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## The Hawkish Instinct for the Capillary

By Doug Bandow on 3.12.11 @ 6:14AM

The neoconservatives again are campaigning for war, this time in Libya. It's a tragic situation, but truly irrelevant to vital American interests. In this case they are exhibiting an instinct for the capillary rather than the jugular.

After all, we really are busy elsewhere, with about 150,000 troops still occupying Iraq and fighting in Afghanistan, where the conflict shows no signs of easing. And other countries also should be on our mind. Consider Pakistan, our alleged ally which is destabilized by the continuing Afghan war. If our gaze should be anywhere, it is Islamabad, not Tripoli. It is worth reflecting on some recent stories on Pakistan.

1) **Nukes 'R Us.** Pakistan is a poor nation, unable to care for its own people and dependent on foreign, and especially U.S., aid. Yet it has money for more nuclear weapons. Not to mention the fact that the government has never owned up to its responsibility for A.Q. Khan turning Pakistan into an international "Nukes 'R Us." Reports the *Times of India*:

Despite being in the throes of a crippling political and economic crisis and almost entirely dependent on handouts from the United States and multilateral aid, Pakistan is poking a finger in the international community's eye. Days after it was revealed that Islamabad has doubled its nuclear weapons' inventory in the past decade, American experts have discovered that it has begun building a fourth plutonium-producing reactor to produce even more nuclear bombs to add to the 100-plus it already has.

The Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) announced on Wednesday that it has obtained commercial satellite imagery from January 15, 2011 that shows what appears to be a fourth reactor under construction at Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site. The reactor construction was not visible during a previous satellite pictures last November.

2) **Incompetent Security Forces.** We are relying on Pakistan's security services to hold back the jihadist tide. However, Zahid Manzoor Bajwa now sits in jail after aiding terrorists. Reports the *Los Angeles Times*:

When police in the city of Lahore raided his house and those of associates in 2003, they found hand

grenades, timers and loaded pistols. Asked about their arsenal, Bajwa and his friends acknowledged that they were planning to kidnap the son of a wealthy steel mill owner so they could buy enough explosives to kill foreigners.

Somehow, Bajwa's two-year stint behind bars went unnoticed by security officials in Punjab province. In 2009, they made him computer section chief for the Punjab police's intelligence wing, a post that gave him access to investigations and special reports on militant groups, surveillance directives, even security arrangements for VIPs.

Investigators now believe Bajwa downloaded secret data onto a flash drive and relayed it to the Pakistani Taliban, the insurgent group responsible for waves of suicide bombings across the country, said a Punjab security official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on such matters.

**3) Pervasive Murderous Extremism.** Malik Mumtaz Qadri gunned down the man he was supposed to be protecting Salmaan Taseer, governor of Punjab province. It seems Governor Taseer didn't believe that Christians should be executed for allegedly blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed. Reported the *Wall Street Journal*:

Mr. Qadri had previously been removed from a branch of the police dealing with counterterrorism due to concerns about his Islamist leanings, and had himself come forward to ask to guard Mr. Taseer, a senior police official said.

Preliminary investigations also have revealed that Mr. Qadri informed other police officers of his plans, the official said. Police have detained a dozen other people, including six police officers who were also on guard duty and are suspected of abetting the crime after they failed to stop the shooting of Mr. Taseer.

Investigations are focusing on Mr. Qadri's links with Dawat-i-Islami, a radical Islamist group that has been at the forefront of protests in recent weeks against efforts to change the blasphemy laws, the police official said. Mr. Taseer's death has exposed a deep fissure in Pakistan society between liberal politicians with Western lifestyles and religious leaders who hew to an Islamist view of the world and are gaining influence.

Why worry? I'm sure everything will work out fine for us in Pakistan.

On the other hand, perhaps this isn't the best time to go charging off in another war of choice in another fractious Muslim nation about which we know little.

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