**American wars**

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Friday, Sep 17, 2021

The year 2021 marks the 20th anniversary of the World Trade Centre twin towers attacks that not only claimed more than 2,500 precious lives, but also transformed the world in many ways. The audacious attacks inflicted deep wounds on the families of those who lost their loved ones; they are still suffering from the agony and grief caused by the incident.

The attacks were carried out by a terrorist outfit that was backed and supported by the West and the US during the Afghan jihad that was launched to defeat the then Soviet Union. Previously, Moscow had provided financial assistance to the Viet Cong during the US invasion of Vietnam where the US suffered a humiliating defeat – also, close to 50,000 American soldiers died in the Vietnam War.

The September 11 incident triggered a debate in American society. Some underscored the need to reflect upon the actions of the world superpower. However, for the ruling elite of the mighty US state, the incident provided an opportunity to launch more conflicts and wars. They believed that the attacks had hurt the ‘imperial’ ego of the US, besides putting a question mark on America’s invincibility. The global military leadership also came under fire with some analysts wondering whether the US was really capable of leading the world any longer.

The ruling elites from Western capitals created an impression that the attacks were carried out by those who despised Western culture. They termed it an attack on their democratic traditions and liberal concept of freedoms that have always benefited people.

But critics of the American foreign policy interpreted the incident in a different way. They argued that while Americans had witnessed only one such incident where they lost such a large number of lives, their rulers had orchestrated several of such incidents that wreaked havoc on the lives of millions of people across the globe. They asserted that the most important aspect of the attacks was the loss of precious lives of innocent people. They underscored the need to ponder over the actions of US politicians, which inflicted similar tragedies over millions of people in various parts of the globe.

Detractors of George W Bush pointed out another 9/11 that happened in the 1970s. On September 11, 1973, the elected Chilean government of Salvador Allende was toppled in a military coup that was widely believed to have been orchestrated by the American CIA. The coup led to the imposition of a brutal dictatorship on the Latin American country that caused unimaginable suffering to the people of that mineral-rich state. General Pinochet’s regime, backed by Washington, imprisoned thousands of political workers besides launching a brutal crackdown on labourers, trade unionists and other sections of society. More than 10,000 people of Chile became the victims of enforced disappearances.

These critics asserted that the grief of Americans over the terror attacks of 9/11 was understandable, but they needed to understand how such agony – of equal, or even higher, levels – was imposed on other people by American leaders through their support for brutal dictators that led to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives – or possibly millions of lives.

Chile was not the first country where the US was accused of helping a dictator, but the champion of democracy had supported several autocrats and military rulers. In 1953, the American CIA and the British intelligence agency toppled the elected government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. In 1954, a military coup, supported by the CIA, put an end to the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. Washington despised Arbenz for introducing a policy that sought to use natural resources of the country for its people. More than 154,000 people lost their lives in the mayhem caused by the coup. In Indonesia, the US and the West pampered General Suharto who was accused of being responsible for the killing of more than 500,000 people and for starting the East Timor genocide.

Washington and its Western allies are believed to have supported more than a hundred brutal dictators and autocrats in several parts of the world. They are also accused of imposing death and destruction through wars and conflicts. The world has witnessed more than 200 conflicts since 1945 with the US being involved in a majority of them. Millions of people lost their loved ones in these games of conflagration that were thrust upon them by warmongers sitting in the power corridors of Washington.

Three to seven million people perished in the Vietnam War that was imposed by the US. The country witnessed one of the most brutal bombardments of modern times. The flames of the conflict also engulfed Laos and Cambodia where the US carried out carpet bombing. More than three million tonnes of bombs were dropped on Laos. Eight million of these bombs remained unexploded, maiming and wounding citizens. The bombing killed more than 100,000 besides rendering around two million homeless. More than 150,000 were decimated in the US bombing of Cambodia that witnessed over two million tonnes of bombs in a ruthless military campaign.

The US and the West also stand accused of using crippling sanctions that inflict death and destruction on people in several parts of the world. The inhumane sanctions against Iraq during the 1990s led to the death of more than 500,000 children. Such sanctions are also creating immense hardships for the people of Venezuela, Iran and North Korea. It was not only these inhumane sanctions that inflicted mortal blows to Iraqis, but the illegal war imposed by the West on that Arab country also proved to be catastrophic for the Middle Eastern state.

The invasion of Iraq spawned terrorist groups that are said to be responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands of people. According to some estimates, more than two million people have already been engulfed by the conflict caused partly by the invasion. Millions have been displaced. The illegal invasion of that country is said to be one of the factors that pushed the country towards a sectarian conflagration. The country is still reeling under the effects of the invasion.

The US is also blamed for ruining the lives of millions of people by throwing support behind the elements who wanted regime change for the sake of American interests. The mayhem in Libya and the conflict in Syria that plunged the countries into disarray are also partly blamed on the US.

In Syria, more than 555,000 people lost their lives during the civil war which many Syrians believe was imposed by Western powers. Around 11 million people were displaced while the country suffered the economic loss of over $200 billion because of the destruction caused to its infrastructure.

Despite all this death and destruction, American politicians are adamant that they should export democracy through wars and bombing. Critics of the US foreign policy believe that the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks should convince Americans to reflect upon the disastrous policies of their ruling elite, which caused not one 9/11 but several such incidents across the world.

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