

EXCLUSIVE FOR The Daily Star

Ten years after 9/11

Where does the world stand today?

HERE is no question that the destruction of the World Trade Centre ten years ago dramatically changed the US behaviour on the global scale. Attacked for the first time ever on the mainland, US reacted with a ferocity, rage and military might that has changed international politics forever.

The US action, first against Afghanistan and then against Iraq, ushered in an era of blatant unilateralism where the UN was exploited to sanctify the political objective of the lone super power. The trend has unfortunately continued as one notices in the case of Libya.

And what about the success in the so-called war on terror? If by success one claims that there has been no major attack in mainland USA since then, then that is success of sorts. But an apparently safer America only does not naturally make for a safer world. Instead of curbing terrorism last ten years have witnessed rise of Islamic extremism in places where it was not seen before. Smaller religious groups have become more ideologically allied with the al-Qaeda with an anti-US sentiment. Regrettably too, while these extremists are in the minority, the majority of the Islamic world has been conspicuous by its silence.

Regrettably too, the focus of terror and anti-terror has shifted from the Middle East to South Asia, with the Afghan imbroglio assuming an unclear scenario. And that is what we in the South Asian region feel so apprehensive about.

Osama Laden is dead, and so are some of his close associates. But is terrorism dead? Can we vouch for certain that the underlying motivations that precipitated 9/11 are no longer valid. That the double standards of the West in dealing with the problems in the Middle East, the blind support for Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians, do not create resentment in many who have no other alternative but to resort to violence as a means of protest?

The flyover subsidence

Thorough inquiry called for

ENGINEERING experts have made it known that the subsidence noticed on the Khilgaon flyover on Friday poses no risks to traffic and that all manner of vehicles can safely use it. That is certainly encouraging news, especially in light of the panic generated when reports first came in of a part of the flyover sinking a little through a displacement of three shutter plates.

But even as we are cheered by the news of the apparently secure position of the flyover, we cannot but raise some very natural questions about the incident. Of course, some of the experts have opined that the sunken part may have been there since the construction of the flyover six years ago. But that only raises the query of why no one noticed it till now. Besides, it is not very convincing for anyone to hazard a guess about the subsidence or if at all there has been a subsidence. Which leads one to the next question: to what extent is the quality of the construction of the flyover, done on local initiative, satisfactory? We believe that there is little room for complacency in the matter and indeed the authorities should go into a full-scale examination of the flyover to ensure that it stays operational.

On a broader scale, the flyover issue raises the important question of our declining water table, a factor that puts at risk such constructions as flyovers, bridges, underpasses and the like. On an immediate basis, the matter of whether the subsidence in the Khilgaon flyover has been caused by a falling water table needs thorough examination. Additionally, the authorities must double check the overall design of the flyover in order to spot any flaw that may be there.

In other words, public fears about the flyover must

The partnerships we need

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

ON this 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, we remember that 9/11 was not only an attack on the United States, it was an attack on the world and on the humanity and hopes that we share.

We remember that among the nearly 3,000 innocent people lost that day were hundreds of citizens from more than 90 nations. They were men and women, young and old, of many races and faiths. On this solemn anniversary we join with their families and nations in honoring their memory.

We remember with gratitude how ten years ago the world came together as one. Around the globe, entire cities came to a standstill for moments of silence. People offered their prayers in churches, mosques, synagogues and other places of worship. And those of us in the United States will never forget how people in every corner of the world stood with us in solidarity in candle-light vigils and among the seas of flowers placed at our embassies.

We remember that in the weeks after 9/11, we acted as an international community. As part of a broad coalition, we drove al-Qaeda from its training camps in Afghanistan, toppled the Taliban, and gave the Afghan people a chance to live free from terror. However, the years that followed were difficult and the spirit of global partnership we felt after 9/11 frayed.

As President, I've worked to renew the global cooperation we need to

meet the full breadth of global challenges that we face. Through a new era of engagement, we've forged partnerships with nations and peoples based on mutual interest and mutual respect.

As an international community, we have shown that terrorists are no

East to Europe, from Africa to Asia.

Working together, we have disrupted al-Qaeda plots, eliminated Osama bin Laden and much of his leadership, and put al-Qaeda on the path to defeat. Meanwhile, people across the Middle East and North Africa are showing that the surest

from Iraq and transfer responsibility in Afghanistan, we will support Iraqis and Afghans in their efforts to deliver security and opportunity for their people. In the Arab world and beyond, we will stand up for the dignity and universal rights of all human beings.

Around the world, we will continue the hard work of pursuing peace, promoting the development that lifts people from poverty, and advancing the food security, health and good governance that unleashes the potential of citizens and societies.

At the same time, we have recommitted ourselves to living our values at home. As a nation of immigrants, the United States welcomes people from every country and culture. These newest Americans -- like all the innocent victims we lost ten years ago -- remind us that despite any differences of race or ethnicity, background or belief, we are all bound together by the common hope that we can make the world a better place for this and future generations. That must be the legacy of those we have lost.

Those who attacked us on 9/11 wanted to drive a wedge between the United States and the world. They failed. On this 10th anniversary, we are united with our friends and partners in remembering all those we have lost in this struggle. In their memory, we reaffirm the spirit of partnership and mutual respect that we need to realise a world where all people live in dignity, freedom and peace.



match for the strength and resilience of our citizens. I've made it clear that the United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. Rather, with allies and partners we are united against al-Qaeda, which has attacked dozens of countries and killed tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children -- the vast majority of them were Muslims. This week, we remember all the victims of al-Qaeda and the courage and resilience with which their families and fellow citizens have persevered, from the Middle

path to justice and dignity is the moral force of nonviolence, not mindless terrorism and violence. It is clear that violent extremists are being left behind and that the future belongs to those who want to build, not destroy.

To nations and people seeking a future of peace and prosperity -- you have a partner in the United States. For, even as we confront economic challenges at home, the United States will continue to play a unique leadership role in the world. As we remove the rest of our troops

9/11: Ten years after

CHANDRA MUZZAFFAR

ON the 10th Anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, it would be instructive to reflect on its disastrous impact upon the entire human family.

One, hundreds of thousands, perhaps a couple of million, lives have been lost in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Afghan-Pakistan border and other places as a direct or indirect consequence of the so-called "War on terror" that followed 9/11. It is not just the violence generated by the US helmed occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan that is responsible for this. Terror groups that resist occupation or are seeking to avenge the death of innocent children and women at the hands of the occupiers, or those who are embroiled in a tussle for power or enmeshed in inter-sectarian and inter-factional feuds -- like al-Qaeda -- are also culpable.

Two, it is estimated that at least \$3.7 trillion have been poured into the two wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This colossal military expenditure has emasculated the US economy and is one of the major causes of the nation's chronic debt crisis which in turn has serious implications for economies everywhere.

Three, the war on terror has led to the marginalisation of other more important wars that the global community had pledged to fight at the beginning of the 21st century, such as the war against global poverty and global illiteracy. It has also diverted attention from the challenge of widening disparities between those who have a lot and those who have a little, which has become a global phenomenon threatening social cohesion and

stability in many parts of the world.

Four, the obsession with terrorism has prompted a number of governments to introduce or expand repressive laws that curtail legitimate civil rights and liberties. Illegal incarcerations, torture and assassinations have been carried out in the name of fighting terror.

Five, the terror war has spawned a new wave of Islamophobia. Fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims, which is deeply embedded in the psyche of a segment of Western society, have been thrust to the fore through the equation of the religion and its adherents with terrorism. Some politicians, religious leaders and a

be prepared to come to grips with some irrefutable truths.

One, those who are committed to truth and justice in North America and Europe should try to convince their fellow citizens through all the democratic channels available to them, that Western elites are the real perpetrators of terror and violence. In their quest for hegemony -- often related to oil, or geostrategic interests or Israel or simply power -- these elites have created fear and terror among millions of innocent people by subjecting them to continuous bombing raids and missile attacks for months on end. This is the terrorism of the militarily pow-

cepted; what was the real cause of the collapse of the Twin Towers and Building 7 of the World Trade Centre; and whether the Pentagon was hit by a Boeing 757. Scholars of repute in Europe and the US, like Hans Kochler, David Ray Griffin, Peter Dale Scott and James Fetzer, have challenged the official version of 9/11. It is because the doubts about 9/11 are so widespread that JUST is of the view that the UN General Assembly should establish a truly independent international panel to ascertain the truth once and for all.

Three, while Western governments and peoples have their roles to play vis-à-vis 9/11, the Muslim ummah as a whole has also got the responsibility to ensure that the militant fringe within the community renounces terrorism as a weapon to achieve its goals. Apart from the vile and vicious cruelty inherent in terrorism, it is a mode of operation that has tarnished the image of Islam and Muslims worldwide.

Whatever its short-term gains, the use of violence and terror against civilians has encouraged a sort of obscurantism which prevents both Muslims and non-Muslims alike from realising that the essence of the Islamic message is the struggle for justice and peace without force or coercion. This is why it is in our interest, in the interests of everyone -- 10 years after 9/11 -- to strengthen our resolve to combat terrorism, and its underlying causes, in all its manifestations.

The writer is President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) and Professor of Global Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia. Courtesy CounterCurrents.org

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section of the mainstream media are responsible for this diabolical bigotry. Consequently, Muslims and their religious symbols have become targets of venom in various parts of the Western world. A fanatical fringe within the Muslim ummah (community) has reacted to this by venting anti-Christian and anti-Jewish bile in their sermons and their writings. The end result is a general deterioration in relations among people of different faiths.

How do we overcome, or at least reduce, the negative impact of the 9/11 episode? Both the centres of power in the West and certain elements in the Muslim world should

erful, of the hegemonic state or empire. In the last 10 years since 9/11, we have seen that invariably it results in much more death and destruction than the terrorism of those who act in retaliation. Western elites should be made to understand this simple truth by their own people.

Two, in order to reach out to the truth, these elites should begin by re-visiting the 9/11 tragedy. There are many unanswered questions about that event that men and women of conscience have continued to ask during the last 10 years -- questions such as the actual identities of the hijackers; why the hijacked airliners were not inter-

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

September 11

1965
Indo-Pakistani War: The Indian Army captures the town of Burki, just southeast of Lahore.

1978
U.S. President Jimmy Carter, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel meet at Camp David and agree on the Camp David Accords a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt and a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

1982
The international forces that were guaranteeing the safety of Palestinian refugees following Israel's 1982 Invasion of Lebanon leave Beirut.

2001
The September 11 attacks take place in the United States. Airplane hijackings result in the collapse of the World Trade Center in New York City, damage to The Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the crashing of a passenger airliner near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.