POINT [#]COUNTERPOINT

To win the war on terror, America must tackle Israel first

DR. FAKHRUDDIN AHMED writes

N the aftermath of September 11, there was a hope that before the inevitable American retaliation, there would be a few moments of American reflection on the possible causes behind the atrocious attack on America. Indeed, a few columnists, notably Richard Cohen of The Washington Post, and patriots like President Carter's national security chief, Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski, began the process of dissection, and slowly but surely pointed the finger at Israel. Alarmed Jewish neoconservatives went into overdrive, and through the media they control made such reflection not only unpatriotic but treasonous as well. They very successfully changed the subject, and while placing all the blame on the terrorists snuffed out any discussion on whether American policies may have played an indirect role in creating and sustaining them. They have succeeded in forcing the Bush Administration to abandon justice and charity, on which America was founded, and substitute those with greed and vengeance, as the major components of American foreign policy.

Reading the columns of The Washington Post and Time magazine's neoconservative Charles "I cover for Bush" Krauthammer Newsweek's Mumbai-bred Fareed "I am more American than the Americans" Zakaria and The New York Times' Tom "I have all the answers" Friedman, one gets the impression that the history between America and Iraq goes They back only to last March. believe that all President Bush needs to do to win in Iraq is to ignore the world that was not really sympathetic towards the US even after 9/11, pacify the Sunni triangle and win the battle of ideas against militant Islam. In his latest Time piece Krauthammer makes the outrageous claim that Bush should not attend funerals of American soldiers because the insurgents will "be encouraged to think their strategy is succeeding and therefore have yet more incentive to keep killing Americans." Wasn't the whole idea behind the invasion not to let the terrorists dictate American behaviour? Of course, none of these "experts" had bothered to consult the Iraqi people. If they had, the Iraqis would have recited a litany of complaints: "You encouraged Saddam to attack your enemy Iran in 1980, and the decade-long war cost us billions. Your Jewish Ambassador Gillespie told Saddam that the US would not take sides in a dispute between two Arab states (Iraq and Kuwait), which Saddam took to be a green

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Over the last 55 years, Muslim anger has been building up at the US's automatic veto to spare Israel of the consequences of its criminally outrageous abuses of the lives, property and dignity of the Palestinians. Al Qaeda terrorists feast on such anger. The unfortunate fact is, as long as America's injustice towards the Palestinians continues, so will Al Qaeda. President Bush's 100% tilt towards Sharon's Israel will only exacerbate American's security problems. Al Qaeda has equated the UN with the US. That is why last August they bombed the UN compound in Baghdad.

light to attack Kuwait in 1990. After Iraqis forever.

your victory in Gulf War I in 1991, you encouraged the Shias and the Kurds to rise up against Saddam and then abandoned them to Saddam's brutal retaliation. Saddam did not bomb us; you bombed us for 13-years. You took the lead in enacting crippling UNsanctions against Iraq that killed millions of Iraqi men, women and children and turned prosperous Iraq into pauper Iraq. You invaded Iraq; we did not invite you. You want to bomb us into democracy; we don't like being bombed. Your soldiers barge into our homes, take our men away, and destroy our buildings like Israel does to the Palestinians. You are here to help Israel and steal our oil, and then you want us to call you "libera-

tors? In Iraq America is up against Iraqi nationalism. Even if America paves all the roads in Iraq with gold, attacks against American interests and personnel will continue, because the Iraqis do not want them in their country. Nationalism is a powerful disease that infects the whole nation, which then stands up as one. Paraphrasing a comment that heavyweight boxing legend Muhammad Ali had made in a completely different context about his opponent Ken Norton, before the world's super power America took on Vietnam in the 1960s, Vietnam was a nobody. National-ism made Vietnam such a somebody that it defeated the superpower America. After America left, Vietnam is again a nobody! Remember how we Bangladeshis rose up as one to fight the Pakistanis in 1971? And in spite of the might of each of the three nations, Lanka has not been able to defeat the Tamils, India the Kashmiris and Russia the Chechens. And over the last fiftyfive years, six million Jews of Israel armed to the teeth with American weaponry have not been able to defeat the unarmed 3.5 million Palestinians. Only the hopelessly

The Jewish neoconservatives had bet, correctly, that even if the US invaded Iraq unilaterally bypassing the UN, once they were there the nation and politicians of every stripe would have to rally around the troops and by exten-sion the cause. Every politician, including New York Senator Hillary Clinton who visited the troops in Afghanistan and Iraq over the Thanksgiving holidays, is now saying that America must not leave Iraq without defeating the terror-ists first. Democratic Presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich provides the flip side of this argument: 'If the invasion was wrong in the first place, why should it be wrong to withdraw now?" The bottom line is, whatever happens in Iraq will have little consequence on the

war on terror. Whether the US defeats the "dead-enders,' "assassins," and "terror-'thugs," ists" in Iraq or are defeated by them will have absolutely no impact on the terrorism of Al Qaeda (70% of Americans agree). What will have an enormous impact is America's stance in the Middle East. According to former President Carter, Mr. Bush's current Middle East stance is "an ostentatious alliance between the White House and the Sharon government, I think to the detriment of our national image and to the detriment of an eventual peace agreement." Unless the Bush administration redresses the root cause of Islamic terrorism --America's 100% support for Israeli terrorism -- according to Noam Chomsky, America is condemned to fighting a perpetual war on terror.

The feeling in the Islamic world is that the United Nations Security Council exists for three Ps to Promote western interests, to Protect Israel and to Punish Muslims! Whenever a single nation casts a single veto in the Security Council, it knows that legally and morally it is wrong. The veto is cast because the vetoing nation could not persuade any other nation to agree with it. Whenever the same resolution is presented in the toothless General Assembly, the vote is

usually 136-4, with only US, Israel, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands voting against the resolution. Over the last 55 years, Muslim anger has been building up at the US's automatic veto to spare Israel of the consequences of its criminally outrageous abuses of the lives, property and dignity of the Palestinians. Al Qaeda terrorists feast on such anger. The unfortunate fact is, as long as America's injustice towards the Palestinians continues, so will Al Qaeda. President Bush's 100% tilt towards Sharon's Israel will only exacerbate American's security problems. Al Qaeda has equated the UN with the US. That is why last August they bombed the UN compound in Baghdad.

The challenge for any American President is formidable. Jews are single-issue voters. When the interests of Israel are at stake, party label matters little. Sensing Senior Bush's coolness towards Israel in

1992, life-long Republicans such as The New York Times' William Safire and A. M. Rosenthal campaigned vigourously against the sitting Republican President! Presidents Carter and Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu and every other living Nobel Peace Prize winners, except two, opposed the war against Iraq. Nobel Peace laureates from Ireland were arrested for demonstrating against the war in front of the White House. Yet, the only two peace laureates who supported the preemptive war (isn't it ironic that peace winners were supporting war?) were the two Israelis: Shimon Peres and Elie Wiesel. The most hawkish advocate of war among the Democratic presidential candidates is the ewish Senator from Connecticut, Joseph Lieberman. When a Virgin-ian Congressman Moran stated the obvious, that the Jews were leading America into war against Iraq,

Zionist-controlled press jumped all over him and made him regret and repent. The Jewish Senator from Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, has just introduced a bill to punish Saudi Arabia. The bill is co-sponsored by none other than chumer! If one were to question why Jewish legislators were abusing their powers to help Israel by punishing Israel's enemies and harming America's long-term interests, you would be crucified! is as though the Zionists are afraid to be judged by what they do. Because the European Christians exterminated the European Jews in the holocaust, the Jews hide behind t h e ade of collective victim hood ("anti-Semitism"), even as, in a role reversal, they inflict similar atrocities on the Palestinians. Opinions such as the writer's is promptly denounced as anti-Semitism by the Zionists even though the best friend of the writer's youngest son is a wonder-ful Jewish kid who comes and stays in our house, and even though we think the world of his

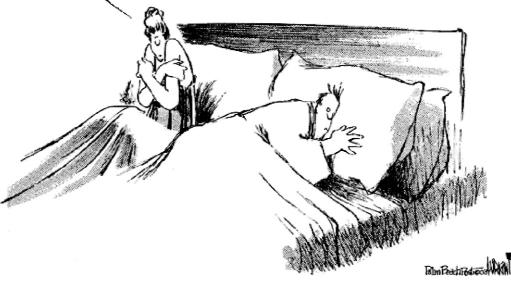
America is unquestionably the world's military leader. The problem for Mr. Bush and America is that to be the world's moral leader it has to be just and fair. One cannot claim moral leadership by asking everyone to ignore a major sin, such as, adultery. Israel is America's adultery!

parents

... JUDGES IN BLACK ROBES GAVE THE U.S. TO A MAN WHO SPOKE IN ODD, STUMBLY SENTENCES. HE STARTED A WAR IN SOME DESERT COUNTRY. PEOPLE CHEERED, CONGRESS OUR TROOPS COMING HOME IN COFFINS THANK GOD IT WAS ONLY A NIGHTMARE!

Jewish legislators, such as New

York's Charles Schumer and the



9-11: The biggest intelligence failure in US history



After reading While America Slept, it's easy to conclude that the failure to prevent 9-11 was, without question, the biggest intelligence blunder in US history. The apologists for the fiasco will counter that any government could look bad in hindsight, that's its often difficult to gather and interpret intelligence and that officials can make honest mistakes . . . blah, blah, blah.

government.

The CIA and FBI were track-

ing several of the 9-11 hijackers

after they entered the US, more

than 20 months before the 9-11

In July 2001, the FBI's Phoe-

nix, Arizona office sent a memo

to the Bureau's head office in

Washington, DC, suggesting it

investigate whether Islamic

fundamentalists were training

at American flight schools. "This

memo never made it above

middle management at the FBI

headquarters," Posner reveals. -

But what's really disturbing is to

learn about the rivalries, jealou-

sies, stonewalling and petty

spats that went on between the

FBI and CIA, the US's two major

intelligence gathering agencies,

as the terrorists plotted to

destroy their enemy. To cite one

example -- the FBI asked the CIA

to conduct a background check

on the individuals listed in the

Phoenix memo, but did not

share the contents of the memo

Posner reserves his most

explosive revelation for the last

chapter -- the double game

radical Islamic fundamentalist

leaning intelligence officials in

Pakistan and members of the

Waffling Wahabi royal family of

Saudi Arabia have played in the

War on Terrorism. Posner's

with the agency.

attack, but lost them.

UESTION -- Is this weird tale A) true or B) a figment spun by my wild imagination? In December 1993, radical Arab organisations, including representatives of Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, held a meeting in Detroit, Michigan, to discuss how best to wage war against the "infidels" of the West. Many fiery speeches were made. At the conference was a local FBI agent who believed he was attending

RON CHEPESIUK

The FBI agent stood on the podium before the hostile gathering and fielded questions. "What's the best way to ship weapons from the US to friends living overseas?" one of the radical attendees asked. "Make sure you the guidelines of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (a federal agency) when you send the weapons," the agent responded matter-offactly.

"some kind of Rotary Club"

affair.

The answer -- the meeting and exchange actually happened ten months after the first World Trade Center bombing and in the middle of first trial of those implicated in the terrorist attack. This bizarre incident is recounted in a timely book by veteran investigative journalist Gerald Posner. Titled While America Slept: The Failure to Prevent 9-11 (Random House, New York), the fascinating and well-documented book is an indictment of not just the chief U.S. intelligence agencies, the FBI and CIA, but also US presidential administrations from Gerald Ford to George, Jr., the

findings not only confirm the secret deal Saudi Arabia worked out with Bin Laden in 1991 to keep his murderous attention away from the kingdom, but provides startling insight into what went on in the interrogation of Abu Zubaydah, one of Bin Laden's most trusted lieutenants

According to two anonymous CIA sources, who spoke independently to Posner, Zubaydah told his interrogators that Prince Ahmed, a nephew of Saudi King Fahd, and Mushaf Mir, a high ranking Pakistani military officer with close ties to elements within ISI, the Pakistani agency, most sympathetic to Bin Laden and radical Islamic fundamentalism, knew beforehand that an attack on American soil was scheduled for 9-11, although they didn't know what kind it would be.

Environmental hazards: Are we dealing with them properly?

compounds of fluorine) was developed first in the 1930s and used by tional issues (like for example, the

optimistic, therefore, would think

that 130,000 American troops

would be able to subdue 25 million

Now, as on many other interna- sphere .to form highly toxic for the relatively low compliance Agency in Paris, "The increase in sulphuric and nitric acids, which costs in Russia, and thus obtain greenhouse gas emissions from 2000 to 2030 in China alone will nearly equal the increase from the entire industrialised world." Although the Chinese (at least officially) are not showing great concern about this environmental hazard, they have decided to impose fuel-economy standards new cars and sport utility on vehicles, which will definitely lower gas emissions over a period of time. Another developing country, India is also increasing emissions at an alarming rate as its economy expands. While in Europe there is a greater awareness of the dangers of global warming (the EU is the only region of the industrialised world where greenhouse gas emissions actually went down by 3.5% in comparison with emissions in 1990), in the United States, the Bush administration has taken a radical pro-business stance. Last month it hosted a meeting in Washington of the energy ministers of 15 countries to discuss a project called Freedom Car, which essentially means a car powered by pollution-free hydrogen. In theory, the idea sounds wonderful but many environmentalists have already pointed out that energy required to produce hydrogen (from electricity) for a car will emit more toxic gases per mile than the amount emitted by an ordinary gasoline powered car of the same size. Some even say that this proposal is merely a ploy to delay any investments on the part of the automobile industry to produce more efficient gasoline powered cars. Bush has rewritten the Clean Air Act of 1977 that "spared the companies the expense of making investments in pollution controls whenever they upgraded their plants and increased emissions." Mr. Bush's latest environmental initiatives such as "Healthy Forests" and the \$30billion plus Energy bill are anything but "environmentally friendly" as they are claimed to be. Now that it seems that the Kyoto Protocol will not be implemented (unless Mr. Putin changes his mind), Mr. Bush's environmental policies are becoming more and nore regressive and some of the developing countries are belching out an ever-increasing amount of toxic gases into the atmosphere, the inevitable conclusion is that since a collective will to deal with environmental hazards is lacking, the future is bleak.



CHAKLADER MAHBOOB-UL ALAM writes from Madrid

am not going to write about natural disasters over which, we, the human beings, do not have much control. Instead here in this letter, I am going to focus on man-made environmental hazards , which in my opinion, can be dealt with, if there is a collective will to do so.

It has been well established that although the early human beings lived in some harmony with the environment, they, with the help of their natural intelligence, learnt how to control and harness the forces of nature and to mine the reserves of organic carbon deposited in sediments over millions of years. Soon they started changing 'the face of the Earth, the nature of its atmosphere and the quality of its water" to meet their own needs which often were selfish and short-sighted. During the early agricultural revolution, when human beings did not know how to use coal, oil, electricity or nuclear energy, the impact of human activity on the environment was not significant . But today, in this post- industrial age, there is a consensus of opinion that the impact of human activities on the global environment is so great that f appropriate measures are not taken soon, the quality of the environment will deteriorate to such an extent that eventually it will not be able to sustain life on Earth.

Environmentalists have become increasingly concerned about three issues concerning (there are other issues, which are probably not that urgent) this rapidly deteriorating situation -- ozone layer destruction, acid rain and carbon dioxide emissions.

The global ozone layer (a gaseous region), which is located in the atmosphere, 40 kilometres above the sea level, is a shield that protects the Earth from the sun's lethal ultraviolet rays. Without the protection of the ozone layer, life on Earth would be impossible. The chemical product known as chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs,

US troops after the Second World War in the Pacific as a component of insecticide spray cans. After the widespread commercial use of this product in refrigeration, air-conditioning, cleaning solvents, aerosol sprays and pesticides (methyl bromides) for the next three decades or so, the scientists realised that the release of CFCs was damaging the ozone

layer. Actually, it was in 1975 when it was first realised that continuous

Kyoto Protocol), the Bush administration has shown its unwillingness to comply with the requirements. Last week, delegates from 181 countries (most of whom were placed under intense pressure from US government and lobbyists for the American chemical industry) met in Nairobi to consider a proposal made by the US to exempt this pesticide from the phase-out leading to the 2005 ban. According to the Bush administration and

fall to the surface with rain contaminating the earth's surface and subsurface waters. Thus acid rain has a devastating effect on vegetation, fish and molluscs, albeit, on a localised basis.

The emission of huge amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is intricately related to industrial activity, poses the biggest problem to a safe environment. Carbon dioxide and meth-

paper credit for the amount of emission reductions, which could then be set against the target for the US

Six years after the acceptance of the Kyoto Protocol for discussion and ratification, which held out the promises of a safer world (from an environmental point of view). the situation today is far worse. According to data , recently published by the UNEP, instead of any

and other government agencies, and three countries that supposedly are Uncle Sam's staunch allies in the War on Terrorism.

Immigration and Naturalization

After reading While America Slept, it's easy to conclude that the failure to prevent 9-11 was, without question, the biggest intelligence blunder in US history. The apologists for the fiasco will counter that any government could look bad in hindsight, that's its often difficult to gather and interpret intelligence and that officials can make honest mistakes . .

blah, blah, blah. In an interview with The Daily Star, Posner put his investigation in clear perspective. "There were a number of chances to break up the plot without ever knowing the details of it. And other countries, from Germany to Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, did not help in sharing (information) that might also have been critical.

The case Posner builds is so factual in detail and overwhelming in content that it makes one wonder how prepared and competent is the US government to prevent another 9-11 atrocity and to wage war against ruthless terrorists.

Here are just a few of the investigative journalist's findings: - Bin Laden could have been history as early as the mid-1990s, but the US government failed on numerous occasions to kill or capture him. For instance, when the terrorist was in Sudan in 1996, the Sudanese government, in an effort to improve its relations with Uncle Sam, offered to arrest Bin Laden and turn him over to any country that had legitimate criminal charges against him. Clinton administration officials doubted Sudan's sincerity and never followed up.

Germany had an informant, a 44-year old Syrian named Mahmoun Darkazanli, who was involved with many of the 9-11 hijackers. CIA officials told Posner that Germany failed to share their asset with the US

Curiously, Prince Ahmed bin Salman, and Mir, along with three others associates, are now dead. Conspiracy? Posner doesn't draw any conclusions, but one can be sure, though, that many more books will be written to probe these strange developments.

But the big question, of course, is have there been any positive changes since 9-11 in the way the US gathers intelligence on terrorists? Yes, but much more needs to be done, Posner told us. "You cannot expect 40 plus years of ingrained hostility and competition between various US intelligence agencies to disappear in a couple of years," he explained.

Posner would like to see more coordination between the various branches of intelligence and less overlap of duties and responsibilities, adding that more power should be given to Homeland Security to coordinate intelligence.

I drew three conclusions from Posner's book: 1) Those in power who slept while America's enemies plotted the biggest domestic terrorist attack in the country's history must be held accountable. 2) The U.S. faces difficult ahead in its battle with terrorists unless the government works harder to get its intelligence gathering house in order. 3) Unfortunately, Uncle Sam needs to watch its back as its pursues the terror network.

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LETTER FROM EUROPE

Now that it seems that the Kyoto Protocol will not be implemented (unless Mr. Putin changes his mind), Mr. Bush's environmental policies are becoming more and more regressive and some of the developing countries are belching out an ever-increasing amount of toxic gases into the atmosphere, the inevitable conclusion is that since a collective will to deal with environmental hazards is lacking, the future is bleak.

release of CFCs to the atmosphere was gradually reducing stratospheric ozone, which carried with it the risk of cancers and acceleration of the greenhouse effect. In 1985, the British Antarctic Survey reported a growing ozone hole above the Antarctica. By late 1998 it was discovered that the hole had grown dangerously. According to Goddard Flight Center (NASA), the hole reached its second largest size ever, 11.1 million square miles in September 2003. The record, according to the same source, is 11.5 million square miles, in September 2000. What is being done to control this deteriorating situation and repair the existing hole in the ozone layer?

Since 1978, the use of CFCs as aerosol propellants has been forbidden or substantially reduced in most countries. Under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Laver (1987) drafted by the United Nations Environmental Program, most of the industrialised nations agreed to phase out all uses of CFCs by the year 2000. The scientists also recognised that besides CFCs there were other substances such as methyl bromide, which are widely used in agriculture as pesticide also deplete the ozone layer. Therefore, it was agreed that from 1999 onwards, the industrialised countries would take the necessary measures to ban the use of methyl bromide by the year 2005. The developing countries would have a ten-year extension to imple-

ment this ban.

American farmers, methyl bromide's soil-sterilising properties are absolutely vital as they try to compete against farmers from poor countries, where low-paid workers tend the fields. Luckily, the European Union is not in agreement with this proposal. According to Margot Wallstrom, the EU environmental commissioner, "Many farmers world wide successfully grow crops without methyl bromide. Exemptions should be agreed only where alternatives are not available and not on any other basis." The environmentalists argue that these exemptions would reverse steady progress in healing the ozone layer." It should be pointed out here that even if no

exemptions are officially granted and if the current policy of 2005 ban is implemented, it will take 50 years to heal the damaged layer. Unfortunately, following the American example, a dozen other industrialised countries, including eight from the European Union have now applied for similar exemptions.

Anyone who lived in London in the fifties had a first-hand experience (very unpleasant) of acid rain in the form of toxic smog, which was caused by sulphur discharged into the atmosphere by the burning of coal. Actually the scientists have established that the use of fossil fuels by motor vehicles, factories, power plants, smelting and refining facilities discharges sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. These gases then combine with water vapour in the atmo-

ane are emitted as a result of fossilfuel burning, which in turn accelerates warming of the Earth's surface. This accelerated warming process is also known as global warming. Although it is difficult to assess the exact impact of global warming, there is a consensus of opinion the if the current trends in emission of greenhouse gases continue, natural and agricultural ecosystems will be substantially altered. There will also be significant impacts on human and animal health. Due to rapid melting of polarice, sea levels will rise (coastal areas of Bangladesh and the nearby islands will probably disappear under water). There will, most certainly, be other consequences which we can not imagine at this point of time.

At a meeting of the FCCC (Framework Convention on Climate Change), held in Kyoto, Japan in 1997, greenhouse gas emission targets were set. The target set by the Kyoto Protocol for the industrialised countries was a 5.2% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 relative to 1990. No mandatory targets were set for the developing countries. The target for the EU was an 8% reduction, the United States 7% and Japan 6%. In order to make the proposal more attractive to the rich nations, the Kyoto Protocol introduced a curious carbon trading system. Since a tonne of gas causes the same damage to the global environment, no matter where it is emitted, the US could keep its high compliance costs down by paying

global reductions, actual emissions in 2000 went up by 8% in comparison with emissions in 1990. During this period, emissions went up in the US by 16.8%, in India by 62.8%, in Japan by 12.3% in China by 4.6% and in Australia by 23.8%. The United States continued to be the world's largest polluter and even increased its share as a percentage of total emissions of the world (from 23.47% to 25.39%). The Bush administration has obstinately refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Now to make things worse, Putin's Russia has also shown its unwillingness to ratify the Protocol, which requires ratification by countries emitting at least 55% of world's greenhouse gases to come into effect. Russia produced 17.4% of global emissions in the base year of 1990. Although the Protocol has already been accepted by 118 countries, without Russia's ratification, the treaty will fail to pass the barrier of 55% of global emissions. Therefore, the Kyoto initiative to control and reduce greenhouse gas emissions on an internationally agreed basis will, at least for the time being, come to an end. It will probably take another ten or fifteen years to restart the initiative.

Meanwhile China is fast becoming a major emitter of greenhouse gases. Although China's perperson energy use and greenhouse gas emissions are far below levels in rich countries, it is already the world's second largest emitter of such gases after the United States According to International Energy