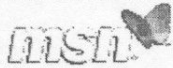


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fighting words A wartime lexicon.

Inside the Islamic Mafia

Bernard-Henri Lévy exposes Daniel Pearl's killers.

By Christopher Hitchens

Posted Thursday, September 25, 2003, at 10:18 AM PT

I remember laughing out loud, in what was admittedly a mirthless fashion, when Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, one of Osama Bin Laden's most heavy-duty deputies, was arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Straining to think of an apt comparison, I fail badly. But what if, say, the Unabomber had been found hiding out in the environs of West Point or Fort Bragg? Rawalpindi is to the Pakistani military elite what Sandhurst is to the British, or St Cyr used to be to the French. It's not some boiling slum: It's the manicured and well-patrolled suburb of the officer class, very handy for the capital city of Islamabad if you want to mount a coup, and the site of Flashman's Hotel if you are one of those who enjoys the incomparable imperial adventure-stories of George MacDonald Fraser. Who, seeking to evade capture, would find a safe house in such a citadel?

Yet, in the general relief at the arrest of this outstanding thug, that aspect of the matter drew insufficient attention. Many words of praise were uttered, in official American circles, for the exemplary cooperation displayed by our gallant Pakistani allies. But what else do these allies have to trade, except al-Qaida and Taliban suspects, in return for the enormous stipend they receive from the U.S. treasury? Could it be that, every now and then, a small trade is made in order to keep the larger trade going?

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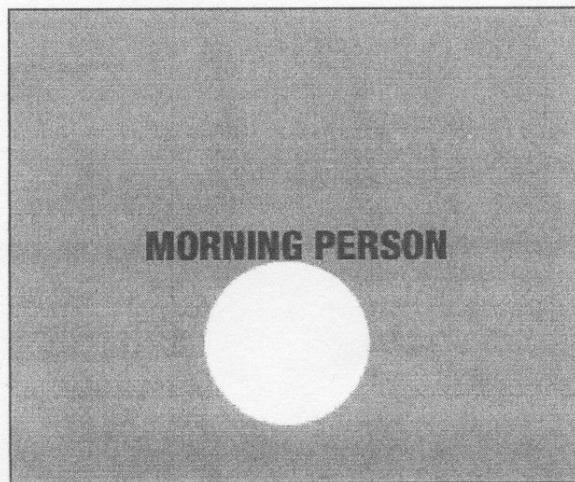
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