

Welcome to utopia

by *Oliver_North*

The traveling, never-ending campaign roadshow came home last week. The president of the United States is back in Washington from his "I like you, you like me" excellent adventure in Europe and "surprise" trip to Baghdad. It was nice of POTUS to thank the troops. He should have bowed to them instead of to King Abdullah.

Members of the O-Team "recovering from late-night teleprompter edits, grand parties and jet lag" now deny that the apparently obsequious gesture to the Saudi king was really a "bow." Perhaps it would be better described as a "curtsy."

Whatever it was "the Arab press applauded the moment as servile" it was keeping with the administration's "apologize for America first" message. Given what else happened this week, the incident may turn out to be as trivial as giving the queen of England a Chinese-made iPod as a gift from the American people.

While Mr. Obama was basking in the adulation of carefully selected Euro-crowds and genuflecting to foreign potentates (or simply "bending because he is so tall"), other really bad things were happening. The North Koreans defied his warnings of "severe consequences" and test-launched a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile. In Tehran, the ayatollahs ignored his Utopian plea for "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" and claim to have turned on 7,000 more centrifuges to refine uranium. Somali pirates "dissed" his "deep appreciation for the Islamic faith, which has done so much over the centuries to shape the world" and hijacked an American-flagged vessel in the Gulf of Aden.

The O-Team was so exercised over the first piracy of an American-flagged merchant vessel since 1866 that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton fired off a full rhetorical volley. While the crew was busy retaking the ship, she said that "we're deeply concerned" and "following it closely" and that "the world must come together to end the scourge of piracy."

More telling than the vacuous hot air blowing from London, Prague, Ankara, Baghdad and Washington was the defense budget presented this week. It assures adversaries and allies alike that we will be unprepared to fight a serious adversary in the future. Hollow talk, empty oratory and impossible dreams are now commonplace in American politics, but the O-Team's Euro-expedition may have set a new foreign fantasy record. Actions speak louder than words "no matter how flowery the rhetoric."

In Prague, Mr. Obama's speechwriters dropped into the teleprompter this last-minute observation: "Just this morning North Korea broke the rules once again by testing a rocket that could be used for long-range missiles." He then noted, "This provocation underscores the need for action, not just this afternoon at the U.N. Security Council but in our determination to prevent the spread of these weapons."

Perhaps if they had more time, his wordsmiths wouldn't have included the pivotal words "once again" to remind us that nothing the U.N. Security Council has done to date has deterred the North Koreans in any way from doing whatever they please in regard to building nuclear weapons or ICBMs. Mr. Obama might as well have mentioned that you can't say the word "unproductive" without using U.N.

Genocidal despots, such as those ruling in Pyongyang and Tehran, never have cowered in fear of a nonbinding U.N. Security Council resolution, because they know that the U.N. has raised irrelevance to a new level. They do, however, pay attention to reality — such as what we're buying to defend ourselves.

Unfortunately, less than 24 hours after Mr. Obama mentioned the North Korean "provocation" and Iran's "dangerous pursuit of nuclear weapons," his defense budget revealed how seriously he takes those and other threats. The O-Team intends to reduce our ability to project power overseas and to protect the American people from nuclear attack.

If the Obama defense budget is approved as submitted, we will increase spending on protecting our troops ashore and fleet at sea from attack by ballistic missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction but cut homeland ballistic missile defense by \$1.4 billion. We will increase the number of small "littoral support ships" but reduce our ability to project power from the sea by cutting our carrier fleet from 12 battle groups to 10. We will not modernize ground combat mobility for the Army or the Marines, and POTUS will have to wait a few more years for a new helicopter.

Thankfully, the new budget does include much-needed funding for housing and facilities vital to our war fighters and their families. It also purchases more unmanned aerial vehicles and future F-35 multi-mission aircraft than originally contemplated, but it cuts the production line for the already proven F-22.

Taken together — the towering teleprompter talk and the hard realities of what Mr. Obama is willing to spend on defense — we had better pray that he is right. But then, this is Easter season — and a good time to pray.

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