

9/11 as a Symbol of Terror: Responses and Actions

Bilal Mahmood

University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Abdul Majid

University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

The phrase of "the Global War on Terror" was adopted by the media. It was announced that Washington Administration would utilize all its resources to uproot terrorism and will punish all those who are responsible for the 9/11 tragedy. Both Islamic Jihadists and two Bush administrations have deployed spectacles of terror to promote their political agendas; that both deploy Manichean discourses of good and evil which themselves fit into dominant media codes of popular culture; and that both deploy fundamentalist and absolutist discourses.

Key Words: Pakistan, USA, Terrorism, Taliban, Militancy.

Introduction

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001 flights 11, 175 and 93 were reported to be hijacked by flight attendants at 8:19 am, 8:52 am and 9:36 am respectively whereas flight 77 was reported to be found missing at 9:34 am. Flight 11 (AA 11), 175 (UA 175), 77 (AA 77) and 93 (UA 93) crashed into 1 WTC (North Tower at 8:46:40 am), 2 WTC (South tower at 9:03:11 am), Pentagon (at 9:37:46 am) and Shanksville, PA (at 10:03:11 am) respectively (Ridel, 2011). This incident resulted into the killing of nearly 3,000 people on American soil. Although, exact number of fatalities of 9/11 is uncertain yet the memorial of 9/11 incident named 2,982 women, men and children. This incident resulted into a great shock and despair to the entire world in general and to the Americans in particular.

Victims of the 9/11 attack were the nationals of an estimated 80 states ("Text: President Bush Addresses the Nation," 2001). These attacks were captured live and soon were broadcasted while showing the jumping of workers from windows of 110 storey buildings across the globe. In many countries including the US and Europe, three minute silence was observed for showing solidarity with the US on September 14, 2001 (*11 September 2001: The Response*, 2001). This incident resulted into an entire transformation in the concept of terrorism among American citizens particularly.

Responses to 9/11 attacks

People all over the world expressed their sympathies and solidarity with the victims of 9/11 attacks. Heads of states, world leaders and important official

dignitaries rendered their official condemnation against these attacks. Some significant developments in expressing reactions to 9/11 tragedy can be described as under.

American official response to 9/11 attacks

President Bush, who was listening to Kay Daniels reciting a poem at a class room of second graders in Florida, was informed about the striking of second plane with the WTC but he did not move from class for more than five minutes. This raised many questions in political and scholarly sphere about his non-instant and apathetic response to the attacks even when he was informed that these attacks were the indication of terrorism (Ganguly, 2009).

In the meanwhile, the US Secretary Rumsfeld made the decision to take the country to military alert level from the peacetime defense condition 4 to Descend 3 which was even higher the US had since Arab-Israel war in 1973. Russia was conducting the major military exercises at that time so in order to avoid any misunderstanding and miscalculation, National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice made a call to Russian President to explain the situation and he reported back with support and agreed to halt the Russian military exercises as the US was under attack at that time (Booth, Ken & Dunne, 2010).

In the evening of that day, President Bush addressed the nation on the tragic attacks on WTC and Pentagon. On September 12, 2001 he has chaired two meetings of the National Security Council (NSC) stressing that the US is at war with a different and new kind of foe and instructing its administration to devise a plan to eradicate terrorists and tick off all those who endorse them (States, 2004, p. 330). On the same day, he told the Congressional leaders that it would not be a war on terrorists but on all those who provided safe haven to them while stating that "these guys are like rattlesnakes; they strike and go back in their holes; we're not only going to go after the holes; we're going to go after the ranchers (Chohan, 2004)."

Surprisingly, Washington Administration within few hours after the incident of attacks on WTC and Pentagon concluded that Al-Qaeda, led by OBL, was behind these attacks with their base in Afghanistan. According to 9/11 Commission Report, Al-Qaeda was held responsible for funding 19 operatives with an amount of around \$ 400,000 to \$ 500,000 on plotting and accomplishing 9/11 attacks. It is important here to mention that from January 20 to September 10, 2001 forty PDBs (President's Daily Briefs) which have been disseminated by the CIA were related to OBL and Al-Qaeda to Bush (States, 2004). This gave rise to many questions about the security measures which USA remained fail to take. On September 17, 2001 Bush issued a MoU which granted CIA to establish secret interrogation and detention operations outside the US territory. Bush also issued an Executive Order under International Emergency Economic Powers Act (EEPA) which was meant to choke up all financial transaction and to freeze American

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property of terrorists and their associates on September 23, 2001. This order also authorised the US to impose financial sanctions on international or national outfits who were found to support the terrorists in any form (*Executive Order 13224*, 2001).

U.N response to 9/11 attacks

In the wake of September 11 attacks, UN became more active in combating terrorism. On the very next day of these attacks, UNSC passed a resolution 1368 in which it evinced its inclination to embrace all essential measures to respond to the above mentioned terrorist attacks (UNO, 2001c). Furthermore, on September 28, 2001 another Resolution 1373 was passed declaring the acts, modus operandi and practice of terrorism contrary to the UN charter and the same applies to the planning, financing and inciting terrorist activities (UNO, 2001d). Thus, UN demanded its member states to suppress and curtail any kind of assistance to terrorists such as freezing of terrorist-related funds and assets, denial to provide any safe haven to them and their movements and full cooperation with other states government and global community on counter terrorism front. Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) of 15 members of UNSC was also established under this UNSC Resolution with the charge to monitor member states for implementation of this resolution and to bring the member states on an agreeable consensus with terrorism-related protocols and conventions. Member states were asked to submit reports related to steps taken by them for tackling terrorism to CTC with particular focus on progress on the key seven areas which are as under:

1. Legislation on terrorism regulation;
2. Financial asset control of terrorists and their outfits;
3. Custom effective monitoring;
4. Immigration checks;
5. Extradition;
6. Law enforcement measures; and
7. Arms traffic control ("*Multilateral Responses to Terrorism: The United Nations*," 2004).

Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan, stressed on the necessity of global consensus among member states on convention of international terrorism. He stated that the terrorists attacked on one state viz., the USA but wounded the whole world (Annan, 2001). Colin Powell, the then American Secretary of the State, also assured the UN about American readiness to deliver technical support in areas ranging from aviation safety to the trailing methods applied by law implementation (UNO, 2001). According to Chantal De Jonge Oudraat, it was for the first time in the history of UN that it recognized the states right to act militarily unilaterally or multi-laterally in self-defense in response to terrorist attacks (Oudraat, 2004). The first above mentioned resolution (1368) of UN paved the way for military action against Al Qaeda and second resolution (1373) ensured the global efforts in tackling terrorist networks.

Muslim world response to 9/11 attacks

On September 23, 2001 in response to 9/11 attacks, in an extra-ordinary meeting by Foreign Minister of GCC (Gulf Countries Council) approval was given for complete cooperation with US in its efforts to bring justice to the preparators of 9/11 attacks. However, no indication was highlighted about the question on their strategy and policy for military support. UAE and KSA were having close ties with Taliban regime in pre-9/11 years. On September 28, 2001 KSA gave its approval to USA for using her bases, if needed, for any military action in Afghanistan. Iran also showed her condemnation of attacks but declared her support for military action would only be if backed by UN (*11 September 2001: The Response*, 2001).

In post 9/11 years, Al-Qaeda and its related network became the prime focus of the US counter-terrorism efforts. An enormous portion of American counter-terrorism initiative involved Muslim states. Therefore, much pressure was on these states to take measures against terrorism and other related measures. Many Muslim states are dependent on the US for aid, trade and their security. Resultantly, non-compliance with the US preferences such as it was counter-terrorism particularly against Al-Qaeda network might lead to serious challenges and risks for many Muslim states. The biggest challenge in implementing the counter-terrorism measures was faced by Muslim states that were "incredibly unpopular" with religious contention over the issue. On November 10, 2001 Bush addressed UN General Assembly in New York and talked on the danger to world peace and all states of the world at the hands of "terrorists". It is important to note that the mention of Islam and Muslims was done lavishly to impress the Muslim world that the US is working for the world peace and for the peace in Muslim countries as well (Bush, 2001).

Al-Qaeda and OBL has had a long history of global popularity among Muslims for its efforts to serve Muslim cause in terms of his contribution in Afghan Jihad which resulted into an uphill task to undo by the West and Muslim rules. Al-Qaeda and its associates projected the American invasion of Afghanistan as an attack on Islam and the Muslim world.

On the other hand, it merits mentioning that a Pew Global Research Survey from 2006 reveals striking findings. Despite the condemnation of Muslim states and Muslim individuals across the globe, the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan said that they did not believe 'Arabs' were behind the 9/11 attack. Interestingly, according to a Gallup Survey findings from 2002, 43% of the Turks expressed their disbelief that 'Arabs' were behind 9/11 catastrophe, while this figure increased to 59% in 2006 and in 2011 Pew Survey the figure even rose to 73%. It is important to note that according to 2011 Pew Survey a rise was in the beliefs of Muslims particularly of Middle East and Turkey on that the 'Arabs' did not carryout the 9/11 attacks. However, in Pakistan the response was different as it was seen a decline from 86 %, 41 % in 2002 and 2006 respectively.

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On the other hand, in 2011 it moved from 41% to 57 %, a trend showed an increase in disbelief of Arabs involvement in 9/11 attacks in Pakistan (Booth, Ken & Dunne, 2010).

American demands from taliban regime in Afghanistan

US State Department presented a paper to Bush titled, "Game Plan for a Political-Military Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan", as was demanded by him. It entailed particular following demands from Taliban government in Afghanistan to:

1. Surrender OBL and his chief lieutenants along with Ayman al Zawahiri;
2. Exchange everything Taliban knew about Al-Qaeda and its maneuvers;
3. Disband all terrorist sites;
4. Release all captive foreigners by Afghan government; and,
5. Abide by all the UNSC resolutions (States, 2004, p. 332).

In this respect, an ultimatum of 24 to 48 hours was given to Taliban for handing over OBL and closure of all Al-Qaeda camps. It was further explained that in case of no compliance with above mentioned demands, Washington administration would use her all means to destroy the Afghan based terrorist infrastructure (Abbas, 2004).

US pressure on Pakistan to reconcile taliban regime with us interests

After 9/11 incident, pressure was mounted on Pakistan to play its role in convincing Taliban regime to comply with American demands. On October 1, 2001 Gen. Musharraf gave a straight warning to Taliban leadership for its breakdown and predicted a near clash between Taliban regime and US if they will persist on not cooperating with American demands. A Pakistani delegation led to Afghanistan and asked Taliban for handing over OBL. They were warned that in case of non-cooperation with American demands about handing over OBL and so on, a US led military action may be resulted against Afghanistan.

In response to these warnings, Mullah Omer, the spiritual leader and commander of the Taliban forces, stated that the matter will be looked into by a Grand Islamic Council of 800 Islamic scholars for deciding the fate OBL exile or otherwise. Initially, Taliban declined to have any information about OBL. However, later on September 30, 2001 Abdul Salam Zaef, Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan talked about the presence of OBL in Afghanistan and that he had been shifted to a secret location under the protection and control of Taliban. He also repeated the Taliban's offer of dialogue with the US along with their request to provide firm evidences of OBL's involvement in 9/11 attacks. However, Bush Administration rejected the Taliban offer of dialogue and demanded for a swift action to implement UN resolution.

In a personal communication with Molana Ameer Hamza, Chairman Tehreek Hurmat-e-Rasool, Chief Editor Weekly Jarrar and the author of about 50 books, he

was of the view that even before the incident of 9/11, the US had decided to come to this region. So far as the handing over of OBL was concerned, it was argued that even if Mullah Omer handed him over, even then the US was sure to come to Afghanistan so the decision of Mullah Omer was right as it showed their brevity which was in consonance with Afghan tradition. He is of the view that this decision of Mullah Omer was an apt decision which later on proved correct in the form of American defeat in Afghanistan (Hali, 2014).

9/11 attacks: devoid of substantial evidences

Neal Horsley in his article, "Bush Lied about Bin Laden" stated that a vast number of Muslims and Americans believed about the non-existence of any "conclusive" evidences as said by Bush in public questions about the alleged involvement of OBL in 9/11 attacks (2001). Michel Chossudovsky in his article, "Pakistan and the Global War on Terrorism" asserted US WOT as "a complex and intricate intelligence construct. The covert support provided to Islamic extremist groups is part of an imperial agenda. It purports were to weaken and eventually destroy secular and civilian governmental institutions, while also contributing to vilifying Islam. It is an instrument of colonization which seeks to undermine sovereign nation-states and transform countries into territories (2008b)."

The official narrative of 9/11 attacks was seen with doubt by a large number of individuals even in the US as fake and an inside job. Theories like controlled demolition gave rise to many unresolved questions in people's minds on the incident of 9/11. David Ray Griffin, a retired Prof of Philosophy of Religion & Theology in his writings proved the 9/11 episode as "debunking" by raising a series of crucial questions on the official account of American description of 9/11 attacks by an outside enemy (2007). In response to American public pressure, US had to establish a commission on 9/11 attacks for finding the facts about these attacks. Bob McIlvaine who was the father of one of the victims of 9/11 attacks explained the 9/11 Commission Report as torture and a piece of fiction which must be discarded in an interview.

An interesting development unfolded when FBI, on September 20, 2001, declared that it was uncertain about the identities of some of the hijackers; whereas, on the same day President Bush stated that the US knew well about the terrorists and the governments who were supporting those terrorists. On this important occasion, Arundhati Roy in her book "The Algebra of Infinite Justice" critically evaluated that looking at both the statements of FBI and President Bush, it sounded as though US President knew something which the FBI and American public didn't (2002,). Distinguished scholar Noam Chomsky in his book "Power Systems: Conversations on Global Democratic Uprisings and the New Challenges to U.S. Empire" argued that for eight months the FBI carried out one of the most intensive international investigations in the history of the world, and after eight

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months the head of the FBI recorded in the press statement that they still didn't know who the real perpetrators of 9/11 are (Kux, 2003).

Post 9/11 U.S measures against Al-Qaeda

On September 24, 2001 in efforts to cut off the financial supply to Al-Qaeda network, Bush Administration took the certain measures. Firstly, the assets and transactions of 27 individuals and fractions suspected to have links with terrorist undertakings or networks have been frozen. Secondly, it was announced that assets and global banks would also be frozen who would not cooperate with US in its anti-terror campaign. Thirdly, transactions were restricted with groups who believed to have ties with terror networks. Fourthly, a Foreign Terrorist Asset Tracking Centre was established to locate the roots of funds for terrorist outfits ("Blacklist those Who Do Business with Terrorists,"2001).

Bush doctrine

US described the 9/11 incident as a rude demonstration to the fact that their existed an inadequacy of deterrence, containment and ex post facto responses on the part of the US for dealing with terrorism and rogue regimes which bent on efforts to acquire WMD. Therefore, it firstly demand the US to rule out the option of using force as reaction rather merit efforts to use the rule of force "pre-emptively". Secondly, the US must promote democratic regime change in Afghanistan and beyond (Hashmi, 2005).

Bush Doctrine refers to various foreign policy related initiatives at the turn of the century that are typical of the hawks or Republicans of the US. It evolved from the legacy of the Cold War era policies. Initially used in 2001, it involved two major elements firstly Washington Administration's announcement to unilaterally withdraw from the "Anti-Ballistic Missile" (ABM) Treaty and secondly to reject the "Kyoto Protocol" but after the incident of 9/11, the expression was used for Bush Administration's new policy asserting that the US had the right to protect itself against states that gave sanctuary or provided support to terrorist groups. Bush vowed that the US would rid the world from the evil (Booth, Ken & Dunne, 2010). This doctrine was instantly employed later to rationalize the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Bush administration claimed that the US was caught up in a global war that was a war of ideology, in which its adversaries were bound together by a mutual ideology and a shared hatred for the values of democracy. Going into details of interpretation, different analysts would assign diverse connotations to the "Bush Doctrine", as it was used to explain its other component such as:

1. The policy of defensive war which even went so far as justifying that the US should have the right to oust foreign regimes that posed a budding risk to the security of the US, even if that hazard was not forthcoming;

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2. A policy of disseminating democratic values around the globe, particularly in the Gulf countries, to counter the threats of terrorism; and
3. Eagerness to unilaterally pursue US military interests.

Some of these policy elements were then formally incorporated in a NSC document that was published in September 2002. Strangely the phrase "Bush Doctrine" that has been widely acclaimed by analysts to interpret different policy initiatives of the US was hardly articulated by officials of Bush administration except that it was employed by Vice President of the US, Richard Cheney only once in June 3, 2003 in an address when he arrogantly remarked, "If there is anyone in the world today who doubts the seriousness of the Bush Doctrine, I would urge that person to consider the fate of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq" (Cheney, 2003).

However, Henry A Kissinger in his article, "A New Doctrine of Intervention?" suggested that the US intervention needed to consider the strategic worth and social solidarity of a state (including the likelihood of cracking its complicated sectarian structure) and to assess what could plausibly be erected in lieu of the old setup. He observed that the "traditional fundamentalist" political powers, forged by alliance with "radical revolutionaries", threatened to dictate the process while the social-network elements that marked the initiative were being pushed to the side. He further argued that US should be prepared to face situations where Islamist governments were democratically elected (Kissinger, 2012). One may note that the NDS Doctrine of the US, therefore, rests on two main pillars. One is the pre-emptive strikes against potential enemies and the other is the promotion of democratic regime changes.

US WOT as direct reaction to 9/11 tragedy

In a personal communication Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed, WOT has been described in the Bush's description as the response to the 9/11 event. By virtue of these attacks, Americans were crudely shaken for the first time in their history by the fact that they could be attacked on their heartland. In these attacks two were the most crucial targets for the terrorists: one was the headquarters of their military complex and the other was the centre of their business empire. So, symbolically whosoever did it, they chose these targets just to hurt the Americans in the most profound sense and that is evident from the result as well. It was emphasized that all the strong people and powers got bullied on the street and their biggest worry is to get exposed as being weak since this psychologically becomes the case. So in that sense the WOT then became the expression of America's sheer embarrassment.

The 9/11 attacks came as a total shock as despite all the advanced preparations to thwart nuclear attack from Russia and keeping in view the other military advancements, it was revealed that elements with very ordinary methods could infiltrate, penetrate and strike at the super power. So then it was important to reassert American authority in the world that had been undermined and so it seems

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that OBL and his people thought that they had called the US military might into question which in history was otherwise known as the 'Paper Tiger Theory'. In other words, when looked into their psychological state, OBL and his people wanted to prove that Americans were the paper tigers but in return, the US wanted to prove to OBL and his organization, US as the real tigers. So the WOT was the American reaction to the striking of terrorists on their soil on 9/11 (I. Ahmed, 2014).

The phrase of "the Global War on Terror" was adopted by the media and the US public for referring the then Bush regimes policies and actions to counter terrorism. It was announced that Washington Administration would utilize all its resources to uproot terrorism and would punish all those who were responsible for the 9/11 tragedy. On September 14, 2001 Congress yielded a resolution for empowering the President to use military force against all those forces such as states, individuals and outfits who were involved in planning, authorizing, conducting or supporting 9/11 attacks. On the same day, a package of \$ 40 billion for emergency spending in the wake of 9/11 attacks was approved (*107th Congress*, 2001). Iran disapproved the US to use its airspace, whereas the other regional states gave their assistance to the US such as three CARs- Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan approved the US to use their air space along with the staging facilities which was very crucial to re-establish the presence of Afghan NA and the Uzbek element to take Mazar-e-Sharif from the Taliban control. Russia also sided with the US WOT (R. W. Jones, 2002). A new cabinet level Homeland Security Department was established and American troops were decided to send to Afghanistan for dismantling Taliban regime who under the command of OBL was training and exporting the terrorism according to the Bush Administration (Freidel & Sidey, 2006).

Rationale of U.S WOT: Myth or reality

The US policy makers describe the goals of the US WOT as "to prevent terrorist networks in the region from again taking root in Afghanistan" (Katzman, 2010). Obviously, thus the US would not like the Taliban to emerge at least in the previous form, strength and attitude where they had from 1996 to 2001 unbridled power to reign all over Afghanistan without any regard to ethnic or religious minorities, or with an orthodox style toward women according to the West. According to the official narrative of the US, it was explained that the US and the rest of world community would like to see Afghanistan a stable political and regional entity being governed by predictable norms. However, many studies suggested that the Washington administration did attack Afghanistan not because she was brutally attacked by her as the formidable evidences were lacking in this connection. When the US demanded the Taliban for the handing over of OBL, they asked for the provision of evidences that OBL was involved in the incident of 9/11 September attacks which were not provided. Rather Taliban were informed that the US would bomb on them until they would not comply with their demands.

Noam Chomsky declared this American act of attack on Afghanistan not only an act of terrorism but of aggression. Although the 'WOT' in Afghanistan was initiated in October, 2001 in response to the attack on WTC yet it was eight months later to the incident of 9/11, 2001 that the FBI in a release to press, informed that they does not know who did attack on WTC and Pentagon but just suspicions were there. The US attacked on Afghanistan because they wanted to invade that state for establishing their own rule here. He further stated that the most important reason which worked behind the invasion of Afghanistan was owing to its geo-strategic location. If one looks into the mirrors of history, Afghanistan has been invaded many times since the time of Alexander the Great. At present, core reason is the possible gas pipeline from CARs to other states. In this connection, one may observe the US past efforts for materializing the Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline (TAPI) project in which the chief participants are Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In this TAPI project, the Washington Administration is involved because she wants to prevent the Russian role in the region on the one hand as a part of "New Great Game" and to isolate Iran on the other hand. In TAPI gas pipe line, the US tried hard to draw India into her own orbit by offering her the alternatives (Chomsky, 2013).

Michel Chossudovsky in his study presented the US WOT as a tool used to maintain and expand the growth of corporate capitalism. He explained the US WOT in Afghanistan as a "profit driven" war for holding resources. The study suggested that the hidden agenda behind the US WOT was oil (Chossudovsky, 2008b). A few days later to the beginning of the US WOT, a courtesy visit of the US Ambassador to Pakistan Wendy Chamberlain to Pakistan's Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources, Usman Aminuddin provided further strength to the analyst who related the US WOT with hydrocarbon resources in the region. In another study, "Energy Future Rides on US War: Conflict Centered in World's Oil Patch", Frank Viviano asserted that the hidden stakes of the US WOT can be described in only one word which is "oil". He further emphasized that it was inevitable that the WOT would be taken by many as a war on the behalf of the world oil giants like America's Chevron, Exxon & Arco; France's Totalfina Elf; British Petroleum; Royal Dutch Shell and other multinational conglomerates that have assigned huge investment to extract the valuable resource in this region (Lansford, 2009).

Mark Zepezauer in his book, "The CIA's Greatest Hits" argued that the ostensible reason was of the US WOT was to get OBL but the real aims were to out the Taliban regime and install a more "pliable client" regime in Afghanistan as they did later with the induction of Hamid Karzai who was the consultant to UNOCAL. So according to the author, it was argued that by installing Karzai was in fact like the CIA basically negotiated with itself (Booth, Ken & Dunne, 2010). Others suggested that the US launched that war because she wanted to stay into the region for checking her interest while securing her oil and gas interest in CARs,

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having an eye on China and to counter the penetration of other powers in the region.

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Biographical Note

Bilal Mahmood is Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Dr. Abdul Majid is an Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.
