

PERSPECTIVES
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**"SAUDI ARABIA IS 'NOT COOPERATING' WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE
CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM": POINT AND COUNTERPOINT**

=====GulfWire~~Perspectives=====

A recurring theme in the ongoing U.S. media campaign against Saudi Arabia is that the Kingdom is not cooperating with the Bush Administration in matters pertaining to terrorism. GulfWire has previously provided extensive documentation that refutes such a claim. [See the Perspectives essay by GulfWire Publisher Dr. John Duke Anthony, "Myths and Misinformation: Saudi Arabian and U.S. Statements in Context," GulfWire Perspectives, Week of March 11-17, 2002].

The absence of evidence to substantiate such claims has not lessened the extent to which media pundits and Congressional critics continue to make these and related kinds of allegations. As to what's going on, many specialists believe that the critics intend nothing less than to drive a wedge between Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Fox News is one among other major American national television networks that have repeatedly criticized the nature and degree of cooperation between Riyadh and Washington. This past weekend, Fox's popular Hannity and Colmes Show did it again.

The account that follows relates to a spirited exchange between Fox News' Sean Hannity and Alan Colmes, on one hand, and GulfWire Publisher Dr. John Duke Anthony, on the other. The exchange was preceded by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu making numerous anti-Saudi Arabia remarks. Of interest is that Dr. Anthony's analysis was supported by Colmes and White house Presidential Spokesman Ari Fleischer.

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SAUDI ARABIA IS ``NOT COOPERATING`` WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM: POINT AND COUNTERPOINT

Fox News' [Sean] Hannity and [Alan] Colmes Program

June 20, 2002

HANNITY: "Saudi Arabia recently announced that it has 13 Al-Qaeda suspects in custody. But a Saudi official says that the U.S. will not be allowed to question them. So, the Saudis say they are our friends, but why are they working against us?"

We are joined tonight by Dr. John Duke Anthony of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations.

Dr. Anthony, I don't think there's any justification here from a country that purports to be our ally. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers came from this country. They have been caught supporting terrorist networks and giving compensation to the families of the homicide murderers, the homicide bombers. Could you explain why they shouldn't do this [allow U.S. officials to interrogate Saudi Arabian prisoners in the Kingdom] if they say they are our friends?

ANTHONY: Yes. I spent much of the afternoon today talking with high-ranking U.S. officials about this. There is no problem in this regard. There are no complaints.

What Saudi Arabia is doing is exactly what we have done, what we are doing, and what we will continue to do. There's reciprocity here.

HANNITY: What reciprocity?

ANTHONY: At Guantanamo Bay, we're not allowing Saudi Arabia to interrogate our prisoners there.

HANNITY: But when has Saudi Arabia gotten hit with a kind of terrorism like we have? When have we gone into Saudi Arabia and killed thousands? We are talking about Saudis who have committed crimes that are on Saudi Arabian property.

ANTHONY: What you're saying is that Saudi Arabia is not cooperating. This is the second time you guys have accused it of not cooperating. The first time you did this was in the aftermath of the Al-Khobar Towers' [June 1996] bombing. Yet [then] FBI Director Louis Freeh and President Clinton both gave kudos to Saudi Arabia for its cooperation. For you to imply to the contrary [then and now] is wrong and dangerous.

COLMES: Dr. Anthony, you are right. What the Administration is putting out is that Saudi Arabia IS cooperating. [Emphasis added].

Here's what the President's Press Spokesman, Ari Fleischer, had to say today:

FLEISCHER: [Video tape footage and comment spliced into the footage] We're going to continue cooperating with Saudi Arabia. Cooperation with Saudi Arabia has been strong.

HOLMES: Dr. Anthony, I want to add to this point. Saudi Arabia is exercising its sovereignty just as we exercise our sovereignty.

But it seems that Saudi Arabia is being made out to be our enemy. It seems we are getting mixed signals here.

Is it the case that the Saudis are fully on our side? Do we have any reason to suspect that they are not our friend and ally?

ANTHONY: Good question. There ARE mixed signals. [Emphasis added]. But the idea of Saudi Arabia as an "enemy" is certainly not coming from our Administration. Quite the contrary. Relations between our [U.S.] Administration and their [Saudi Arabian] Administration are strong, especially in matters pertaining to economics and defense.

The relationship is also strong strategically, [in particular] with respect to cooperation in matters relating to war and peace. Economically, we are net beneficiaries. Politically, the relationship is strong with regard to numerous issues. Commercially, we are number one in the world in terms of how we benefit in the areas of trade and investment. And, as I indicated, with regard to regional security and defense cooperation, the relationship between us is the envy of every country.

HANNITY: I couldn't disagree with you more. But I thank you for being on the program.

o Dr. John Duke Anthony, Publisher of GulfWire, is also President and CEO of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations and Secretary, U.S.-GCC Corporate Cooperation Committee. All three are Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit and non-governmental organizations dedicated to educating Americans and others about the Arab countries, the Middle East, and the Islamic world.