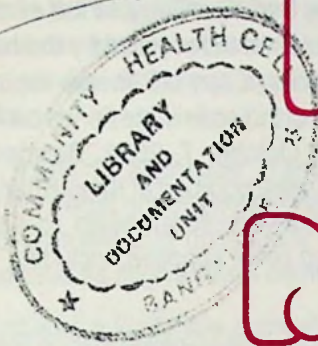




FACTS *against* MYTHS

VIKAS ADHYAYAN KENDRA

Vol VII # 10/2002

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Designs for Global Hegemony: The Myths of the "War on Terrorism"

"How could we have expected to arm and train so many nations in the world in modern ways of warfare and counterinsurgency, and used warfare against so many, while simultaneously impoverishing the majority of the people in those countries through our economic policies, and still expect to be safe..."

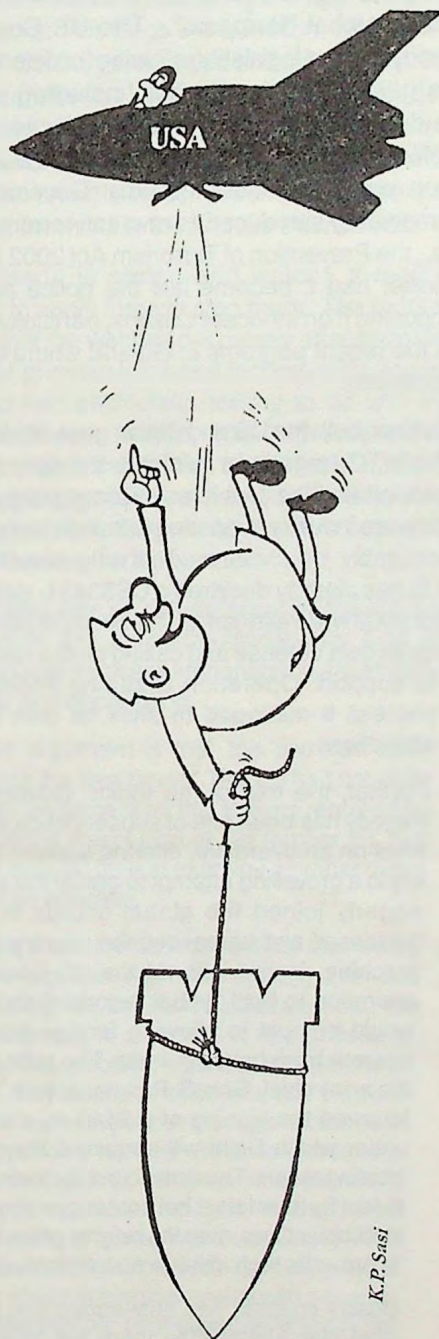
— Wendell Berry, "Thoughts in the Presence of Fear"
(www.gristmagazine.org)

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COMMENT

The global situation since the WTC bombing has considerably worsened and the world is being redefined. The new Afghan regime installed by the US, after the 'War' in Afghanistan, is already in deep crisis. Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaida outfit in the meanwhile continue to be as illusive as ever. In the Middle East, Israeli aggression led to a cycle of violence against the Palestinians. Hatred, xenophobia and knee-jerk calls for vengeance by the US have since increased. Bush has talked of attacking Iraq after inventing the so-called Axis of Evil — Iraq, Iran and North Korea — thereby turning his crusade against terrorism into a war against nations. In reality, the 'Axis' is the White House across the river Potomac and down to the Pentagon!

The 'War on Terrorism' is having serious implications not only for the global community but also for India over the issue of human rights violations. Indeed, "Terrorism" has become a convenient tool to crush any opposition threatening the economic and political agendas of the ruling bloc. New levels of double-speak have since been witnessed everywhere, including among the Indian ruling class.



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Human rights are being curtailed so as to "maintain our freedom". This 'tough love' approach to US foreign policy (you need to be bombed because we know what's best for you), as in the past, serves as a warning: to "persuade" countries [not only those in the Axis of Evil] that they'd better behave and follow the US or prepare to suffer the consequences. Civil liberties and human rights too have suddenly become negotiable. The US is to lift its ban on extra-judicial executions carried out abroad by its own agents. The CIA might be permitted to employ human rights abusers once more, which will doubtless mean training and funding a whole new generation of bin Ladens. It will judge which nations are with it or against it not by the integrity of their elections or justice of their courts but by the vigour with which their armed forces and police combat "terrorism". The US Congress has already passed legislation allowing for detention without charges of any immigrant (including permanent residents). Already a number of cases of racial profiling, particularly against Arabs and Muslims, have been reported. In India, the Indian Government almost immediately introduced its own anti-terrorist legislation viz., the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2002 (POTA). No sooner had it become law the police abused it by imposing it on innocent citizens, particularly Muslims, in the recent pogroms in Gujarat where the violence continues.

Further, both the US and British governments exploited the WTC tragedy to reinforce the very policies that precipitated the problem: building up the power of the defense industry, preparing to launch campaigns which inevitably kill civilians, licensing covert action. The US has already declared a US\$343 b. defense budget for 2002 while earmarking hundreds of billions of dollars for its own defense and calling on the rest of the world to support 'Operation Enduring Freedom'. In the process it managed to shirk its own international obligations.

Further, the role of the Indian Government in the tragedy has been one of subservience and servility. It went on an overdrive, offering support to Bush's war cry in a grovelling attempt to gratify the super power. It eagerly joined the global chorus in denouncing 'terrorism' and harnessed the country to the US war machine. It also offered the US unconditional co-operation to fight 'global terrorism' and facilities that would amount to allowing foreign ground crews to operate from bases in India. The subsequent visit of the army chief, Gen. S. Padmanabhan, to Washington followed the signing of a \$146 m. deal with the US under which Delhi will acquire 8 Raytheon weapon locating radars. The Americans, for their part, are eager to test fly their latest helicopter gun ship AH-1Z of Bell Helicopter Corp. over the heights of the Siachen glacier to prove its high altitude operational capabilities.

Bush's crusade has only added fuel to fire. Even in post-War Afghanistan there are frequent reports of

deaths of innocent Afghan civilians by bombs, missiles and military raids by the US military, to the extent that their numbers far exceed those killed by the barbaric 11 September attacks. Even US media reported a number of incidents of indiscriminate firings on Afghan civilians, begun on October 7, 2001. Besides, Red Cross warehouses were bombed at Khair Khana near Kabul, sending workers scrambling to salvage desperately needed relief supplies, including wheat stored in them¹.

Equally disturbing is that the so-called War on Terrorism has since exposed a great deal more than the Bush Administration cares to admit. Most recently, he has confessed to knowing in advance of the terrorist attacks on September 11, which has also been confirmed by independent reports². Evidently, the US administration was far more interested in promoting its hidden foreign policy agenda even at the expense of its allies. According to a recent expose by intelligence analysts, the primary concern of US in Afghanistan is oil, and *its war on terrorism is largely for domestic and global consumption with the underlying motive being the desire to consolidate its global hegemony. Accordingly Bush has since made it clear that the "anti-terrorism campaigns will not be limited to Afghanistan. His Secretary of Defense had announced "10 years of war" while Bush on November 24, 2001 stated "...the United States army will have to be active in different areas of the world". Since then, South East Asia has experienced the re-introduction of the American military. US troops are back in the Philippines, in violation of its 1987 Constitution. This is an all too-familiar script and ultimately the fate of South Asia can be no different from that of its neighbours.*

Finally, the 'War against Terrorism' has not reduced global tensions in any significant manner. Instead, it has fueled tensions between countries, e.g. between India and Pakistan with troops amassed all along the LOC with the two countries on a military standoff. The terrorist attacks on the Assembly building in Srinagar on October 13 and the Parliament in New Delhi on December 13 were used to justify the Indian government's threat to *attack Pakistan if it failed to act against terrorists operating on its territory. Alongside mass unemployment, poverty and hunger, there has been an explosion of slaughter and destruction not only in Afghanistan or Palestine but in Gujarat as well. Such brutal violence in the new millennium is a new hecatomb, inflicted on thousands of ordinary people. Side-by-side, the rhetoric and vile propaganda that underpin this 5th Afghan war has gained such popular acceptance that they are already being accepted as 'facts'. Communal forces in India are conveniently and quickly taking over such spurious discourses. The dividing line between reality and falsehood is thus getting increasingly blurred. Hard facts, on the other hand, are either ignored outright or systematically suppressed. But logic, history, and facts will reveal where such empty rhetoric and vile propaganda end and facts begin.*

MYTH: *In the struggle against terrorism the War in Afghanistan was a just war – a war of self-defense – and also a deterrent against future terrorist attacks.*

FACT: It was not a “just war” in any sense of the word. It was an illegal act of aggression on the part of the US government that unilaterally decided what was appropriate. As such it was a crime against humanity.

In a just war, a legitimate authority must authorize a war. In this case, that authority is the United Nations. It has the responsibility to provide a more objective authority to decide what action was necessary. Under the UN Charter, the waging of war is permissible **only** under two conditions, viz., i) if the Security Council authorizes it, or ii) in the absence of such authorisation, if it is in self-defense.

Since the beginning of the hostilities, i.e. from September 11, 2001 the Security Council passed 7 Resolutions on the War on Afghanistan, and dealt with international efforts to restore stability to the country. None of these specifically authorised the use of force.

The US conveniently applied Resolution # 1368 and Resolution # 1373 to justify the application of force.³ The former resolved that the UN (not individual nations) shall ‘combat by all means threats to international peace and security caused by terrorists acts’ and expressed its readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks of September 11, and to combat all forms of terrorism in accordance with its responsibility. This Resolution indeed calls terrorism a threat to international peace and security. But it does not invoke Chapter VII of the UN Charter under which punitive measures are envisaged. It makes no reference to Afghanistan. Far from authorising the use of force, it states the Security Council’s ‘readiness to take all necessary steps to respond to the terrorist attacks in according with its responsibilities under the UN Charter’

Thus, the thrust of the UN Charter is towards peace and **against the use of force**. Any contrary intention in any Resolution must therefore be specific and categorical in invoking the exceptional power of use of force. The Security Council, in its various Resolutions, has specifically set out some other measures which can be taken, such as freezing of accounts, etc. No specific mention of armed intervention appears. Obviously, principles of interpretation require that if the Security Council wanted to authorise something, which can be invoked only by way of an exception, the same should be stated explicitly and categorically. The granting of such power cannot be read into Security Council Resolutions by tortuous and distorted interpretation. No such categorical and clear invocation is found in any of the Security Council Resolutions, and therefore there is no way in which the US war against Afghanistan can be justified as having been authorised by the Security Council.

Even if, by stretching the language of the Security Council Resolutions, a meaning is attributed to these Resolutions as invoking the use of force, at best it can be said that the use of force would be justified if the Security Council itself, through the UN force and UN flag decided to use such force. Nothing of the kind happened!

Ironically, however, the UN Security Council also had not condemned these attacks! Its resolution of 12 November seemed to have assumed that member States had acted to stop terrorism, without going into details of how they were going about it⁴.

Further, the related claim – the US acted purely in self-defense – which is, stopping the aggressor from further attacks: This begs the question, who was the aggressor? Contrary to the hype and propaganda there is only circumstantial evidence on the Taliban being involved in the attacks. Nor is there evidence that the terrorists were Afghanis. The Taliban were accused of harboring the prime suspect (Osama bin Laden) but **not** of being involved in the attacks themselves.

Since Al-Qaeda is armed and violent, it may be appropriate to apply force to stop them. The problem however, is that the war had not merely attacked these suspects but grievously injured innumerable Afghan citizens who had absolutely nothing to do with the Taliban or Al-Qaeda. Indeed, most Afghanis had no information on what the Taliban had done or does, or what was happening outside of their besieged country. Even if they did know, they would not have been in a position to influence the Taliban.

Therefore, these acts of ‘self-defence’ by the US-led coalition forces are also simultaneously acts of aggression against innocent Afghanis who are already victims of war and oppression.

Another false argument is that the war had been declared only as the “last resort”. The US had not given a time-span to implement all the actions required by the United Nations Resolution of September 28. Nor did they allow enough time to examine whether those actions would be effective.

Further, in a just a war, the harm caused by the military action must be less than the harm that it is intended to prevent. The US-led coalition maintained that the harm it is preventing is a repeat of the attacks of September 11. The problem, again, is how can harm be compared.⁴ The war had not been a war between equals. It was a war of the super-rich against the poor. It had targeted not only terrorist camps and hideouts, but public infrastructure. Communications, electricity, water, etc., were irreparably damaged. Much land will be uncultivable owing to “unexploded ordnance” – that is, bombs that have yet not exploded but would explode if touched, with major ecological and health hazards. By December, the number of civilian casualties in the war was already greater than the number of victims of

the September 11 attacks. Afghanistan was already experiencing famine, and millions were dependent on food aid, before this war begun. The war has made it almost impossible to distribute food. It had also increased the number of people who have no means of growing food or buying it. This means that what may appear to the US and its military allies to be a restrained use of force, is viewed as extreme force and as relentless destruction by the Afghanis.

Additionally, to be a just war, it has to be targeted to those who have initiated the aggression, and distinguish between those people and non-combatants.

At the time it was not known how bombs directly killed many. What is clear though is that a number of non-combatants had been killed. Bombs fell on housing and farmlands. The unexploded canisters from cluster bombs are lethal to whoever disturbs them. Because they are colourful, children may pick up the canisters. They are also the same colour as food parcels confusing women, men and children with lethal consequences.

Finally, there has (again) been no evidence that the main effect of the military action has been against the alleged terrorists. Rather the main effects have been against the civilians. It has killed non-combatants both by bombs and by making it impossible for them to get food. It has damaged the infrastructure on which Afghanis depend for their livelihood and existence.

All in all, *the war has failed in satisfying the criteria for a just war.* It also failed the criteria for self-defensive action allowed by the UN Charter.

In fact, if terrorism is defined as the use or threat of violence against civilians in the pursuit of a political objective, then the entire war on Afghanistan can be seen **not** as a war against terrorism but as a terrorist war, and, to reiterate, a crime against humanity.

Myth: *The War on Terrorism was in defense against terrorists and terrorism — to destroy their networks, training camps and infrastructure.*

FACT: Violence against innocents in a war is not the proper response! Condemnation of the barbaric attack on the WTC in the strongest words is totally justified. So is the attempt to arrest, try and punish those involved in the attack who were not killed in it. But to have invoked the spectre of war is something totally different. Most of all, to declare war on terrorism is to declare war in abstraction. The Northern powers have been too trigger happy in declaring such crusades in the past. Lest we forget: the 'War Against Poverty', the 'War Against Drugs', the 'War against AIDS', the 'War Against Corruption', and now the 'War on Terror! The world has been in state of perpetual bellicosity against impalpable evils for a long time.

MYTH: *Americans are frequently the targets of terrorists because of USA's credo and stand on*

Democracy, Freedom and Human Rights at home and all over the globe.

FACT: On the contrary! The former retired Lt. Col. USAF, Bowman⁸ not only dubs this claim as "Baloney" but claims the truth is just the opposite: "We are the target of terrorists because we stand for dictatorship, bondage, and human exploitation in the world!"

"We are the target of terrorists because we are hated. And we are hated because our Government had done hateful things. In how many countries have we deposed popularly elected leaders and replaced them with puppet military dictators who were willing to sell out their own people to American corporations?"

"We did it in Iran when we deposed Mossadegh because he wanted to nationalise the oil industry. We replaced him with the Shah, and trained, armed, and paid his hated SAVAK National Guard, which enslaved and brutalised the people of Iran. All to protect the financial interests of our oil companies. Is it any wonder there are people in Iran who hate us?"

"We did it in Vietnam when we thwarted the democratic elections in the South which would have united the country under Ho Chi Minh. We replaced him with a series of ineffectual puppet crooks who invited us to come in and slaughter their people and we did. (I flew 101 combat missions in that war which you properly opposed). And, of course, how many times have we done it in Nicaragua and all the other banana republics of Latin America? Time after time we have ousted popular leaders who wanted the riches of the land to be shared by the people who worked it. We replaced them with murderous tyrants who would sell out and control their own people so that the wealth of the land could be taken out by Domino Sugar, the United Fruit Company, and Chiquita Banana.

"In country after country our government has thwarted democracy, stifled freedom, and trampled human rights. That's why we are hated around the world. And that's why we are the target of terrorists..."

"We are not hated because we practice democracy, freedom, and human rights! We are hated because our Government denies these things to people in Third World countries whose resources are coveted by our multinational corporations. And that hatred we have shown has come back to haunt us in the form of terrorism..."

MYTH: *The terrorist attack on the WTC and the Pentagon took the whole USA and its government, including its intelligence agencies, totally by surprise.*

FACT: On the basis of what has since been reported in the media, there is circumstantial evidence to state that the US Government was in the know about the attacks, and even allowed these attacks to take place! The following set of information will bear this out:

- » The forces that seem to have carried out the WTC bombing may not have been under US control, but were certainly known to the US security apparatus and indeed originated as agents of the CIA;

To counter the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the CIA recruited, trained, armed, and supplied thousands of Islamic fundamentalists to wage a 'jihad' — a concept largely dormant until the Americans resurrected it for their sinister purposes two decades back. Islamic militants were recruited from all over the Islamic world including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This is where Osama bin Laden first came into the picture, as an operative of American imperialism. When they fought the Russians, they were glorified as freedom fighters, but today President Bush brands them as uncivilised fanatics who have to be destroyed;

- » Since 1996, the FBI had been investigating the possibility that terrorists were using American aviation schools to learn how to fly jumbo jets, so the entire 'modus operandi' of the terrorists had been anticipated by the authorities;
- » The apartment in Germany, where the Trade Centre attacks had been planned and co-ordinated, had been under German police surveillance for nearly 3 years;
- » The FBI and other American intelligence agencies had received warnings of, and intercepted messages about, a planned spectacular terrorist attack, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the White House Rose Garden ceremony with Clinton, Rabin and Arafat. Both Israeli and French intelligence agencies had sent warnings to the Americans. So, American authorities certainly had advance notice about when the attack would come. Perhaps it was not clear that the target would be the WTC, but the centre had already been targeted by Islamic terrorists for attack in 1993;
- » In August, (2001) the FBI had arrested Z. Moussaoui on suspicion when seeking pilot training at a flight school in Minnesota and mentioning that he was not interested in learning how to take off or land. In early September, French authorities had sent a warning about his suspected terrorist links. In November, the FBI suddenly reversed itself and denied Moussaoui's involvement in the plot. But in any case, suspicions about pilots not interested in taking off or landing, hinting at the possibility of suicide hijacking, were revived;

- » Mohammed Atta, who allegedly piloted the first plane to hit the Twin Towers, was well known to the authorities but was allowed to remain at large in the US. Despite the fact that he had been listed for years on the State Department's terrorist watch-list because of his suspected involvement in a 1986 bus bombing in Israel, he was permitted repeatedly to enter, leave and return to the US. From January to May 2000 he was under surveillance by US agents following his suspicious purchase of large amounts of chemicals, which might be used to make explosives. In January 2001 he was held by Immigration and Naturalization agents at Miami International Airport because he had previously overstayed a visa, and because he did not have a proper visa to enter the US to study at a flight school in Florida. Despite being on the State Department watch-list, and the FBI's concern that terrorists might be attending flight schools in the US, he was permitted to enter the US and enroll in the flight school. In April 2001, Atta was stopped by police for driving without a license. When he failed to report in Court the next month, a warrant was issued for his arrest, but it was never executed. He was arrested for drunk driving on two other occasions. Atta had never made any attempt to operate under an alias during his entire time in the US, travelling, living and studying at the flight school under his real name. Why?! Is there a more Machiavellian explanation for the authorities constantly and consistently permitting him to remain at large? Was he being 'protected' or set up as a fall guy?

- » On August 23, 2001, the CIA sent a list of 100 suspected members of Osama bin Laden's network, who were reportedly in or on their way to the US, including Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaq Alhazmi who were on board the plane that hit the Pentagon;
- » For weeks the US government officials and the media kept drumming the figure of 6,000 lives lost at the WTC. But there is every indication that these figures, with their heavily laden propaganda value, were highly inflated by the government. The American Red Cross, which is distributing financial aid to families of the victims, had only processed applications from 2,563 families. Government officials refused to comply with a request from the Red Cross for a copy of its secret official list of Trade Centre victims;
- » The Jane's Intelligence Digest[®] revealed that Russia's intelligence services had blueprints

The 'War' in Afghanistan:

For Oil Profits? Preserving the Dollar? Or Geopolitical Gameplan?

Amidst the roar of aerial bombardment and subsequent US "victory", there have been a number of theories of the reason for the invasion. The first school maintains that in order to keep the dollar as world currency and thus retain US control over the oil industry it is imperative to keep the dollar as the sole currency of global trade and thereby retain its position as the world's only superpower. The US is desperate to ensure that the global oil trade continues to be conducted in dollar terms only. This objective however often comes up against the interests of its European 'allies'. Indeed, European oil companies e.g. ENI of Italy, etc., have been engaged in numerous projects to extract oil from the Caspian and Caucasus directly to refineries in Europe and it is obvious that from January 1, 2002, with the Euro as legal tender in the EU, the goal of an alternative oil market could begin to take shape and be a threat to US economic and financial power. The 'War' on Afghanistan then was supposedly to remove the barrier constituted by the Taliban in routing an oil pipeline through Afghanistan to carry part of the output of the oilfields in Kazakhstan. It was also a part of wider strategy of the US to have the sole power and control on oil distribution. Behind this imperative is the fate of the Dollar, and behind the fate the dollar is the superpower status of the US. The EU moreover are also keen on improving the status of their fledgling currency, the Euro, in the oil market and thus not surprisingly oppose the US with their own geopolitical designs. In short, this school of thought maintains that the war in Afghanistan was the result of the desire of immediate economic gain. However, as the Gulf War had since proved, US victory saw no improvement in oil profits, nor did it change the price of oil. That is, the immediate economic factors are not the cause of war.

A slight departure to the above is the point that though economic factors are not crucial for the cause of war, the US objective nevertheless hinges on the fate of currencies. In other words it hinges on a specific economic factor. Oil and an oil pipeline is a decisive factor in the role of the dollar and its new rival, the Euro.

However, the preservation of the status of the US as world hegemon is not directly and decisively dependent on US control of oil. That is, while it is correct that commercial control of oil production – most of the major global oil companies are American owned – does help the US to maintain its economic might, and is thus a factor in the dominance of the dollar, it is not the basic explanation of the means by which the dollar gained and retains its role as world currency. For

* The dollar achieved its pre-eminence before oil became the main fuel on the planet. In fact no currency's strength is especially founded on the control of raw materials. For instance, Japan controls practically no raw materials, but the Yen, despite the recent stagnation of the Japanese economy, remains a strong currency. Conversely, the former Soviet Union had huge quantities of oil under its control but this did not even prevent its collapse, let alone enable the Rouble to become a world currency. It was not control of the coal or cotton supply that launched the pound sterling as the main currency of the 19th century.

It is, rather, the preponderance of a country's economy in terms of world production and trade, and its relative political and military weight, that explain why particular currencies have become the standard monetary reference in the world.

The emergence of capitalism in other countries began to undermine the British colonial power and began to overtake it in terms of productivity. The emergent new conditions sounded the death knell of Sterling and the Second World War sealed its fate. The subsequent exhaustion of all later European powers increased the relative weight of US production and its share of world trade, and therefore increased global demand for dollars. After the Second World War, with most of Europe devastated, the US, stimulated by a phenomenal growth in the armament industry, achieved a crushing global economic supremacy. The Marshall Plan of 1947 supplied the European economies with the dollars they desperately needed to reconstruct by buying American goods. Dollar supremacy was institutionalized at the world level by the Bretton Woods Agreement, and the creation of the WB and IMF under the aegis of the US. In 1971 the decoupling of the dollar from gold by Washington allowed the US to maintain the power of the dollar and the competitive position of American production by exchange rate manipulation, which also helped cheapen its growing foreign debt. At the beginning of the 80s, the raising of interest rates, and the de-regulation of the movement of capital, with the consequent mushrooming of financial speculation, helped offload the effects of the crisis onto other countries. Behind these measures the military supremacy of the US, which became unassailable after the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, ensures that the dollar retains its supremacy.

The role of oil in the dollar's prime position is therefore relatively insignificant. Even if it is true that in the 'first oil crisis' of 1971-72, the US, through its influence over OPEC oil pricing, managed to transfer enormous funds to its coffers from those of the European and Japanese capitalist powers via Saudi Arabia, such manipulations are hardly the main instruments of dollar supremacy.

What counts in the hegemony of the dollar is the US's economic, political and military domination of the world market in which oil and other raw materials are bought and sold, and this domination is mainly decided by factors of a more general and historical nature, rather than the control of oil.

Related to this is the argument that the US's military invasion of Afghanistan is part of a long term preemptive strategy to occupy the centres of oil production and the oil routes in order to prevent the EU from controlling them with a view to making the Euro the dominant currency in world oil production and trade. The supposed objective is to stop the Euro from taking the dollar's position, and thus overtaking the US as a rival superpower.

This claim is also incorrect. Economically the EU is still much weaker than the US. Its GDP is about 2/3rds that of the US. Germany's economy, the strongest political pole in the Euro zone, still only ranks 3rd behind the US and Japan. At the political and military level, the divide is even greater. Europe's greatest economic power remains a military dwarf compared to Britain and France, its main rivals. Germany is increasing its military strength, its troops have intervened outside its border (in Kosovo) for the first time since World War II. Yet its ability to project its military might extends no further than its immediate neighbours in Eastern Europe!

Thus, from all these standpoints, the drive to protect the dollar's domination of the world economy cannot be considered a credible reason for the massive military campaign against Afghanistan.

The second current behind this thinking is that the superpower status of the US is dependent on the dollar's pre-eminent role albeit not in a decisive way. Military superiority is as much a cause of the dollar's status as an effect. Obviously the economic and monetary pre-eminence of the US in the world economy is a crucial factor in its military supremacy. But military and strategic might does not flow automatically, mechanically and immediately or proportionally from economic power. There are innumerable examples to prove this point. Japan and Germany are the strongest world economic powers after the US, but are still military dwarfs compared to Britain and France who, weaker economically, have nuclear weapons. The erstwhile Soviet Union was weak economically but contested US power at the military level for 45 years.

Like every other country, the US cannot rely solely on the performance of its currency to automatically guarantee its world domination. On the contrary, the US must continue to devote massive, costly resources to its military and strategic interests in order to try to outflank its geopolitical rivals. Its anti-terrorist campaign since September 11, has scored success in this struggle. It has forced the other major powers to support its military and strategic objectives without allowing them an upper hand in any way. It can now more easily set about expanding its 'anti-terrorist' crusades in other countries.

Yet it would be difficult to measure whether the US offensive in recent months has made oil supplies any more secure for the US than before, or significantly increased the dollar's superiority. The real US victory is at the military/strategic level. Control of oil for economic advantage was not the decisive question that caused the US to spend billions of dollars in its war against Afghanistan, and to risk the stability of Pakistan where the proposed pipeline would continue after it left Afghanistan.

The era when major powers launched wars for immediate or direct economic gain was an embryonic phase in the evolution of imperialism. Once the major powers had divided the world between themselves as colonies and spheres of influence, the possibility of direct economic benefit from war became more and more uncertain. War became less a question of economic gain than a question of the survival of each state at the expense of its rivals.

Instead of war serving the needs of the economy, the economy has come to serve the needs of war, and raw materials have not escaped this general rule. If the US wants to control raw materials, especially oil, it is not because it will ensure the health of its profits or currency, but because of its military importance.

Though the war in Afghanistan was all about the maintenance and reinforcement of the US position as the only global superpower, it was not determined by specific economic factors, like the control of oil. It is rather dependent on geo-strategic questions. It was about the ability of the US to achieve military supremacy in key areas of the world like Afghanistan, which had proved their strategic worth long before oil became known as 'black gold'. The importance of Afghanistan is not because it is a potential vehicle of an oil pipeline, but because it is at the geographical hub of the main global powers of the Middle and the Far East, and of South Asia, total control of which will greatly increase US power.

(This analysis is from the International Review,⁷

of the close links of Taliban's with the al Queda outfit and both were supported by the Pak military and the ISI. The Russians had also provided a report on this to the UN Security Council way back on March 9, 2001 along with regular flow of information from Moscow to the US that go back to the final years of the Clinton Presidency.

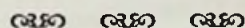
Finally, the US government has never publicly revealed its "evidence" of bin Laden's responsibility for the Trade Centre attacks. Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld clearly signalled his preference that bin Laden be killed rather than captured in order to skip a trial. It is only natural to ask why the US is so concerned to keep its alleged 'evidence' a secret?! None of this definitely constitutes positive proof that either the US administration, or perhaps the CIA, had prior knowledge of the WTC attack, but one does not have to be a conspiracy buff to have his suspicions raised.

Apart from failing to provide convincing evidence that the attacks of September 11 were the work of Osama bin Laden the US had failed to explain how they 'identified' the 19 alleged hijackers (unless they simply chose all those with Arab or Muslim-sounding names from the passenger manifests). If the US had evidence against Osama bin Laden, it could have made it public and negotiated with the Taliban to have him tried in some other country. (The US after all had carried out such negotiations for over 10 years with Libya when it blamed two Libyans in the crash of an airline over Lockerbie in Scotland, in 1998. The trial led to one conviction and one acquittal). But the US government

completely rebuffed offers by the Taliban to negotiate about bin Laden.

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Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to Rohini Hensman for her valuable inputs and comments in preparing this issue of FAM. The graphic on the front page is reproduced from our monthly publication, Poster Journal, designed by K. P. Sasi.

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Facts Against Myths is a monthly bulletin of factual information on a number of development myths and fallacies, etc, including information against alien development models, paradigms and false concepts on caste, creed and gender.



Produced and Published by :
Vikas Adhyayan Kendra
D-1 Shivdham, 62 Link Road,
Malad West, Mumbai 400 064, INDIA

☎ : 882 2850 & 889 8662 Fax : 889 8941
Email : vak@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Design & Layout : Kartiki Desai

Printed by : Omega Offset, 4574, Shetty Gally
Belgaum 590 002. ☎ 0831-424124 / 433429

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