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Saudi Arabia's Counterterrorist Rationale

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Abstract. This article analyzes United States public discourse on the authenticity of the Saudi Arabian government's counterterrorism efforts.

One theme of United States (US) public discourse on Mideast terrorism and on global terrorism impelled by interpretations of Islam is that of the authenticity of Saudi Arabia's counterterrorist efforts.

Authenticity is questioned through the following statements: (1) A majority of the 9/11 hijackers were of Saudi Arabian nationality. (2) Public and private Saudi Arabian funds have been and continue to be transmitted to religious and humanitarian organizations. Some of these organizations, in turn, are conduits for terrorist support and operational funding. (3) The Saudi Arabian government has been less than completely cooperative in terrorism-related investigation and legal adjudication. Suspects are not made available for direct questioning by US authorities. Legal adjudication leading to conviction occurs without comprehensive investigation. Convicted individuals undergo the death penalty before comprehensive investigation has occurred. Terrorism suspects have been killed before legal adjudication. (4) Some so-called radical interpretations of Islam that have been implicated in the ideologies of some terrorists have their source in Saudi Arabia and are funded by public and private funds via religious schools.

In countering attacks on its counterterrorist authenticity, the Saudi Arabian government points out that terrorist groups have targeted it for hosting US military forces and other personnel. Logically, then, the US and Saudi Arabia are on the same side of the war against terrorism and counterterrorist efforts are obviously authentic.

However, there are counters to Saudi Arabian counters of attacks on its counterterrorist authenticity. One is that the Saudi Arabian government believes that authentic counterterrorist efforts would bring it more threat, risk, and damage than inauthentic ones. Another is that the government is, indeed, will-less or clueless on the nature of the terrorist threat and how to counter it. Still, another is that the government is supportive of the terrorism that seems on the surface to endanger it.

In all likelihood, there are multiple motives and multiple interpretations of motives fueling what seems to be Saudi counterterrorist inauthenticity in the eyes of the US government. Some of these can even be deemed synergistic with the US homeland security industry and the public exhortation towards a long-term war against terrorism with global reach. There is little doubt that Saudi assertions of counterterrorist authenticity denote not only authenticity but also authenticities. (See Alanazi, F. M.; & Rodrigues, A. (2003). Power bases and attribution in three cultures. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 143, 375-395; Facing facts about Saudi Arabia. (July 29, 2003). *The New York Times*, p. A26; Marghalani, K., Palmgreen, P., & Boyd, D. A. (2000). The utilization of direct satellite broadcasting (DBS) in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 42, 297-314; Otaibi, S.M. (2000). Political communication patterns in Saudi families: Limitations and results. *Dirasat: Human & Social Sciences*, 27, 13-29; Pollock, D. (1988). Saudi Arabia's King Khaled and King Fahd. In B. Kellerman & J.Z. Rubin, (Eds.). *Leadership and negotiation in the Middle East*. (pp. 140-165). Praeger Publishers.)