

Aiding Osama

The anti-Bush zealots are right about one thing—the current mess in Iraq is hindering the war against Al Qaeda but not in the way the far-left envisions. The Iraq situation is so polarizing that it has fogged the terror playing field. In their disgust over how Iraq is being handled, many Americans simply have lost sight of the enemy, but believe me... he has not lost sight of us.

As we discussed last week in this space, Osama bin Laden and his fanatical followers kill at random and will use any method, including nuclear, that becomes available to them. That is the danger we Americans face. Unlike the nuclear threats of the past, there is no doomsday deterrent. Many of these terrorists actually want to die.

There has been far more outcry in the United States over the prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib than the video beheading of Nicholas Berg or the civilian executions in Saudi Arabia last week, both reportedly the work of Al Qaeda.

The constant media drumbeat of Abu Ghraib, more than 50 front page stories in The New York Times alone, has taken the high moral ground away from the USA in the war on terror and dimmed the spotlight on the fanatical killers. In some parts of the world and even in the minds of a few misguided Americans, the USA has become villain number one, not Al Qaeda.

While the media is partially to blame for using Abu Ghraib as a hammer to bludgeon the Bush administration, thereby inserting a political agenda in the middle of an important news story, the President is to blame as well.

Clearly, something is very wrong when inexperienced, poorly trained military reservists are allowed to run wild and abuse prisoners. Clearly, something is wrong when enormous mistakes are made in the occupation of a country whose defeat was a

foregone conclusion. I mean, everybody knew the USA would defeat Saddam, so why was the aftermath of the war so screwed up? Is this another intelligence failure? Is this a strategic failure on the part of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his team? We don't know, because Mr. Bush rarely holds anyone publicly accountable for doing his or her job poorly.

So now we have lost momentum in the terror war. A furious Al Gore accuses Bush of creating "gulags." A dangerously naïve ACLU demands we treat captured terrorists like Martha Stewart, providing them with defense attorneys and the fifth amendment right to remain silent. Meantime, Al Qaeda plans more mayhem and murder, no doubt enjoying the paralyzing divisions bedeviling its despised target.

I hate to say this, but it looks like it will take another 9/11 attack in order for many of us to understand that we are now in the most dangerous age in America's history. Hitler and Tojo did not have nuclear weapons. Pakistan does. Al Qaeda owns parts of Pakistan. Do the math.

There's a bestselling novel out right now called "Memorial Day" written by Vince Flynn. He knows that the U.S. war on terror is unbelievably screwed up, and tells you how and why in a gripping way. Al Gore and every member of the ACLU should read this book and so should you.

President Bush should also read the book and wise up. The President is right in waging an aggressive war against worldwide terror, but he must get better people to do it. Enough with the chaos and foolish mistakes like Abu Ghraib. Clean house, Mr. President. There are smart, tough and experienced people who realize what's at stake here. Find them and protect us.