the chance of attacks from terror organizations from that country. Weapons exports to another country increase the chance of attacks from terror organizations from that country. 95% of all suicide terrorist attacks are conducted to encourage foreign occupiers to leave the terrorist's home country.”

I'm not aware of a foreign terrorist threat, attempt, or action against the United States, in which a motivation was stated, where that motivation was anything other than opposition to U.S. military imperialism. Statistically, religion doesn't seem to have anything to do with it. If you occupy another country, people get mad — with or without religion.

This is part of a broader picture of counter-productive self-defeating masochism. Terrorism has predictably increased during the war on terrorism (as measured by the Global Terrorism Index). 99.5% of terrorist attacks occur in countries engaged in wars and/or engaged in abuses such as imprisonment without trial, torture, or lawless killing. The highest rates of terrorism are in “liberated” and “democratized” Iraq and

Afghanistan. The terrorist groups responsible for the most terrorism (that is, non-state, politically motivated violence) around the world have grown out of U.S. wars against terrorism.

So, why did I say that the war that launched all of this was a big huge success? Well, it depends on your perspective. If the goal is to sell weapons, putting more troops into Saudi Arabia is brilliant. If the goal is to provoke more violence and get more wars going, nothing could be better. If the goal is persuading people that you are attacking their religion and will listen to nothing other than violence, everything seems right on course. You're winning. Pretty soon, as Trump promised, a lot of us are going to be truly sick of all this winning.

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