

# The Delray Democrat

## Pensacola was Preventable<sup>1</sup>

*Rob Resnick*

There should never be occasion to question whether the enemy has infiltrated our ranks, yet this was exactly the horrific failure that led to the tragic shooting at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. It was absolutely terrorism, despite President Trump's deflections. I will not repeat the social media commentary that accompanied this horrific and spineless act of mass murder. That gives life to the illegitimate. Suffice it to say the message and intent of those involved was clear. Ironically, it appears that these Saudi Arabian officers were upset in part by the U.S. support of their own nation's defense. The takeaway is that there is just no logic or sincerity in anything they posit, just an insidious quest for senseless violence by evil cowards.

When Saudi Arabia, or any country, sends military officers to train here, they must certify the individuals and guarantee they are not terror threats. If we and the sending nation cannot properly vet certain candidates, they should not be admitted. The Saudi leadership has much better fidelity over their personnel than we would. Are we to believe that they vetted all of these officers and all satisfied the process? How could they have gotten it so wrong with a group of officers attending this program. We have strong candidates from many nations vying for slots so why did Saudi Arabia get so many into one program to the exclusion of so many other friendly nations? It all relates back to a flawed relationship between the U.S. and Saudis.

The Saudi leadership is wholly complicit and shame on our senior leaders who continue to see them as reliable friends and partners. Remember, the Saudis never accounted for how all but one of the 9/11 terrorists were Saudi Arabian and our government has unfathomably protected them ever since. More recently, the Saudis have not accounted for their torture-murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Saudi Arabia produces or supports some of the worst extremists in the region and exports their hatred and violence around the world. We should work with the Saudis where we have common interests and seek good relations. However, we have no basis to trust them or partner with them. They should not be allowed into our military schools until such time as they demonstrate true commitment against terrorism, extremism, and violence. Our military readiness and safety must come first.

We understandably look for blame in the face of such atrocity. Plainly stated, the blame lies with those who committed the act. They did this and they should suffer the eternal consequences. That said, there is also moral responsibility. As discussed, the Saudi leadership bears significant responsibility. President Trump bears some responsibility. His close ties with the Saudi royal family led to misplaced trust in them and increased involvement. The NRA bears some responsibility. The shooter legally purchased his weapon in Florida. The NRA opposes restricting even those on the terror watch list from purchasing weapons. Maybe a

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<sup>1</sup> *The Delray Democrat*, January 2020, p. 6.

reasonable background check could have red-flagged this purchase, but the NRA opposes those as well.

The amazing, dedicated professionals at Pensacola will continue their great work. They should never again have to fear an enemy in their ranks. If any good comes from this tragedy, it is the hope that we improve the selection, vetting, and admittance process for foreign military members.