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Opinion from THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST

OPINION : LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Unintentional back scratching

Published on October 27, 2006

Since 9/11 there has developed a bizarre symbiotic relationship between Osama bin Laden and President Bush.

Bush's Iraq policy, as he iterated over and over, has been "stay the course." Bin Laden, America's number-one foul foe, couldn't be more pleased with this policy. It fits perfectly into his ambitions. America's presence in Iraq is Osama's greatest recruiting tool, swelling the ranks of radical Muslims dedicated to killing Americans.

The Bush team seems equally opportunistic and ready to cash in politically on this relationship. The current Republican campaign ad that shows bin Laden and the ticking clock is a case in point. The not-so-subliminal message is that only the Bush team can prevent this fiend from another unspeakable terrorist plot like 9/11.

This cheesy commercial of fear (imitating bin Laden!) raises the question: Since the Republican Party has been in charge of our one-party state for the past five years, how come Osama is still on the loose?

The inconvenient and unpardonable fact is that in December 2001 American Special Operational Forces in Afghanistan had bin Laden trapped at Tora Bora in the White Mountains. When the key American field commander, Gary Bernstein, begged Washington for 800 rangers to block the al-Qaida leader's last avenue of escape, the request was denied. The Bush White House was preparing its pre-emptive war against Iraq and would not be diverted. (See Bernstein, "Jawbreaker," 2005)

JERRY MCKNIGHT

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