

TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF EMPIRE

One of my first reactions to the news that Nicolas Sarkozy told Obama he doesn't like Bibi Netanyahu is to note that Sarko is right.

"I cannot bear Netanyahu, he's a liar," Sarkozy told Obama, unaware that the microphones in their meeting room had been switched on, enabling reporters in a separate location to listen in to a simultaneous translation.

"You're fed up with him, but I have to deal with him even more often than you," Obama replied, according to the French interpreter.

Bibi **is** a liar. Particularly in the context of relations with the Palestinians, Bibi has repeatedly broken promises not to expand settlements.

Nevertheless, the Neocons are now gunning against Obama for his response—which was effectively non-committal.

Hell, it's not even like Obama responded by calling Bibi an ungrateful ally, like Bob Gates has said on the record.

But I couldn't help but connect this flap to the firing, last week, of the general in charge of training Afghans, John Allen.

Gen. John Allen, the commander of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, just announced that he fired Maj. Gen. Peter Fuller, the deputy commander of the crucial mission to train Afghan security forces. Fuller, a recent arrival to Afghanistan, gave a surprisingly harsh interview to *Politico* criticizing Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Afghan

generals he mentors as “isolated from reality.”

Allen is having none of it. “These unfortunate comments are neither indicative of our current solid relationship with the government of Afghanistan, its leadership, or our joint commitment to prevail here in Afghanistan,” Allen said in a statement.

His crime? Pointing out how ungrateful Hamid Karzai is for our efforts in Afghanistan (which is pretty similar to what Gates did with Bibi).

A senior U.S. Army officer in Afghanistan called key elements of the government “isolated from reality,” said they don’t appreciate America’s sacrifice for their nation and offered up some choice words for President Hamid Karzai.

[snip]

The two-star general flashed irritation when he brought up Karzai’s recent remarks that Afghanistan would side with Pakistan in a war against the U.S., blasting the president’s comments as “erratic,” and adding, “Why don’t you just poke me in the eye with a needle! You’ve got to be kidding me ... I’m sorry, we just gave you \$11.6 billion and now you’re telling me, ‘I don’t really care’?”

Now, frankly, I think Allen mistook our own actions for generosity rather than strategic self-interest. Gates, at least, seemed to acknowledge that we would continue to support Israel anyway out of our own (misguided) self-interest.

But it seems worth note that we are increasingly whining about the ungrateful response to our exercise of self-interest. And then trying to

pretend we didn't.