



America Would Do Better To Arm Jordan Than Saudi Arabia

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May 23, 2017

A new attack on innocent civilians in Manchester, England ought to serve as a definitive wake-up call to the western world. In an apparent terrorist attack, extremists targeted little girls attending a pop concert in the heart of the United Kingdom. Security experts have said that the attack has “all the markings of a Sunni Muslim terrorist act.” That’s code for ISIS, the world’s largest Sunni Muslim terrorist organization. The terrorist army once derided as JV by Barack Obama has wreaked havoc the world over, and all with the financial support of many Sunni governments. It is past time for the United States and our allies to oppose virulent Islam in all its forms, regardless of sect.

There is a civil war inside Islam, from which America would do well to avoid becoming ensnared. In the world today there are two primary radical Islamist elements that engage in acts of terror: Shia radicalism led by the Ayatollahs in Iran, and the Sunni extremism advanced by ISIS and Al Qaeda. The Shia-Sunni divide traces back to a schism following the death of Muhammad in A.D. 632. A dispute arose between factions of Islam as to the rightful successor as caliph of the Islamic community following the death of their prophet, and the conflict continues to this day. While these warring factions of Islam resent one another, they do share a common hatred of America, Israel, and the West.

During President Trump’s visit to Saudi Arabia this weekend, the United States sought to put pressure on the Shia regime in Iran by strengthening ties with Sunni Saudis. While this may seem like a smart move in the short-term, there are long-term implications if Saudi Arabia does not change. While Saudi King Salman and his senior officials do not openly finance terror, there are many members of the Saudi Royal family who have provided financial aid to Sunni radical organizations. As the conservative Cato institute pointed out as far-back as 2001, “The Saudi government has been the principal financial backer of Afghanistan’s odious Taliban movement since at least 1996. It has also channeled funds to Hamas and other groups that have committed terrorist acts in Israel and other portions of the Middle East.” While we can certainly do with Saudi Arabia’s help in checking Shia extremists in Iran, we must be ever mindful of Saudi Arabia’s deep ties with Sunni extremists as well.

To better achieve the President’s noble goal of “cutting-off the cash flow” to terrorism, the United States would do better to sell weapons to King Abdullah’s Jordan than to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Jordanian King has fought radical Islamic terrorists of both sects, equally standing-up to ISIS and Iran. By supporting the Jordanians as well as the Israelis, the United

States would send a powerful message toward governments of goodwill, and good behavior, in a deeply troubled part of the world. Radical extremists must be confronted no matter their sect, or the identity of their financial backers.

There is a dual war within the Islamic world: a civil war over theology, and an external war waged by both factions against free people. The United States must not engage in the Islamic civil war, but, instead, must defeat the threat to our civilization posed by both strains of extremism. When we arm would-be enemies because they are the current enemy of a worse enemy, we almost always regret it later. Case in point: the United States government armed the Mujahideen in Afghanistan to repel the Soviets in the 1980's, and by the mid-1990's the Mujahideen had become the Taliban that harbored Al-Qaeda. The enemy of our enemy is our enemy if they espouse a radicalism all their own.

Radical Islamic terrorism must be defeated in all its forms, and the United States must align ourselves with true allies who do not smile to our faces while funding extremists behind our backs.