

12/2003

Re: Separation of Mosque and State

Dear Editor,

A report was recently broadcast on the changing attitudes of people in Iran about the desirability of theocracy. Apparently, after 25 years of government by religion, most Iranians feel that a reform to a more secular and democratic society would be in the best interests of their country. Some went so far as to say that the clerics, not being accountable to anyone but God, have become corrupted and are using religious law simply as a device to control and subjugate the people, by appealing to a belief in leaders divinely inspired by God.

The founding fathers of the United States were all too familiar to these dangers, but perhaps some Americans today might take heed from this example in Iran to realize that our leaders too can be corrupted by power and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. And is there anything more absolute than believing that your course to war is ordained by God?

Now we have William Boykin, the new deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, claiming that the Muslim God "was an idol," and that "our spiritual enemy will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus". These comments have inflamed the Mid East and given new strength and credence to terrorists around the world who have claimed all along that this is a holy war by the US. But the administration continues to defend him as not actually having broken "any rules".

Just as the citizens of Iran may be recognizing the necessity to separate mosque and state, to preserve our own freedoms we Americans should also be mindful and continue to cherish our democratic traditions and be vigilant of our enviable separation of church and state. Or at least what remains of it!

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