

AQ TO CIA: YOU ARE THE EMPIRE, AND WE ARE LUKE AND HAN

I loathed Star Wars, The Force Awakens. Loathed it.

I hated it so much I made myself go back and watch 1 through 6 again, to try to understand what even Jar Jar Binks (in my admittedly lonely opinion, though I urge you to go back and watch those early ones again) had on Disney's creation. Along the way, in addition to realizing that The Empire never thought to fix the vulnerability that allowed R2D2 to hack each new-and-improved Death Star instantaneously, I realized The Force Awakens should have, instead of replaying the same Star Wars story over again, talked about what went wrong with the Rebel Alliance, which after all shouldn't have remained the rebels for long. Why couldn't, didn't, our noble heroes set up a sound society to replace The Empire? Instead, somehow, The Empire gets rebooted once again, without dealing with the fact that The Empire *this time* should have been the rebels in charge.

I realized, as I was watching over the movies again, how for some of the same time the US was celebrating Luke and Han on the wide screen, we were secretly backing our own group of theocratic rebels in the desert as they fought an evil empire (I assume our Hollywood President enjoyed the parallel). I'm the generation of Star Wars. I was raised believing in our scrappy victory over Evil. But it's all too clear, now, that we're not the rebels, if we ever were. The theocratic rebels we helped blow up a Death Star in 1977 went on to blow up our Death Star, and the endless series of sequels against these rebels is bleeding us dry.

The Force Awakens didn't deal with the fact that the US has become (if it wasn't already, in 1977) The Empire; the movie shied away from

contemplating that fact.

Of course, that made the observation from this video – from an al Qaeda fighter (presumably captured) – all the more striking to me.

An al Qaeda fighter made a point once in a debriefing. He said, all these movies that America makes, like *Independence Day* and *Hunger Games* and *Star Wars*, they're all about a small scrappy band of rebels who will do anything in their power with the limited resources available to them to expel an outside, technologically advanced invader. And what you don't realize, he said, is that to us, the rest of the world, you are The Empire, and we are Luke and Han. You are the aliens and we are Will Smith.

Hollywood is still making movies that cover up this fact.

But it's not fooling much of the rest of the world.

Update: As happened with Syed Rizwan Farook, the tabloid press managed to get into the culprit's home. Both his 3-year old kid's bedroom and the bathroom are completely decked out in Star Wars gear.