

سفارة المملكة العربية السعودية
في واشنطن

OFFICE OF
THE AMBASSADOR

ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA
601 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20037

April 1, 2003

Newsweek Inc. Editorial Department
Letters to the Editor
251 West 57th Street
New York, N Y 10019-1894

To The Editor:

The Newsweek Web Exclusive "With Friends Like These" [March 26, 2003], "accuses" Saudi Arabia of providing legal assistance to Saudi citizens detained as part of the U.S. Justice Department's investigation into terrorism.

It has always been Saudi policy to provide legal assistance to any citizen in any country outside of our own, in respect of any legal difficulties. Your piece makes it seem as if this is the only instance in which the Kingdom would provide legal aid to its citizens. That could not be further from the truth. If a Saudi citizen were accused of shoplifting in Australia, it would be the duty of the Saudi Embassy there to provide legal aid to that citizen.

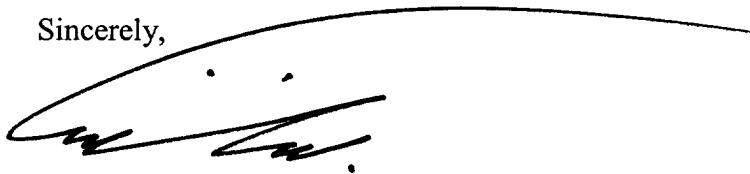
Furthermore, the story accuses the Embassy of providing "top-flight" defense lawyers. The United States prides itself on the ideal that all citizens enjoy a right to counsel, and the Kingdom agrees wholeheartedly. But should we provide inadequate and poorly prepared counsel? Does the United States provide lawyers lacking in training to citizens detained for crimes abroad? Absolutely not, and to excoriate the Kingdom for providing good attorneys instead of poor ones is hypocritical at best, and inane at worst.

It also seems that Newsweek is jumping to conclusions about the guilt or innocence of those detained. The story's tone derides the Kingdom for providing lawyers to suspects, not citizens charged with a crime. The United States' entire legal system revolves around the ideal that people are innocent until proven guilty beyond any reasonable doubt. Is there something wrong with providing legal counsel to citizens who may be innocent? Your piece certainly seems to indict, bring to trial and convict those citizens and the Kingdom does not think that Newsweek favors these ideals only for Americans and not for citizens of other nations.

Newsweek Inc. Editorial Department
Letters to the Editor
Page 2

Cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia in counter-terrorism has been described at the highest levels of the U.S. government as excellent. Ari Fleischer, spokesman for the President, has said: "Saudi Arabia has indeed been helpful. In fighting the financial war on terrorism, on helping arrest terrorists, on information sharing, Saudi Arabia has been a good partner." We have absolutely nothing to hide. We too have been the victims of terrorism and we are committed to working with the United States in this endeavor. Yet, all of your sources were quoted anonymously. If these sources truly have issues with Saudi Arabia, then they should feel free to go on record so that we may address their concerns with the real facts. The Kingdom and its Embassy can only truly work in concert with real people, not "anonymous sources."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz', written over a large, thin, curved line that spans across the signature area.

Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz
Ambassador