

11TH SEPTEMBER
AND THE AFTERMATH

UPDATED COMMENTS

Events of 9/11

2 October 2001

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



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Prof. khurshid Ahmad

(Professor Khurshid Ahmad is ex-Minister of Planning, Government of Pakistan and is a specialist on international and economic affairs. He is also a vice-president of the Jama 'at Islami, Pakistan.)

The text is in bullet points for brevity:

- The attacks on America leave us all very sad and our sympathies are with the innocent people that have suffered.
- Muslims should express unreserved condemnation of such terrorist attacks whoever may have committed them, for Islam stands for sanctity of human life and even in a state of war differentiates between the belligerent and non-belligerent.
- People of around 46 countries have been affected by these tragic attacks, including 11 Muslim countries. In all, it is estimated that over 1,000 Muslim lives have been lost in the World Trade Centre disaster.
- Terrorism cannot be defeated by war or counter- terrorism. The term terrorism' is very difficult to define - one man's terrorism can be another man's struggle for freedom. You cannot really declare war against terrorism, except in metaphoric terms as war on poverty, on AIDS, on drugs, etc. But such a use of the term 'war' is not the conventional political one. When Pearl Harbor was bombed it was easy to define an enemy, there were clear sides, this is not the case with terrorism in the contemporary world.
- Retaliation and revenge will only lead to an escalation of violence. Terrorism must be dealt with, it must be condemned, contained and defeated, but retaliation by force will not achieve this. Force is not the answer because the enemy is not a clear and single entity. A bombardment of a suspected country will only fuel more anger and violence, as it would also be unjust and criminal, resulting in loss of innocent life and property.
- Terrorism is a tactic used by people in desperation; people of different faiths and ethnicity. The US has supported the IRA; terrorism by Zionists is a historical fact. Israel, Spain, Sri Lanka, Quebec, Philippines, and India - all have their own brand of terrorism. To focus on only Arabs / Muslims is discriminatory and selective.
- It is only by addressing the causes of terrorism and the issues of contention between groups of people that terrorism can be dealt with. The situation in the Northern

Ireland has only been eased somewhat by long-term negotiations with the IRA and bringing members of this group into the political process. Israeli terrorists such as Ben Gurion and Begin, were allowed to become statesmen and champions of 'peace'. The Philippines is approaching peace and addressing the grievances of people who were forced to resort to violence. There is no military solution to such problems - only the political process can lead to solutions on the basis of justice and accommodation.

- At a time like this the pursuit must be for justice, not revenge. It is not correct to blame Muslims, while no established facts have been brought to light. People are innocent until proven guilty and the burden of proof lies on the accuser. This is the case from both legal and common sense perspectives.
- It is not a matter of defending Usama bin Laden or the Taliban. If bin Laden is found to be guilty then he must be punished. But this has to happen through a fair trial by an impartial authority according to international law.
- At the moment the US is acting as the accuser, judge, prosecutor and executioner. This is not acceptable in any legal system.
- Such actions can only ferment further anti-American feelings.
- It seems illogical that bin Laden, given his reclusive position and the amount of attention paid to him by surveillance experts, would be in a position to plan or carry out such a sophisticated and coordinated attack by remote control. The attack was, no doubt, a very professional operation. It is highly unlikely that bin Laden would have the necessary resources, material or otherwise to do this. Most of bin Laden's millions have been frozen in Saudi Arabia, and he is reported to be left with only a very limited amount of financial resources.
- The US currently spends around \$30 billion on the CIA around \$3 billion on the FBI, \$6.5 billion on National Security systems, \$11 billion on other intelligence agencies attached to different Federal Departments and a further \$27 on non-intelligence information agencies. It has also now secured another \$40 billion from congress, partly to capture the perpetrators of the attack. The real failure is that such huge amounts of money have been spent and yet nothing could be done to prevent this attack. Can such a catastrophic intelligence failure be covered by scapegoats?
- How could 4 airplanes be hijacked from such leading airports? Why was the movement of the planes not tracked, especially when they changed course? Given the delay of some 18 minutes between the first two attacks and some 30 minutes between the second and third, why was nothing done by the military? The fact is

that a system propped up by billions of dollars of taxpayers' money, and run by the most sophisticated nation in the world, failed.

- There is much doubt regarding the people that have been alleged to be the hijackers. It seems one of them died some time ago, another is still living! Some of them have lifestyles (such as drinking alcohol, having girlfriends, visiting discos, etc.) that are not in line with religious fundamentalism!
- One cannot rule out the involvement of local terrorist groups. McVeigh was not operating alone and he admitted that he wanted to kill the largest number of people possible.
- Anti-American feeling is not restricted to Muslim groups. The protests in Seattle, London, Genoa, and other places show this. There is a fear of what will happen at the next meeting of the G8. The US could not get itself elected onto such UN bodies as the Human Rights Commission and Anti-Narcotics Commission primarily because of anti-American backlash. All this shows that there is actually popular antagonism against the US because of its policies, which have hegemonistic overtones and suffer from double standards. The US must analyze why there is so much distrust and disillusionment?
- Israel uses American supplied F16s to bombard buildings in Palestine. If the US condones such actions and even supports them, then it is bound to attract very strong feelings of condemnation.
- Bombarding Afghanistan will not solve the problems mentioned above. It also seems that a key objective the US is pursuing is access to Central Asia in pursuit of its oil and mineral resources. This will need ground troops, but America must learn from the British and Russians bitter experiences of ground assaults on Afghanistan.
- In the past, US interests have been attacked in Lebanon, Somalia, Greece, even its ally, Israel, has carried out such attacks. There seems to be dual standards in dealing with this range of aggression against US interests.
- One must ask who benefits from these incidents.' Certainly not the Arabs or Afghanistan" Israel does, because it detracts the world's attention from the accusations leveled against it in the UN Conference in Durban just a few days prior. Israel has also taken the opportunity to step up attacks against Palestinians. The Zionist movement has shown that it can kill even its own people to achieve its objectives - e.g. the sinking of a ship carrying Jewish refugees from Germany and Poland during WWII. Other groups to benefit are the military and intelligence industries that are now in a position to demand increased resources. There are

many candidates who might have a finger in the pie. Only facts and not rhetoric can convince the world as to who is responsible for the devastation of 11th September 2001.

- Over 400 persons have been interrogated in the US and several dozen in Europe, yet upto 2nd October only 1 person has been charged. This indicates that no clear justifiable linkage has so far been discovered. The Independent and Observer on 30th September also mentioned that investigations have been inconclusive. The question this begs is that despite this factual position, why is the media and the Anglo-US leadership so aggressively sticking to the accusations against bin Laden and Afghanistan?
 - In light of the past 3 weeks, it is high time that the Muslim leadership and ummah devise a clear strategy to face this situation. The demonization of Islam and Muslims cannot continue like this and go unchecked and unchallenged. The Tamil Tigers violent movement in Sri Lanka is not projected as Hindu terrorism, the IRA is not projected as engaged in Catholic terrorism, as with the violence of any other religious extremists. Why is the Muslim community targeted in this discriminative and scandalous manner?
 - In the US there have already been hundreds of violent attacks on Muslims; over 350 have been registered with the police. This picture is also repeated in other parts of the Western World. The fear is that if there is an attack on Afghanistan, things will get much worse.
 - Muslims must always react in a manner in accordance with their faith and civil traditions, this is the only way we can overcome the aggression, which will be further escalated by irrational behaviour.
 - Muslims must use this opportunity to open dialogue at all levels to defend their faith and community and invite people who stand for justice and human rights to work with them to save human society from terrorization, which the US reaction is leading to.
 - It is sad that the OIC has been sleeping and the Muslim governments have not responded to these events in a more positive manner. This failure of leadership is causing concern among the masses. But the Muslim response at all levels must be firm yet peaceful, balanced, dignified and effective. Lack of response is as damaging as ill-thought out response and emotional outburst. This is also an opportunity for Da'wah, building bridges and mobilizing support from all people towards a just, civilized society.
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