



Clear and Present Danger; American's Enemies Target Democrats and Republicans Alike

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Bipartisan alliances have become a rarity in Washington. But this week, in a small room in the Capitol, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Democrat from Connecticut, and Sen. Jon Kyl, a Republican from Arizona, joined hands to create one. Or rather to re-create one. The Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) is a familiar name to any student of 20th Century foreign policy. Originally founded in 1950, its mission was to educate Americans about the reality of Soviet Communism. It's largely forgotten now, but during the Great Depression and World War II, many Americans had come to regard Joseph Stalin not as a mass murderer but as "Uncle Joe." In the 1970s, the

CPD was revitalized by Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, a Democrat who wanted to win the Cold War. This was at a time when it was becoming fashionable - not least in Paris -- to suggest that perhaps the Russians could teach the Americans a thing or two about human rights. In its third incarnation, with Senators Lieberman and Kyl as honorary chairmen, the CPD is to focus on terrorism and the movements that are using terrorism to damage and, ultimately they pray, destroy America and other "infidel lands." This comes at a time when many people are confused about who is fighting us, why they are fighting us and what links - ideological as well as

operational - there may be among those fighting us. "It has been the consistent mission of the CPD throughout its history to warn of dangers and to advocate for policies on a non-partisan basis," Sen. Lieberman said. In the current era, "We fear that many Americans may not fully understand the long-term goals of our enemies." Chief among those enemies, Sen. Lieberman said, are the "Islamists," the followers of a "totalitarian movement masquerading as a religion." The Baathists, who were led by Saddam Hussein in Iraq, also seek to do American harm. And James Woolsey, who served as President Clinton's first Director of Central Intelligence, and who joins the senators as Chairman of the CPD, includes the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia on the list. Sen. Kyl stressed all these groups are anti-freedom, anti-human rights, anti-democratic and anti-American - "new totalitarians" who, like the old totalitarians, are "bent on imposing their will on the free people of the world." Of late, they've been having their share of successes. Islamist terrorists in Spain almost certainly changed the outcome of a national election -- without writing an op-ed, airing a commercial or participating in a debate. This week, the Philippines, a fledgling democracy, pulled its troops from Iraq, as the terrorists had demanded in exchange for the release of a hostage. (It is curious how even as terrorists kidnap and kill to support the insurgents in Iraq, many otherwise intelligent people insist there is no connection between the terrorists and the insurgents in Iraq.) Could the bad guys defeat us? Sen. Kyl believes

that is conceivable -- if the terrorists succeed in their "strategy to terrorize, demoralize and divide America and its allies." To defend ourselves, he said, "will require that we come together much as did previous generations when they faced the threats of fascism and communism." But that will only happen if the phenomenon is properly understood. For too long, Ambassador Woolsey observed, too many policy makers have regarded terrorism as a law enforcement problem rather than a war. As a result, he said, "We didn't send aircraft carriers, we sent lawyers." Sen. Lieberman noted that Scoop Jackson recognized the reality of terrorism as far back as 1979, when he described it as a "modern form of warfare against the liberal democracies." Of course, 1979 was the year that followers of Ayatollah Khomeini seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held American diplomats hostage. The siege would continue for 444 days. The lack of a forceful U.S. response - combined with intense global media coverage -- would send a message that nothing succeeds like excess. Four years later, in Beirut, Hezbollah suicide-terrorists would murder more than 250 Americans. Once again, a feeble response would assure further escalation. The road to 9/11 was being paved. Ambassador Woolsey suggested that it has been difficult for Americans to respond to terrorism in part because "the terrorists say they are motivated by religion and Americans tend not to question other people's religions." But those fighting what they describe as a jihad - a holy war -- against the U.S., he added, "have as much to do with

Islam as Torquemada had to do with the Sermon on the Mount." Sen. Lieberman's (Scoop) Jacksonian posture puts him at odds not just with Democrats of the Michael Moore and Al Franken ilk, but also with Howard Dean and even his former running mate, Al Gore, who has moved far to the left since November 2000. Similarly, Sen. Kyl can expect to be shunned not just by Buchananites but also by the estab-

lishmentarian "neo-realists" in the GOP. Nor is it easy for a Democrat and a Republican to ignore politics in an election year - particularly this election year, a time when the divide between the two major parties is as wide as it's ever been. But, the senators agreed, that's exactly when their hard-nosed but non-partisan approach to preserving America's freedom and security may be needed most of all. -

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