

“BANDAR IS NOW CLEARLY THE TIP OF THE SPEAR”

Back in October, in response to the Saudis taking their toys and going home from the UN, I warned, “I worry they disengaged from the UN because they are considering alternative means of pursuing their interests, means that would be loudly condemned in that body.”

Yesterday, Dick Cheney lackey John Hannah wrote a remarkable screed about Saudi complaints. It starts by warning that Obama’s Iran deal’s “greatest impact is not ensuring that Iran doesn’t get the bomb, but that the Saudis will.” In part to support this, he describes Mr. Tip of the Spear’s close consultations with the Pakistanis (who not only have the bomb but have thousands of our troops held hostage to supply lines through Pakistan).

Bandar is now clearly the tip of the spear in King Abdullah’s efforts to combat the Iranian threat around the region – not to mention the principal point of contact in the kingdom’s thick relationship with Pakistan’s military and intelligence establishment.

Then after laying out the Saudi complaints (basically, that the US is not serving as meat in its efforts to extend its hegemony over the region), and after condemning John Kerry with a mix of emasculation and Saudi distrust, Hannah issues the threat Bandar likely suggested he issue:

An atmosphere this poisonous is dangerous, to say the least. The incentive for the Saudis to engage in all kinds of self-help that Washington would find less than beneficial, even destructive, is significant and rising. Driven into a corner, feeling largely

abandoned by their traditional superpower patron, no one should doubt that the Saudis will do what they believe is necessary to ensure their survival. It would be a mistake to underestimate their capacity to deliver some very unpleasant surprises: from the groups they feel compelled to support in their escalating proxy war with Iran, to the price of oil, to their sponsorship (and bankrolling) of a much expanded regional role for Russia and China at America's expense.

Ultimately, Hannah is warning that the Saudis will get – and, the suggestion is, with his language about “a very, very high price in blood, treasure, and U.S. interests,” use – the bomb.

But I can't help but return to his focus on Bandar bin Sultan, who had financial ties (via donations to charities) and potential foreknowledge of Saudi ties to the 9/11 attacks. Former Senator Bob Graham has renewed his effort to bring attention to the Saudi role in the attack, though that never seems to go anywhere. And whether you consider ops like Iran-Contra terrorism or not, Bandar is clearly the master of covert ops.

What kind of self-help has Bandar insinuated to Hannah he plans to pursue?