

9/11: Why resist probe?

Prof Khurshid Ahmad

September 11, 2001 has become a memorable day and a historic turn in world affairs! The bloody events of this gloomy morning of September shook not just the USA but also the entire world. The incidents raised a number of questions: Why and how did they happen? And who is behind them? Here, we would focus on one particular question: why did the US administration try to evade proper investigation and jumped to hasty conclusion?

Why efforts were not made to know the real facts behind such a big eventuality, to make the situation clear through transparent and unflinching judicial investigation, to identify the causes and motives, and formulate a 'consensus strategy' at the national and international levels. The course of action could have been decided with agreement rather than under coercion, and humanity could have charted out some strategy to avoid such dangers and accidents in the future. The over-simplification, haste, arrogance and superficiality the American leadership resorted to in order to escape the real questions, along with the way it used the events for its own colonial ends and interests — have all given rise to serious doubts and reservations not only about the leadership capability, but also its intentions and designs.

All the blame is put at the door of one person — Osama bin Laden — or, at the most, on a few hundreds or thousands of his associates (al-Qaeda). The whole of the world is being thrown in the throes of terror, though using force blatantly presents no solution to such problems.

No serious and satisfactory effort has been made to date to probe into the matter, to present all the facts with impartiality, to analyse all aspects and to fix the problem: What are the factors and causes behind these events and what is required to grasp the situation and reform it to avert such accidents and to plan for the future? The intelligence failure is only grudgingly admitted. No one was held to account for the failure of the whole security system in America, which consists of 13 principal agencies and costs \$ 67 billion annually.

A stockpile of information about Osama bin Laden and his associates was also available that different sources had provided not only to the CIA but to the White House also. The question is: when the most important American institutions failed to perform their duty why they were not proceeded against? What was done to fix the responsibility? Is it because Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda are being used as a 'smoke screen' and shirking the investigations and accountability is a kind of 'cover-up'? The administration even disliked congressional hearing on the subject, and tried to stop it. When it could not stop it and proceeding about the information of intelligence agencies got started, it first resisted the demand for information; when it had to, it gave only incomplete information. It even bugged the

proceedings of the Senate Committee, an act for which the Committee gave a warning for defamation proceedings. No chief of any intelligence agency was held accountable, rather the intelligence budget was raised by \$ 20 billion.

An emotional atmosphere has been created with the help of propaganda while efforts at impartial investigations and search for the truth are being crushed with force. Those who have conducted impartial and independent investigations express doubts even today about the capability of Osama and his associates to carry out such operations.

Two recently published books from France have raised some very basic questions. The facts presented in these books have caused clamour in academic and political circles. But, the American media as well as the government are overlooking all these aspects. The French author Thierry Meyssan's *L'Effroyable Imposture* (The Horrible Lie) refutes that an airliner attacked the Pentagon and, through an analysis of the damage done to the building, proves that an airliner's crash could not cause such damage and that it could be the result of a missile strike. This shows the involvement of some group or agency, rather than that of Al-Qaeda. The second book of this author *Pentagate* shows that America diverted attention from the facts and causes of September 11 and used it for its own economic and strategic interests; the real evidence was not brought forth or was destroyed.

Another best seller *Forbidden Truth* by Jean-Charles Brisoré and Guillaume Dasquie shows how the people at the helm of politics and economy in America are orchestrating a heinous game-plan and targeting others to cover their own nefarious designs. The book shows how the tricks of the American game planners turned on themselves. Moreover, access to the resources of Central Asia and control over the region through Afghanistan after the disintegration of the Soviet Union has been the real objective and target.

Joseph Trent, author of *The Secret History of CIA*, has written the introduction of the English edition of the book. He has openly said that the American leadership cannot tolerate a serious investigation into the whole issue because it does not come out clean itself and that names of many a self-righteous people come in the way.

Vice President Cheney called the Senate majority leader Tom Daschle trying to talk him out of any major probe into the intelligence failure. There could be no serious investigation because a serious investigation in the end would reveal that money and oil were more important than protecting Saudi Arabia or US. A serious investigation would demonstrate that Middle East and money still helps support members of the Bush family. (*Forbidden Truth*, p. xii).

Our interest is in finding out why the American leadership did not take the path of investigation and accountability. Target-

ing 'scapegoats' of its own choosing, the American leadership has adopted a dangerous course of trampling upon the very American constitution, the UN Charter, the international law, the rule of law, sovereignty of nations and countries and all those values that are the fruit of struggle of not just a few years; but of centuries; and plans for a new global colonialism are made with the establishment of American political and economic hegemony on the nations of the world. The search for convenient targets is a continuous process: the first was Osama, then came Al-Qaeda, then Taliban and Afghanistan, then al-Qaeda's supporters in 30 countries, then Iraq, Iran, Sudan, North Korea, and then, by now, Saudi Arabia, Islamic and welfare organisations all over the world, religious education institutions. To haunt and chase them, new principles were devised to acquire powers to hit the first apparent target, to plan military intervention, and, to change the governments.

Recently, 80 German intellectuals issued a declaration in the wake of incessant American warnings and pressure on the European nations. It openly says that what the American leadership terms "war on terror" is but "open aggression and unpardonable crime, politically and morally." The German intellectuals refused to buy the American stand on what it is doing in Afghanistan and other countries of the world in the name of "war on terror". They say that it cannot be termed a just war. Opposing "monopolisation of universal values", they said America cannot interpret human values the way it likes.

They said: There are no universally valid values which allow the justification of the mass murder (9/11 attack) in our place with another mass killing (in Afghanistan).

Majority of the European countries, China, Russia, and quite naturally, all the Arab and Muslim countries are expressing their concern over this American plan, but the American leadership is trying to impose its now view by devising whimsical new principles under the cover of 9/11.

Pakistan government's crime of cooperating in the aggression and wrong action that America has taken against Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, and the Taliban, though it might be under coercion and extended only grudgingly, is unpardonable. Even then, General Pervez Musharraf has expressed doubt in his recent interview to a correspondent of New York on whether the 9/11 attacks were really the work of Osama bin Laden? He said: Osama might have been involved in financing and planning the attack. Osama may not be directly involved in it.

This enraged the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. The reality, however, is that the allegation is but a 'contention' for which no solid evidence has been provided, even the need to provide such evidence is not being recognised. And this is the problem that no one can answer. Why is it so?

The writer is a former senator and currently the Chairman, Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad