

# Terrorists Cheer Kerry's Rhetoric

By J. MICHAEL WALLER

Bin Laden, al-Sadr and Kim Jong-il are using John Kerry's defeatist anti-Bush campaign both to stir up anti-Americanism worldwide and to divide Americans.

**E**xploiting the liberties of free societies, terrorists are using the mass media to sow divisions among and within the democracies, terrorism experts report. The March bombing of the Madrid subway proved that low-budget terrorist attacks could be used to influence democratic elections and, by virtue of Spain's sudden military withdrawal from Iraq, to drive wedges between the staunchest allies in the international antiterrorism coalition. Senior Spanish and U.S. officials now believe al-Qaeda will plan more attacks in the United States to try to force President George W. Bush from office.

Playing directly into the terrorists' hands is Bush's increasingly shrill challenger, Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.). Democracies long have been vulnerable to manipulation by hostile foreign powers. President George Washington foresaw this in his Farewell Address of 1796. Though the popular notion is that the main point of the address was to warn against entangling alliances, the most persistent theme of Washington's speech was to warn against foreign subversion of America's democratic process. In his words, "It is easy to foresee that from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken, many artifices employed," to undermine the national identity and sense of purpose. Specifically, Washington feared that foreign adversaries would use the new

democratic system to turn Americans against themselves.

Even now, external enemies are attacking the political fortress of the United States and its democratic allies through propaganda by word and deed. In his taped statement aired on the Wahhabi satellite TV network Al-Jazeera on April 15, Osama bin Laden not only sought to divide Europe from the United States by offering a "truce" with European countries that pull out of the coalition in Iraq, the al-Qaeda leader also explicitly feasted on the feeding frenzy among bickering American politicians about whether President Bush was to blame for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.



Good propagandists will turn their enemies' words against them, and the best will sow suspicion and division among them. This is happening now in the United States, where the terrorist enemy and its allies are using the rhetoric of the current presidential campaign in their jihad against the nation. Previous cautions against rash campaign words that provide aid and comfort to the enemy were thrown out the window long ago. Kerry steadily has become more and more shrill in his denunciations of the president as a leader, a man and a politician. Straying from legitimate policy differences with Bush or a healthy national debate about how best to fight the terrorist enemy, the Democratic nominee in waiting has yanked off the safety and fired full auto at the president.

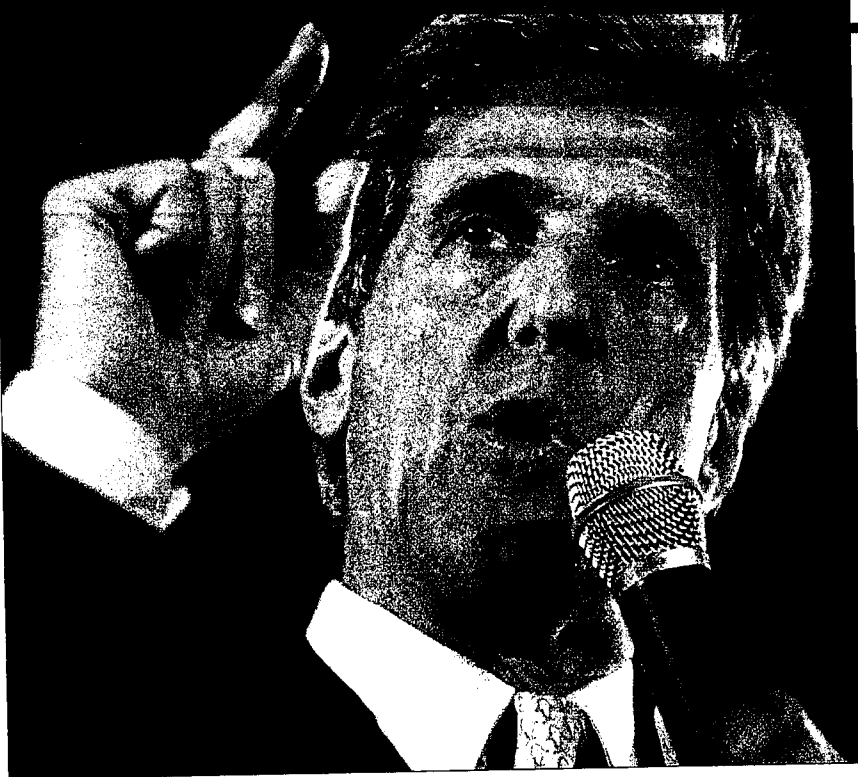
Al-Jazeera and other anti-U.S. propaganda outlets have been quick to magnify whatever Kerry says in an attempt to show what a failure the United States has become under the Bush presidency. Kerry's increasingly strident and careless statements on the campaign trail reverberate abroad. His foul-mouthed interview with *Rolling Stone* became part of an Al-Jazeera feature on March 16. Although Kerry voted to let the Iraq war go forward, the Wahhabi-owned TV network noted, "He has suggested Bush's handling of the campaign is 'f—ed up.'"

"Bush misled Americans on the degree Iraq posed a threat," Kerry said in the Al-Jazeera broadcast, and the president is not "working closely enough with the international community." Bush's exclusion of France and Germany from competition for U.S. taxpayer-funded contracts to rebuild Iraq, Kerry said, was "dumb and insulting." Al-Jazeera rebroadcast, in Arabic, Kerry's allegation that in combating terrorist structures inside the United States, Bush and the Department of Justice have smeared "innocent Muslims and Arabs who pose no danger."

Such words, one of Kerry's former Senate colleagues says, grind down the image of the United States abroad and damage Washington's efforts to maintain allies and supporters in the Arabic-speaking world. With near-daily doses of extreme and careless quotations from the anti-Bush camp, Arab audiences are led to believe the worst about U.S. intentions and policies in the war on terrorism. Rather than helping the war effort with positive alternatives

**Fanning the flames:** The anti-Bush camp has led Arab audiences to believe the worst about the president's intentions and policies in the war on terror.

LEO D. BRYLEN/THE WASHINGTON TIMES



to counterterrorist policies they consider flawed, Kerry and other politicians are fanning the flames of hostility in the Islamic world.

The government-controlled press in Syria generally ignored President Bush's State of the Union address in January, "but on its front pages highlighted criticism that came in its wake, particularly Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry's calling Bush's [foreign] policy 'arrogant and inept,'" according to the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), which monitors Middle Eastern news and propaganda organizations and publishes translations and analyses in English. Even in Jordan, an Arab kingdom that has been an ally in the war against the terrorists, the editor of the *Al-Arab Al-Yaum* newspaper commented, "When President Bush gave his address, to hearty applause by his party in Congress, the Democrats shook their heads in condemnation."

The Kerry campaign, meanwhile, is reported to have e-mailed messages to foreign media outlets, pledging to "repair the damage" that President Bush allegedly has inflicted on the world. The *Tehran Times*, an English-language newspaper in the Iranian capital, reported Feb. 8 that unnamed Kerry staffers sent an e-mail to the Tehran-based Mehr News Agency apologizing for the conduct of the United States in the war on terrorism and saying that Kerry is the man to make things new again. "Disappointment with current U.S. leadership is widespread,

extending not just to the corridors of power and politics but to the man and woman on the street as well," the message said. "We also remain convinced that John Kerry has the best chance of beating the incumbent in November and putting America on a new course that will lead to a safer, more secure and more stable world."

The Kerry campaign has claimed that all of this was the work of overseas Democrats and cannot be laid at the door of its candidate.

But recent statements from Sheik Moqtada al-Sadr, the extremist Iran-backed Shiite cleric whose guerrilla army has been killing U.S. soldiers and Marines, appear to echo this and some of Bush's other Democratic critics. Within 48 hours of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's (D-Mass.) first major characterization of Iraq as "another Vietnam," al-Sadr picked up the theme.

Soon after Kerry denounced Halliburton, the oil company formerly headed by Vice President Dick Cheney, bin Laden singled out the firm. "I stopped briefly at a gas station," Kerry said on March 30. "If prices stay that high, Dick Cheney and President Bush are going to have to carpool to work. Those aren't Exxon prices, they are Halliburton prices." In his recording released two weeks later, according to a MEMRI translation, bin Laden denounced major corporations but named only Halliburton: "This war makes millions of dollars for big corporations, either weapons manufacturers or those working in the reconstruc-

**Terrorist tool:** Sen. John Kerry's increasingly shrill challenge of President Bush is grinding down the image of the United States abroad and playing directly into the hands of anti-U.S. extremists such as (from top) Osama bin Laden, Sheik Moqtada al-Sadr and Kim Jong-il.

tion [of Iraq], such as Halliburton and its sister companies."

Former Sen. Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.) observed in a recent *Washington Post* commentary: "Instead of trying to chart a path of progress, many of the president's critics have devoted themselves to fomenting public despair over a war, which they keep repeating, should never have been fought. At the same time critics of the Bush administration insist it should have done more to combat al-Qaeda in Afghanistan before Sept 11." Thompson added, "They miss the more profound lesson that national tragedy should have instilled:

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## TERRORISTS CHEER RHETORIC

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that the only deterrent to terrorism is strength and that weakness — real and perceived — is an incitement to further attacks.”

The steady, daily attacks on the war and the motivations behind it, Thompson warns, risk undermining the strong international position of the United States and turning it into one of weakness.

“Weakness is when America’s leaders compare Iraq to Vietnam, announcing to the world a faltering resolve to see our mission through.” This signal, Thompson argues, causes wartime allies to lose heart. “To our allies in the Middle East and beyond, these predictions of defeat send a clear and chilling message to hedge their bets, because the United States cannot be counted on. And to our enemies, they can send an equally clear message: You can win.”

Neither Kerry nor his ally Kennedy seems to have learned from his own Vietnam experiences, say critics, when both used extremist rhetoric to sow defeatism

## The ‘Madrid Model’

Al-Qaeda may be planning to influence the American presidential elections this November, replicating the “Madrid model” of staging bloody terrorist attacks to intimidate voters into ousting leaders who aggressively fight terrorism. Some observers believe that its March 11 subway bombings in Madrid, which created an electoral backlash against Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar three days later, validated a model by which the terrorists could influence democratic societies to get rid of their tough-on-terrorism leaders.

Among the United States’ staunchest European allies, Aznar was one of the original European supporters of ousting Saddam Hussein. All pre-electoral polls showed his party winning re-election against Socialist Party candidate Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. But the subway bombings, which killed nearly 200 and injured more than 1,800, shook the confidence of the Spanish people and was the single largest factor in Zapatero’s surprise victory.

“The terrorists won,” according to Bob Brinker, a financial analyst and host of the syndicated radio program *MoneyTalk*. Watching how political events shape the markets, Brinker coined the term “Madrid model” in expectation of future attacks designed to manipulate the outcome of elections. In Brinker’s view, under the Madrid model the terrorists attack a democratic



at home even though U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were destroying the communist enemy on the ground.

As in Vietnam, the Kerry camp seems not to care. The very day bin Laden’s tape was broadcast, Kerry stood in East Rutherford, N.J., accusing the president of manipulating the

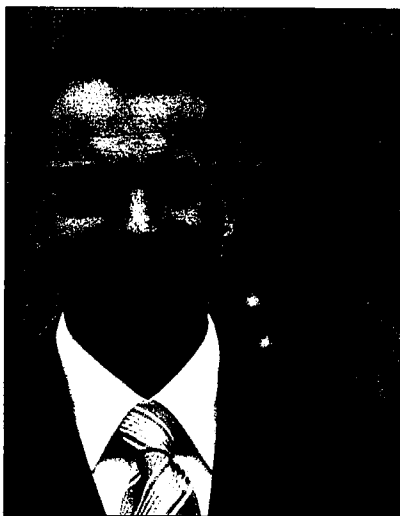
**Inside job:** Many on the left have devoted themselves to inciting public despair about U.S. military action in Iraq.

war for personal political gain. “Everything he did in Iraq, he’s going to try to persuade people it has to do with terror even though everybody here knows that it has nothing whatsoever to do with al-Qaeda and everything to do with an agenda that they had preset, determined,” Kerry said.

Islamist forces are not alone in using Kerry’s words against the United States. North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il, whose regime is on the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terrorism, also favors a new American president. The regime’s mouthpieces, including the Communist Party daily *Rodong Sinmun*, have been using Kerry’s statements as propaganda to discredit the U.S. government.

“North Korea has been paying keen attention to the U.S. presidential election in recent weeks, reporting Democratic presidential primaries and various opinion polls through its state media,” the English-language *Korea Times*, published in Seoul, reported in February. “Most of the reports are focusing on the criticism against Bush and Sen. John Kerry’s surge as viable presidential candidate.” Rebecca MacKinnon, former Beijing bureau chief for CNN and now a media fellow at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, says that North Korea’s state-controlled media have been portraying Kerry “in a positive light.”

As the *Financial Times* reported in February, “In the past few weeks, speeches by the Massachusetts senator have been broadcast on Radio Pyongyang and reported in glowing terms by the Korea Central News



CHRISTOPHE SIMON/AP

**Exerting influence:** Host referred to Spain’s Zapatero as an “al-Qaeda-installed prime minister.”

society, change the government and gain a military victory in Iraq by helping democratic antiwar politicians come to power. Brinker calls Zapatero an “al-Qaeda-installed prime minister.”

“Can you imagine the empowerment that al-Qaeda feels today?” Brinker said on his April 18 program. He predicted a repeat performance for the U.S. presidential election in November: “This is the last thing in the world you want to see happen.”

— JMW