

# Orange alert

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USA 5/10/04

THE NATIONAL SECURITY institutions in the United States declared an 'orange alert' for July 4, the national independence day. Whether the decision was made in view of real and imminent danger or apprehensions of an over-worked imagination is anybody's guess.

The impression it gave was that terrorists were about to strike.

Airport authorities in seven big cities were instructed, therefore, to keep a watchful eye on passengers of Pakistani origin and on green passports.

I was not aware, when I travelled from New York to Toronto, Canada, to join a reception in the honour of Prof Dr Gopi Chand Narang, that the green passports had been mentioned in the 'orange alert' announcement. It was only when I stopped on my way back from Canada for immigration formalities that I was stranded for four hours. Several Pakistanis travelling on American passports, too, had to face a volley of questions. The four-hour delay stretched the eight-hour journey to 12 hours. I also got some embarrassing information. One of the Pakistani ladies was travelling on a passport previously used by somebody else. There was a case, also, of change of picture on the passport. Instead of travelling directly to the United States, we learnt, some people first went to Canada and then used illegal means to enter US.

Use of illegal means is not new; nor is an alert in view of real or imagined danger. There is an unending overcompensation for the security lapses revealed on September 11, 2001. For three years now the American people and workers of foreign origin have been forced through unnecessary security filters. It is not a case of once bitten twice shy either. Apparently those benefiting from the terrible incidents of September 11, 2001, have made turned fears and apprehensions into a lucrative business. They trade not only in real danger but also in imagined threats. Indeed, it is a very profitable business.

## VIEW



### MUNNOO BHAI

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It is now obvious to the entire world that the US warmongers and those wanting to control the mineral wealth of the entire world, particularly the oil trade, have been the greatest beneficiaries of the 9/11 terrorism. Those working for peace, justice, democracy and human rights have been the worse hit. Innocents have been killed to avenge innocents. Extremism and terrorism have been attributed to Islam and Muslims. The entire Islamic world stands damned, therefore, on account of the extremists and terrorists among Muslims.

A strict watch for green passports and passengers of Pakistani origin at the seven big airports of the seven big US cities has been ordered because Pakistan participated in the US *jihad* in Afghanistan; because, with US help, it has been an instrument of installing the Taliban government in Afghanistan and because it has been a partner in the second US *jihad* against the Taliban. An impression is given that Osama bin Laden, Mulla Omar and their Taliban and Al Qaeda colleagues are hiding in Pakistan's tribal areas. There is also the impression that the ease of using illegal means in Pakistan makes

acquisition of green passports relatively easy.

The impression works to the advantage of US national security institutions who can keep the country and the people on 'orange alert' to help hawks in the government acquire greater significance and win the November elections. Similarly, the impression that the US does not want democracy in any Muslim country since a majority of people in these countries is opposed to US policies works to the advantage of Pakistan's ruling class. The conclusion is that the US prefers simpler and cheaper 'one-window' arrangements with the Muslim countries.

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