

Carrie Lehman, and Jerry Ritter. They have done a magnificent job.

If I left anybody off the payroll, I apologize.

I congratulate my good friend, Senator BINGAMAN, and Senator REID for making this possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for a period not to exceed 5 minutes each, with the exception of Senator BIDEN, who wishes to speak for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Delaware.

SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, today the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Prince Abdullah, met with President Bush in Crawford, TX. Based on the reports from that meeting, there were several items on the agenda, one of which was the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, and the other was the nature of the Saudi-U.S. bilateral relationship.

A report this morning in the New York Times said that the Crown Prince intended to deliver a "blunt message" to President Bush. Apparently, a Saudi official indicated after that meeting that oil would not be used as a weapon. Earlier, an unnamed Saudi official said that we, the United States, may face a "strategic debacle" unless we alter our relationship with Israel.

There is nothing wrong with blunt messages and blunt talk between friends. I am confident the President of the United States was equally blunt in the message he delivered. No doubt the Crown Prince discussed ways to advance his initiative with regard to Israel, a breakthrough that I publicly stated several times in recent weeks has not been fully appreciated by the world.

The Saudis had endorsed unanimously at the Arab League meeting last month in Beirut a plan that holds out hope for normal peaceful relations between Arab States and Israel. However, laying down that plan is not enough. It is time for more mature leadership.

We have been asked by the rest of the world and the Crown Prince to take an active role in supporting this plan. That is fine. However, I add, I hope the President discussed what active role the Saudis should take in dealing with peace in the Middle East. When the Crown Prince goes home, what concrete steps will he take to move the process forward, to create a new environment that builds trust and hope for a political settlement?

I am troubled by the apparent disconnect between the initiatives for

peace taken by the Crown Prince and his nation and the contradictory behavior that is prevalent in Saudi Arabia and its policies. For example, in March the Saudi newspaper, Al-Riyadh, carried a vile, anti-Semitic article by someone claiming to be a professor. The article resurrected the centuries-old blood libel that civilized people would have thought was a thing of the past. This Saudi professor, in a leading Saudi newspaper, wrote for the Jewish holidays: "Blood must be taken from a non-Jew, dried, and mixed with dough to make pastries." It goes on to say that using human blood in pastries was a "well-established fact historically and legally throughout the history of mankind and that this was one of the main reasons for the persecution of Jews and the exile of Jews in Europe and Asia at different times."

Finally, the article says: "The needles enter the body extremely slowly causing immense pain that gives the Jewish vampires extreme pleasure and they closely monitor this bloodletting in detail with pleasure and enjoyment that is beyond comprehension."

That is printed in a leading Saudi newspaper. The editor of that paper says that he was out of town when this article appeared, and later wrote that it was unworthy of publication.

Forgive me if I have a hard time believing that the article simply slipped through the cracks and that it was a fluke. I can believe many things about Saudi Arabia, but freedom of the press is not one of them. This article was published because no one who saw it believed that it contained anything offensive or untrue.

Imagine the outrage in Riyadh, in Cairo, in Amman, in the United Nations, and elsewhere if a Jewish professor published an article in an American paper saying that Muslim holiday feasts were prepared with the blood of ritually sacrificed Jews? Can anyone imagine what the Saudis would expect of the President of the United States, what the Saudis and the rest of the civilized world would rightly expect of all United States Senators who had nothing to do with it being published, but saw it published? The civilized world would demand of us, as they would have a right to, that we, the leaders of this country, stand up one at a time and disavow these vile, vile diatribes.

What did people expect of us, and what did our President do, when a group of mostly Saudi citizens killed thousands of Americans on the 11th? The President did the right thing. He stood up and he said: This is not about Saudi Arabia, this is not about Muslims. He did the right thing.

I wonder what would have happened had it been the reverse. I wonder what would happen.

It is time for some mature leadership here. It is not enough just to lay down a good plan—and it is a good plan the Saudi Crown Prince laid down and which was adopted in Beirut. What

would the Saudis expect us to say, though, were the roles reversed? What action would they demand of the President if in fact such vile lies were printed about Muslims and Saudis in an American paper? And what would the rest of the world have us say about such slander, in a country where there is freedom of the press, the United States?

Another example of this disconnect that baffles me is the recent telethon, ordered by King Fahd, which, according to press reports, raised over \$85 million for families of so-called Palestinian martyrs. According to the Saudi Government, these people are defined as people "victimized by Israeli terror and violence." But in the common parlance of the region, this term often refers to suicide bombers.

In the aftermath of September 11, in which 15 Saudis engaged in the most deadly suicide attacks in history, one would hope the Saudi Government might think twice before offering financial incentives for so-called martyrdom.

Imagine if the President of the United States and the Members of the Congress contributed to a telethon for someone who walked into a hotel in Riyadh and killed 100 Muslims. What would we say? What would we be expected to say? What would we think? What would happen if the President of the United States said: We condemn it, but we understand the frustration of the Saudi people, in having no democracy? We understand the frustration of the Jewish people, being victims of suicide bombing? It would be an outrage, an outrage. And the whole world would say: Where is the moral leadership of the United States?

But the Saudi support for the cult of martyrdom is not restricted to offering financial incentives. Recently the Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom wrote a poem entitled "The Martyrs." The poem appeared in Arabic language newspapers and praised Palestinian suicide bombers, particularly a young deranged Palestinian woman from a refugee camp who killed herself and two Israelis on March 29. The Ambassador refers to her as "the bride of loftiness."

This is written by the Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

She embraces death with a smile
while the leaders are running away from
death . . .

He goes on to say:

We complained to the idols of a white house
whose heart is filled with darkness.

Given the opportunity to renounce this poem, a Saudi spokesman said on United States television:

The ambassador is a very well known poet . . . he was expressing the anger and frustration people feel.

Give me a break. That is not good enough. I personally met with this spokesman, who is a fine man. I expected more from a man as educated and sophisticated as Mr. Al-Jubeir. If an American diplomat wrote a poem—