

HOW MANY TERRORISTS DOES ONE F-16 GET YOU?

Fred Kaplan tries to teach BushCo a lesson about cooperating with unsavory regimes by pointing out the central role Pakistan played in yesterday's big terrorist bust.

There's a broader lesson here, and it speaks to the Bushadministration's present jam throughout the Middle East and in other danger zones. If the British had adopted the same policy toward dealing with Pakistan that Bush has adopted toward dealing with, say, Syria or Iran (namely, it's an evil regime, and we don't speak with evil regimes), then a lot of passenger planes would have shattered and spilled into the ocean, hundreds or thousands of people would have died, and the world would have suddenly been plunged into very scary territory.

This is not one of Kaplan's strongest articles. He makes an important point about our relationship with Syria and Iran, sure. But to play up BushCo's short-sightedness on Syria and Iran, Kaplan pretends that only Britain cooperated with Pakistan's ISI on this terrorist bust. Kaplan thereby ignores that the US—in both this bust and the war on terror more generally—has precisely the kind of relationship he would advocate, one cognizant of the fact that, "the concept of morality in international relations is more complex than President Bush sometimes seems to recognize." Indeed, I have a suspicion that Pakistan's involvement here may raise some very challenging questions about our cooperation with them on the war on terror.

Consider how Pakistan itself describes its involvement in this terrorist bust.