

HAS THE WORLD CHANGED?

A FRESH LOOK AT TERROR, WAR, AND PROPAGANDA

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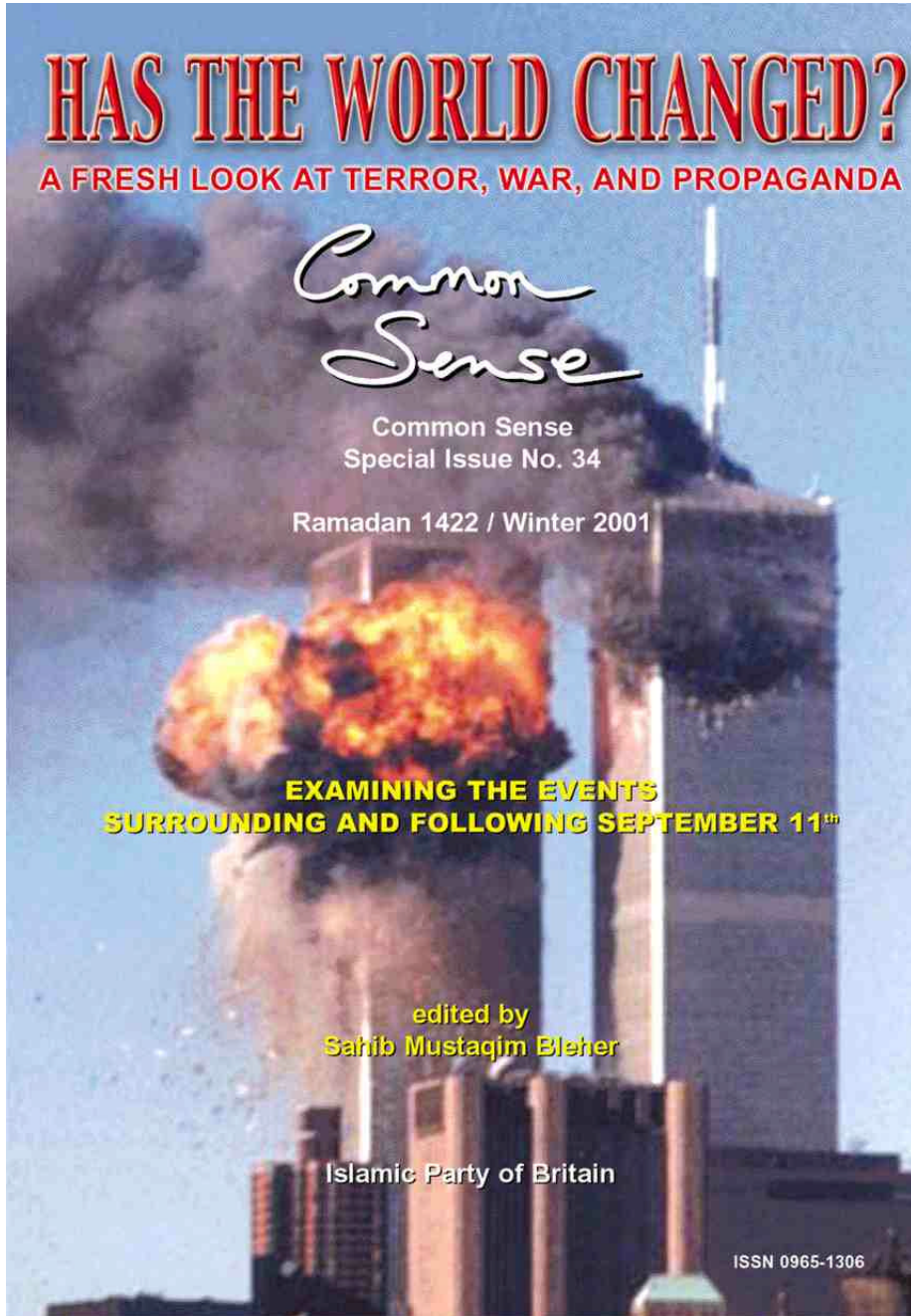
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**EXAMINING THE EVENTS
SURROUNDING AND FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER 11th**

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Preface

The day the world changed is one of the euphemisms used for September 11, 2001, the day when airliners were flown as guided missiles into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. What exactly happened that day? Did it come as a surprise for everyone just as it did for the millions of television viewers glued to their screens to follow the events? Why should it have changed the world, and in what way? Are we being told the truth? If not, in whose interest is it being covered up? Is the information given to us reliable or propaganda? Who did it and why? What is the war all about, and will it escalate? Can a war on terror ever succeed? What are its declared and actual aims? What kind of world have we inherited at the beginning of this new millennium? Things have moved swiftly since that day, with America leading a world-wide coalition against alleged terror networks. Afghanistan has been the first country to be targeted in this war which, according to some strategists, will focus on various targets over a long time of up to 50 years. What is it meant to achieve? Is the truth, as always, the first casualty of this war? In the shadow of shock people did not have enough time to take in the detail. Too many questions remain unanswered, too many allegations unproven. Many, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, feel that there is something unreal - and improper - going on. This special edition of *Common Sense* gathers information from a variety of available sources and presents them in an attempt to help us understand the wider picture.

The Events of September 11

On September 11, 2001 several aircraft almost simultaneously deviated from their filed flight plans and were used as missiles:

Two struck the World Trade Center in New York just after 9 am local time:

American Airlines flight #11, a Boeing 767, 81 passengers and 11 crew, took off from Boston destined for Los Angeles, tail # N334AA.

United Airlines flight #175, a Boeing 767, 65 passengers, took off from Boston destined for Los Angeles, tail # N612UA. According to some reports this plane was still flying after the towers had been hit.

A third struck the Pentagon in Washington:

American Airlines flight #77, a Boeing 757, 58 passengers and 6 crew, took off from Dulles near Washington D.C. destined for Los Angeles, tail # was N644AA. According to some reports, this plane crashed into the World Trade Center.

A fourth aircraft crashed near Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania at about 9.45 am local time:

United Airlines flight #93, a Boeing 757, 45 people on Board, took off from Newark destined for San Francisco, tail # N591UA.

According to a statement by United Airlines a fifth aircraft, Flight 175, a Boeing 767 bound from Boston to Los Angeles with 65 people on board, also crashed, but it was not revealed where.

According to the news agency AFP another plane was headed for the Pentagon, and was picked up by Ronald Reagan National Airport in Washington. No further details were released.

The North Tower of the World Trade Center was struck at 8:45 local time, the South Tower at 9:03. The South Tower collapsed first at 9:50; the North Tower followed at 10:29. This means that it took the South Tower 47 minutes to collapse, the North Tower 1 hour 44 minutes. Both towers had been hit at a location near the top. Whilst the the top of the South Towers fell off to the side, with the North Tower the whole structure collapsed vertically and it seems that the collapse was not cushioned by the lower structures of the 110-floor building. If the collapse were due to the ground impact of the fall of several of the top floors of the South Tower, this would have had to cause a separate crater at some distance. Some hours later buildings 6 and 7 of the WTC-complex also collapsed.

Built to last

Only a week prior, the structural engineer who designed the twin towers stated at a conference in Frankfurt, Germany, that the internal steel columns would remain standing if the towers were hit by a Boeing 707. The collapse has been largely blamed on the fire which allegedly melted the steel supports. The South Tower

was hit at the corner, rather than the side, causing a greater part of the aircraft's kerosene to spill outside the building, yet it was this tower which went down first. Without supplemental supply of bottled oxygen or compressed air, jet fuel can only burn up to about 250°C; the fire in the WTC allegedly reached 800°C; to melt the steel construction of the building a temperature of 1538°C would have been required.

When a B-25 US airforce bomber crashed into one of the upper floors of the Empire State Building in New York on 28 July 1945, one engine going all the way through the building and landing on the other side on a nearby building, no similar damage ensued. The destruction was limited to the immediate environment of the floor struck. Since then, the possibility of aircraft strike was taken into account when designing high-rise buildings, including the WTC built in 1966. A new lease for the building had been signed in April 2001, and the building must have been checked for structural safety.

The Pentagon was built in 1943, housing the US military establishment, stretching over 6.6 million square feet. Throughout the last decade it was undergoing major reconstruction and refurbishment. The side struck by the plane was the one opposite to the military command centre.

First Reactions

The day after these extraordinary events, according to the Irish Times, a Pakistan-based Islamic militant group fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir, called *Lashkar-i-Taiba*, claimed responsibility, in a statement faxed to the news agency AFP by its spokesman Khalid Saif, calling the attacks an Islamic duty carried out by a group under the leadership of commander Abu Samama. This claim was hardly reported and quickly dismissed. Within hours of the events the American administration had made up its mind that its already declared enemy number one, Usama bin Laden, was the prime suspect. These views were echoed by high-profile radical Muslim groups in the UK. According to the Italian daily La Repubblica, *Al-Muhajiroun* spokesman Omar Bakri (formerly Fostok) said: "Only Osama bin Laden has the firepower to hit America and only the Islamic movement that believes in the jihad, the holy war, can have carried out that unprecedented attack thanks to the faith of its martyrs." Osama bin Laden, however, denied any involvement in an interview with the Pakistani newspaper Ummat, blaming the Israeli regime. Within minutes of the aircrafts hitting the towers, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Baruk was giving a prepared statement from the BBC studio in London, lending credence to these claims. According to the Israeli daily Haaretz, five Israelis, illegally present in the United States, were arrested by the FBI a few hours after the strike for "puzzling

behaviour": They had been cheering on and filming the collapse of the towers. Officials of the instant-messaging firm Odigo in New York confirmed that two employees in their research and development and international sales office in Israel had received text messages warning of an attack on the World Trade Center two hours before the planes crashed. The company passed the information on to the Israeli intelligence service Mossad who in turn passed it to the FBI.

Inconsistencies

None of these leads were followed up or spoken of again. Instead the FBI issued a list of alleged hijackers on September 14, mostly Saudis, and a revised list almost two weeks later, because one third of the people on the list turned out to have been either deceased previously or were alive elsewhere but had at some time previously had their passports stolen.

On September 12, White House spokesmen claimed that the White House and Air Force One were potential targets of the stray planes, implying that the president was under immediate danger and thus explaining his absence from taking command for most of the day after the attacks. They indicated that a threatening message had been received by the Secret Service, which was worded such that the originators must have had knowledge of his procedures and whereabouts. As this suggested at the very least access to informants inside the White House or the CIA, the claim was retracted on September 25 by a statement that no call with a threat to the president had ever been made.

On the day of the collapse of the Twin Towers, Van Romero, the vice president for research at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, a leading institute in the study of explosives, who was in Washington at the time, opined to Albuquerque Journal that only the detonation of explosives inside the towers could have caused them to collapse in the fashion they did. Ten days later he retracted his views.

Celebrations

Reports circulated that Palestinians in the Occupied territories were celebrating when they heard the events. Many of these reports showed old archive footage. There were others who showed glee at what was happening, but nobody made much of a meal of this: Former American Secretary of State and head of an organisation collecting Holocaust reparation payments from Germany, Laurence Eagleburger, said on CNN on September 11: "There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this." Former Israeli prime minister, Bibi Netanyahu, was quoted in the New York Times the following day as saying: "it is very good for us." No remorse there then. As the bulldozers moved into Palestinian homes, the Israeli military took full advantage of the situation.

The Cover-up

The case against Bin Laden and his al-Qaida network was built up rapidly, eventually escalating in the military assault on Afghanistan. It was based entirely on suspicion, conspirational theory and circumstantial evidence. The hard evidence, on the other hand, vanished. Since first introduced in Australia in 1958, so-called "black boxes" or flight recorders have become one of the most important aids to an air accident investigation. Each plane is fitted with a cockpit voice recorder, housed in the front of the aircraft, and a flight data recorder, located in the tail. The former records at least 30 minutes of voice communication in the cockpit and with ground control, the latter a minimum of 25 hours of technical aircraft data, giving details about the aircraft's systems and configuration. They are designed and tested to withstand sea pressure down to depths of 20,000 ft; impacts at peak accelerations of up to 3,400 g; a continuous crushing force of 5,000 lb. for 5 minutes across any of the main diagonals or faces; penetration by a 500 lb. weight with a quarter inch steel pin point of contact, dropped from 10 ft; being enveloped in a 1,100°C fire for one hour, a 260°C fire for ten hours; immersion in fluids typically used on aircraft, some of which are corrosive for 48 hours and immersion in fire extinguishing agents for eight hours. To meet these stringent requirements, the black boxes, which to aid the search are painted in international Day-Glo orange since 1965, are fitted in a titanium alloy case, lined with heat resistant materials. Rather than using moving parts, which are more susceptible to damage, "solid state" recorders use microchips, and if the recorder is damaged, the protected part of the accident recorder simply needs to be connected to a new recorder of the same type. If the protected part is itself damaged, the memory card is extracted from the protected block, and, in the same way, this card is installed on an adapted new recorder. No technology is fail-proof, but for at least eight recorders (if only four planes were involved) to have gone either missing or be unusable is turning the science of mathematical probabilities on its head. The flight recorder of TWA800 shot down by a stray missile on July 7, 1996 off New York's Long Island was found and usable; so was the recorder of American Airlines flight 587, an Airbus 300-600 which crashed into Rockaway in the Queens District of New York on November 12, 2001. Realising that the loss of all the black boxes was hard to believe, the FBI changed its story slowly: First the two black boxes from flight 93, crashed in Pennsylvania were found but so damaged that no data could be recovered; later some very limited conversation was preserved; and finally, as per a Newsweek article discussed later, the whole half hour of cockpit communication was retrieved (or should it be "reconstructed"?).

Air traffic control

In addition to cockpit recording, air traffic control also records all conversations with aircraft, and those conversations must also be kept for a sufficient period of time to allow investigation after an incident. A plane does not simply disappear from radar screens. What is meant by a plane losing radar contact is that its transponder code which positively identifies the aircraft on the controller's screen, disappears, but the plane remains visible on the screen. The switching off of a transponder immediately raises alarm bells with air traffic control, because whilst the plane's course can still be followed, all height information about the aircraft is lost. Ground control would immediately have tried to talk to the pilots on board, and if radio contact had also been lost, this would further intensify the sense of a serious emergency in the air. If radio control is lost, instrument flight rules dictate that the plane continues on its filed flight path. This is done to minimise the risk of collision, as a known flight path allows air traffic controllers more readily to keep other aircraft away. If a plane after losing both radar and radio contact makes a decisive unpredicted change in its flight path, there will be no doubt in anybody's mind that foul play is involved. Now, if this should happen to more than one plane within the same control region, all hell will break out on the ground, and the control is immediately handed over to the hijack coordinator in Washington who will dispatch military escort missions straight away. The recordings of air traffic control communications would therefore make very interesting reading and give a number of clues to what really happened, but they have not been released to the public, unlike some alleged mobile phone conversations made from onboard one of the aircrafts. One of the key questions which needs to be asked is why weren't standard procedures followed to stop these hijackings from getting out of hand, and what is being covered up by hiding the evidence. This cover-up suggests collusion by the American military or intelligence service.

A false trail of planted evidence

At the same time, a trail of clumsy and hard-to-believe evidence started to appear, suggesting that the perpetrators were experts in executing a most sophisticated and coordinated multiple hijacking, requiring years of advance planning, but rather amateurish in covering their tracks, leaving Arabic flight manuals, Korans, training videos, etc. all over the place, and even checking in baggage which, if checked thoroughly, would incriminate them and put the mission at risk, when they knew that they would not survive and, therefore, certainly not need even an overnight bag. They were portrayed as Muslim religious zealots dying to achieve martyrdom as an entry ticket to paradise, yet were also frequenting night clubs and getting drunk. In spite of that, they carried a 4-page hand-written instruction on how to conduct themselves spiritually during the assault, which - as Robert

Fisk pointed out in the Independent - does somehow contain phrases no Muslim would write. The full Arabic text, again, has not been released to the public. AP news agency not only reported that a copy of the 4-page hand-written spiritual instructions was found in Muhammad Atta's luggage, but another was left behind in one of the other hijacker's cars, and a third one turned up in the wreckage of the plane crashed in Pennsylvania. It is good to know that once you write a few prayers on a piece of paper, it survives conditions which even destroy the indestructible black boxes... Let's have a closer look at these strange people then.

The Accused

So these are the alleged Muslim master pilots at the controls of the crashed planes: Flight 77, which according to the Washington Post of 12 September was flown with extraordinary skill, executing manoeuvres akin to those of a fighter pilot (but in a heavy Boeing 757) was according to the FBI hijacked and piloted by Hani Hanjour who failed a basic check-ride in a Cessna 172 four-seater plane in August, one month earlier. He had a total of just over 600 hours of flight experience, less than what is required to be hired by an airline as second officer, but sufficient that one would expect a reasonably skilled performance on small aircraft.

Mohammed Atta, who almost overnight became a household name due to untiring press reports about his hijacking skills when piloting flight 11 into the WTC, did not make it as far as an instrument rating either (a basic requirement for being able to fly on airways). His instructors on small propeller-aircraft said that he had a very short attention span. Neither would Marwan Al-Shehhi, the alleged hijack-pilot of flight 175, which was also flown into the WTC with amazing precision, manage to impress his instructors. As far as Ziad Samir Jarrah, the alleged fundamentalist hijacker of flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania, is concerned, the media coverage concentrated more on his Turkish girlfriend in Germany than himself. It seems he entered the United States on a false name, but boarded the plane in his own, and that lately he had insisted that the girlfriend with whom he entertained an Islamically illegitimate relationship, should think about starting to wear the headscarf. Allegedly Jarrah wrote her a letter indicating that he was going onto some sort of a mission, but it was returned and got into the hands of the FBI because, according to initial reports, he had made a mistake when addressing it to her, in later reports - realising that he must have known her address somewhat better than suggested - because she had very recently moved home. Obviously, German post offices have not yet caught up with the technology of mail redirection, nor did the neighbours know where she went?

You too can fly a jumbo

Anyway, now the experts are beginning to tell the public that piloting an airliner doesn't take that much skill, like Capt. Hal McNicol, who runs Flight Crews International, Inc., a pilot placement agency based at Los Angeles International Airport, who was quoted as stating that all that was needed was "just enough knowledge to home in on a radio station in New York or Washington, and the needle (zeroes) right in...You don't have to know anything about flying, other than the wings have to be level to fly straight." The troubles is that there are no radio beacons positioned at the WTC and the Pentagon, so the planes would have ended up somewhere else, and you don't execute a 270 degree turn, as flight 77 did, by flying straight and level. But the public are prone to believe anything. The script writers have since moved in and started to create novel-like accounts of the events. Newsweek of December 3 tells the "real story" aboard flight 93, as pieced together from mobile phone calls, the cockpit voice recorder which now suddenly yields complete data, and other pilots listening into the cockpit conversation: The passengers of the flight planned and executed a heroic uprising and attacked the hijackers. This is why the plane went down. The story tries to bury the suspicion that the plane was shot down, since the debris on the ground suggested an explosion rather than an ordinary crash. Initially it had been said that a bomb exploded on board, but this did not answer the nagging question why hijackers, who wanted to fly the plane into a building, would have risked exposure by bringing a bomb on board and than detonate it without having achieved their mission. Now, the hijackers lost control due to passenger interference. As one lie leads to another, however, the piece also unravels the myth about low-hour semi-skilled pilots at the controls. It tells us that they switched off the autopilot and flew the plane by hand (no homing into radio beacons then), yet they executed a hairpin turn and flew a straight line for another half an hour, not a mean feat for somebody who could hardly hold a Cessna straight. It also suggested that air traffic control and other pilots on the same frequency could hear scuffling in the cockpit, but pilot's communication systems are set such that they cancel any ambient noise. To speak to air traffic control you have to press a button and hold it pressed, during which time only the voice of the pilot speaking into the microphone will be heard, and not even that of his co-pilot which will be cut out.

One thing the "hijackers" where, however, very skilled at was wearing their invisibility cloaks: The passenger lists on CNN Special does not list any of them on either of the flights. The only Muslim or Arabic names listed for flight 11 are Seima Aoyama and Rahma Salie, and on flight 77 Norma Khan. Maybe the hijackers flew the planes by remote control and are still alive and kicking?

Who did it?

This idea of remote control of aircraft is not quite as far-fetched as it initially appears, but the only people who have the technology are the military. It is no secret, that the US military deploys unmanned spy planes, as it did recently over Afghanistan, but these are nothing in size compared to a Boeing Jumbo Jet. However, ITN reported in April 2001 on Global Hawk, the first robot controlled flight by an American high-altitude spy plane with a wingspan equivalent to that of a Boeing 737 flying 22 hours all the way across the Pacific Ocean from Edwards Air force Base in California to South Australia. It was monitored by a pilot, but its 8600 mile flight was completely pre-programmed. But has such Global Hawk technology been fitted to civilian aircraft? The chief executive officer of British Airways, Robert Ayling, suggested that such equipment could be used in the future to allow ground control to override the controls of a plane and land it safely in the event of a hijacking. Airlines resisted this in the past, because of the obvious potential for abuse.

AWACS and energetics

Yet, in the military realm there is another technology to accomplish precisely the same: AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System), a system available to the Chinese, the French, the Israelis, the Russians, the Saudis, and the British, besides the USA and NATO, and more recently Japan. Using so-called electro-magnetic pulsing (EMP) it is said to be able to knock out on-board flight controls and communications of targeted aircraft and then fly them remotely. So if those hijackers with their stolen passports were really on board, they were only there to provide an alibi. They did not need to know how to fly an aircraft, nor could the original crew do anything to avoid the disaster. It is hard to believe that on each plane the flight crew would have given in to people only armed with box cutter knives. As long as the captain is in his seat, he has control over the aircraft, can alert air traffic control using a special transponder code, and can use the airplane itself to execute some rough manoeuvres to shake off the attackers and have them overpowered. This would not be done with hijackers armed with firearms, of course, but feeble, easily breakable box cutter knives would hardly scare the living daylights out of a whole crew. Remote control technology would more easily explain the neck-breaking top-speed manoeuvres these planes were put through near their targets, manoeuvres the original pilots would not have been prepared to fly and the alleged hijackers, given their lacking aptitude, would not have been able to fly. The Soviets were known to have used what they call "energetics" already during the Vietnam war to interfere with American fighter planes. Of course, disabling a plane or bringing it down, is not the same as directing it along a predetermined flight path. However, Boeing boasts that its E-3 AWACS aircraft, a militarised version of the Boeing 707, can both identify

hostile targets and control friendly aircraft in its field of operation. From 1991 Boeing moved to the larger platform of a modified 767 plane. In close cooperation with the US military, Boeing is pushing AWACS through a comprehensive upgrade adding, amongst other features, a refined GPS (global positioning satellite) capability. All planes involved in the September 11 incident were Boeings, and before we consider remote control as too futuristic for the present day, it is worthwhile pondering the fact, that the current discussion on the future of AWACS even includes the probability of flying those spy and control planes themselves unmanned and via remote control.

Who benefits?

The technology exists and might have been used, but it is highly unlikely that America's prime suspect, Usama bin Laden, had access to such sophisticated capabilities from his mountain hideout in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly he took neither responsibility nor issued any demands. The absence of a terrorist signature and a list of demands to be met is one of the strangest features of this particular event. To try and figure out who really was behind the attack, the old "cui bono" or "Who benefits" will need to be applied. Whilst this moves us into the realm of speculation, this process of elimination is not half as fantastic as the official version of culpability described above. Where a vested interest is combined with the likely capability to pull it off, there is a reasonable chance that we are laying bare the truth.

Scenario 1

Scenario one is that of a foreign attack upon the United States with the support of insiders which the US administration wants to cover up so as not to have to admit defeat and vulnerability. Russia and China would be likely candidates.

Scenario 2

Scenario two is that of a domestic conspiracy. This could take the form of a group of disgruntled former military operatives, similar to the network of Timothy McVeigh, the man responsible for the Oklahoma bombing. Or it could be a more sinister controlled demolition job, where aircraft were used to detonate bombs planted within the WTC building. The motive, in this case, would be the lucrative cleaning up contract exceeding \$7 billion. In support of this cynical materialistic view of events it is to be noted that the building changed hands in a new 99-year lease less than two months prior to the destructive events and was insured over the top against all kinds of risks, including aircraft strike and terrorism. Now the ageing towers are going to be rebuilt. Another version of the same theme would make the financial powers of the USA accomplices by precipitating a financial collapse which was coming anyway, but can now be blamed on terrorism. Note

how all the job losses and every other bad news is suddenly blamed on September 11. If foot and mouth disease had not arrived already last year, we would also brush this under the big terrorist activity carpet and blame it on Bin Laden's shepherds. It was noted by commentators that there had also been share dealing irregularities in the days prior to September 11, gambling on a drastic fall of the share prices of the two airlines involved, but no other airlines, indicating that some people must have had advance knowledge of the impending events. These issues were not further pursued or discussed as the "investigation" moved on. Finally, there are also the interests of the powerful drug cartels unhappy about the drying up of opium supplies in Afghanistan.

Scenario 3

Scenario three is the attempt by Western governments to create a climate conducive to bringing in measures for the tighter control of their own populations as the economic and political climate becomes more unstable. This is nothing new: President Roosevelt knew of the Pearl Harbour attack, but let it happen, so as to arouse an otherwise apathetic populace into supporting the war, and in 1962 military leaders discussed plans of terrorist attacks inside America which would subsequently be blamed on Cuba, enticing the population to call for revenge. These plans, codenamed operation Northwoods, were shelved, but there is no reason to believe that morality plays a greater role in the echelons of US power today than it did 40 years ago.

Scenario 4

Scenario four is a warning shot fired at the USA by its so-called ally, Israel, now with an experienced terrorist, Ariel Sharon, at its helm, who has openly boasted that Israel now runs America and admitted that he wouldn't even mind blowing up a synagogue or two if it furthered his objectives. Israel could have wanted to drive home the message to the United States, that their support for an independent Palestinian state would not be tolerated. It could have been a way of forcing America's hand to join into Israel's global war against Islam and Muslims. The Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, whose motto is "By way of deception", has done it many times before. There was the Lavon Affair in 1954 when the Israel government plotted to blow up American installations in Cairo and Alexandria and blamed it on Egyptians. In 1967, Israel attacked the USS Liberty with unmarked jet fighters and torpedo boats, killing 31 American servicemen and wounding 170 aboard the US naval ship. They meant to sink the ship and blame it on Egypt, but the heroism of some of the crew stopped the ploy from being successful. The matter was quickly covered up to avoid American embarrassment.

The WTC attack could be a similar case. In 1986 Mossad achieved American

bomb raids over Libya by planting a transmitter sending out false information about a terrorist attack in Germany. A recent attempt to involve Mexico in the allied war against alleged Muslim terror networks was foiled when two Israelis, one of them a former Colonel and Mossad agent, carrying explosives were arrested inside the Mexican congress building. A terrorist attack on Mexican soil, blamed on Muslim terrorists, would have brought Mexico behind the coalition. The two men were released after immense pressure from the Israeli Embassy. So much about the commitment to fight terrorism. The Mossad scenario would also explain why the Pentagon was hit on the opposite side of the offices of the Secretary of Defence and Joint Chief of Staff and destroyed the offices of the Army operations, seeing it was that department which had warned only one day earlier that Mossad was a "wildcard; ruthless and cunning. Has capability to target US forces and make it look like a Palestinian/Arab act". It would also help us understand why Sharon was made to cancel an engagement on New York on short notice and why the majority of the over 4000 Jewish employees in the WTC escaped unharmed because they stayed at home on September 11.

Scenario 5

Scenario five is that of a Muslim or Third World country masterminding the attacks, although they would normally lack the necessary resources and, more importantly, the required inside information and access. They would, however, have a motive.

Why would anyone hate America?

This question is best answered by quoting an article by Larry Mosqueda written shortly after the events: "Like all Americans, on Tuesday, 9-11, I was shocked and horrified to watch the WTC Twin Towers attacked by hijacked planes and collapse, resulting in the deaths of perhaps up to 10,000 innocent people.

I had not been that shocked and horrified since January 16, 1991, when then President Bush attacked Baghdad, and the rest of Iraq and began killing 200,000 people during that "war" (slaughter). This includes the infamous "highway of death" in the last days of the slaughter when U.S. pilots literally shot in the back retreating Iraqi civilians and soldiers. I continue to be horrified by the sanctions on Iraq, which have resulted in the death of over 1,000,000 Iraqis, including over 500,000 children, about whom former Secretary of State Madeline Allbright has stated that their deaths "are worth the cost".

Over the course of my life I have been shocked and horrified by a variety of U.S. governmental actions, such as the U.S. sponsored coup against democracy in Guatemala in 1954 which resulted in the deaths of over 120,000 Guatemalan peasants by U.S. installed dictatorships over the course of four decades.

Last Tuesday's events reminded me of the horror I felt when the U.S. overthrew the governments of the Dominican Republic in 1965 and helped to murder 3,000 people. And it reminded me of the shock I felt in 1973, when the U.S. sponsored a coup in Chile against the democratic government of Salvador Allende and helped to murder another 30,000 people, including U.S. citizens.

Last Tuesday's events reminded me of the shock and horror I felt in 1965 when the U.S. sponsored a coup in Indonesia that resulted in the murder of over 800,000 people, and the subsequent slaughter in 1975 of over 250,000 innocent people in East Timor by the Indonesian regime with the direct complicity of President Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

I was reminded of the shock and horror I felt during the U.S. sponsored terrorist contra war (the World Court declared the U.S. government a war criminal in 1984 for the mining of the harbors) against Nicaragua in the 1980s which resulted in the deaths of over 30,000 innocent people (or as the U.S. government used to call them before the term "collateral damage" was invented--"soft targets").

I was reminded of being horrified by the U.S. war against the people of El Salvador in the 1980s, which resulted in the brutal deaths of over 80,000 people, or "soft targets".

I was reminded of the shock and horror I felt during the U.S. sponsored terror war against the peoples of southern Africa (especially Angola) that began in the 1970's and continues to this day and has resulted in the deaths and mutilations of over 1,000,000. I was reminded of the shock and horror I felt as the U.S. invaded Panama over the Christmas season of 1989 and killed over 8,000 in an attempt to capture George H. Bush's CIA partner, now turned enemy, Manuel Noriega.

I was reminded of the horror I felt when I learned about how the Shah of Iran was installed in a U.S. sponsored brutal coup that resulted in the deaths of over 70,000 Iranians from 1952-1979. And the continuing shock as I learned that the Ayatollah Khomeini, who overthrew the Shah in 1979, and who was the U.S. public enemy for decade of the 1980s, was also on the CIA payroll, while he was in exile in Paris in the 1970s.

I was reminded of the shock and horror that I felt as I learned about how the U.S. has "manufactured consent" since 1948 for its support of Israel, to the exclusion of virtually any rights for the Palestinians in their native lands resulting in ever worsening day-to-day conditions for the people of Palestine. I was shocked as I learned about the hundreds of towns and villages that were literally wiped off the face of the earth in the early days of Israeli colonization. I was horrified in 1982 as the villagers of Sabra and Shatila were massacred by Israeli allies with direct Israeli complicity and direction. The untold thousands who died on that day

match the scene of horror that we saw last Tuesday. But those scenes were not repeated over and over again on the national media to inflame the American public.

The events and images of last Tuesday have been appropriately compared to the horrific events and images of Lebanon in the 1980s with resulted in the deaths of tens of thousand of people, with no reference to the fact that the country that inflicted the terror on Lebanon was Israel, with U.S. backing. I still continue to be shocked at how mainstream commentators refer to "Israeli settlers" in the "occupied territories" with no sense of irony as they report on who are the aggressors in the region."

Americans lied to and misled

"Of course, the largest and most shocking war crime of the second half of the 20th century was the U.S. assault on Indochina from 1954-1975, especially Vietnam, where over 4,000,000 people were bombed, napalmed, crushed, shot and individually "hands on" murdered in the "Phoenix Program" (this is where Oliver North got his start). Many U.S. Vietnam veterans were also victimized by this war and had the best of intentions, but the policy makers themselves knew the criminality of their actions and policies as revealed in their own words in "The Pentagon Papers," released by Daniel Ellsberg of the RAND Corporation. In 1974 Ellsberg noted that our Presidents from Truman to Nixon continually lied to the U.S. public about the purpose and conduct of the war. He has stated that, "It is a tribute to the American people that our leaders perceived that they had to lie to us, it is not a tribute to us that we were so easily misled."

I was continually shocked and horrified as the U.S. attacked and bombed with impunity the nation of Libya in the 1980s, including killing the infant daughter of Khadafi. I was shocked as the U.S. bombed and invaded Grenada in 1983. I was horrified by U.S. military and CIA actions in Somalia, Haiti, Afghanistan, Sudan, Brazil, Argentina, and Yugoslavia. The deaths in these actions ran into the hundreds of thousands.

The above list is by no means complete or comprehensive. It is merely a list that is easily accessible and not unknown, especially to the economic and intellectual elites. It has just been conveniently eliminated from the public discourse and public consciousness. And for the most part, the analysis that the U.S. actions have resulted in the deaths of primarily civilians (over 90%) is not unknown to these elites and policy makers. A conservative number for those who have been killed by U.S. terror and military action since World War II is 8,000,000 people. Repeat--8,000,000 people. This does not include the wounded, the imprisoned, the displaced, the refugees, etc. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated in 1967, during the Vietnam War, "My government is the world's leading purveyor of violence."

Shocking and horrifying..."

What's the war all about?

Now the war against Afghanistan, and then possibly Iraq, and Syria, and Somalia, and Sudan, and who knows who, is adding to this long list of casualties of American interventionism. Although the United States had allegedly no forewarning nor any idea who was behind the attacks on September 11, it took them only days to make up their mind who was responsible: Usama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network of terrorists, directed from within Afghanistan. Never mind that the CIA had the Bin Laden network under observation since many years and boasted that it knew everything about him, never mind that members of the Bin Laden family were given permission to leave the United States with the Saudi Ambassador during the aftermath of the WTC attacks in a private jet when all other planes were grounded, notwithstanding the fact that they had not, as alleged, cut off from their terrorist relative; after all they were long-standing business partners of Bush senior in the so-called Carlyle Group. The world was being told that Bin Laden had masterminded the attacks and planned them for a number of years, and that punitive strikes against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, who harboured such terrorists, were now inevitable.

Premeditated strikes

One problem in portraying the bombing of Afghanistan as a reaction to the events of 11 September, however, is that raids against Afghanistan were planned well before the planes were hijacked. At the beginning of July, for example, three American officials met with Taliban representatives in Berlin and intimated to them in the presence of Russian and German intelligence officers that the US was planning military strikes against Afghanistan in October. Early September 25,000 British troops were positioned in Oman as part of Operation "EssentialHarvest". At the same time, two U.S. carrier battle groups arrived on station in the Gulf of Arabia just off the Pakistani coast. Also at the same time, some 17,000 U.S. troops joined more than 23,000 NATO troops in Egypt for Operation "Bright Star." Coincidence? Were they all waiting for terror to strike on September 11? In fact, warnings were received by the CIA of imminent attacks on American government buildings and symbols of culture by the Israeli, Russian, and German intelligence services. The German Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) even mentioned the use of hijacked planes. One reason why the CIA did not act upon these warnings could well be its own complicity in the attacks. After all, the sum of \$100,000 was sent by wire to Mohammed Atta by General Mahmud Ahmad, the then head of the Pakistani intelligence service, after a visit by CIA Director George Tenet to Pakistan. The very same General visited Washington on September 11 on behalf of the Taliban. Now whilst everyone knows that war is

good for business, that the 46% of US tax dollars spent on the military need to be justified by some sort of external threat, and that new orders for military hardware have saved the American economy from imminent collapse, why Afghanistan?

The oil connection

As former CIA operative Miles Copeland once said, we wouldn't have bothered with Kuwait if they only grew cabbages. The explanation is provided by Unocal, one of the major US oil companies. During congressional hearings in 1998, its vice president of international relations, John J. Maresca, made it clear that "construction of the pipeline we have proposed across Afghanistan could not begin until a recognized government is in place that has the confidence of governments, lenders, and our company". Afghanistan is the connecting link to vast Central Asian oil and gas supplies near the Caspian Sea with a projected production of 4.5 million barrels per day. The 1,040 mile long oil pipeline would extend south through Afghanistan to an export terminal that would be constructed on the Pakistani coast. This 42 inch diameter pipeline will have a shipping capacity of one million barrels of oil per day. Negotiations had been held with the USA's declared enemy, the Taliban, but failed. Instead they were going to award the contract to the now bankrupt Argentina, so they had to be replaced. Or maybe they merely played the role of agent provocateur to invite the Americans in.

Who are the Taliban?

As recently as May 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell gave \$43 million in aid to the Taliban regime, purportedly to assist hungry farmers who are starving since the destruction of their opium crop in January on orders of the Taliban regime. America uses aid as a carrot and sanctions as a stick, and this generous donation to a "hated" regime can't be entirely without significance. As so many dubious organisations around the world, the Taliban were a CIA creation in the aftermath of the Mujahideen war against the Soviet Union. Their movement helped push back the Iranian advances in the power vacuum of Afghanistan at the time. Admittedly the "students" movement, trained in camps in Pakistan, established a degree of law and order which was welcomed by local people who had been subjected to the pillage and rape approach of the guerrillas who now make up the "Northern Alliance". But their strict, merciless, narrow interpretation of Islam made them very soon unpopular and certainly helped a great deal in discrediting Islam internationally. Their presence was a welcome weapon in the hands of those who hated Islam gaining popularity in the West.

Who wrote the script?

It is unclear whether this mixed band of local tribal leaders and warlords, idealistic foreign supporters, and infiltrated under-cover agents eventually broke away and opposed the American agenda, or whether they simply played out a pre-written script. You cannot have war and a military machine without an enemy threat, and Islamic fundamentalism Taliban style filled the gap which drug barons could not fill after the collapse of the evil Soviet empire. Citizens of the West are much more prepared to support an international war against Islamic terrorism than against international drug cartels, and Bin Laden is a more worthy enemy than Noriega. Interestingly, this highly wanted and elusive man, who, according to a BBC commentator "moves like the wind", turned up at the American hospital in Dubai in July 2001 to receive treatment for a chronic kidney infection. There he was visited by his family, business partners of George Bush senior, who allegedly have disowned him, as well as by a leading local CIA official. He left by private jet without hindrance by the mighty arsenals of Uncle Sam. The claims made by the French Le Figaro and backed by quotes from hospital staff were, of course, denied by the CIA. When Bin Laden poses in front of a cave stage set for Al-Jazeera television, whilst the CIA say they don't have a clue where he might be, is he following a script written for him by the CIA, as did Jamal Abdel Nasser or Saddam Hussein before him?

The hidden agenda

There is no doubt that oil plays a key role in the conflicts of our world today. It is no coincidence that most of the trouble spots on earth are also places with valuable natural resources. Yet, control of resources is only a means to an end. This end is the control of the planet. We have all heard buzz words like New World Order, One World, or Globalisation, and they are used to prepare us for the pending reality of world government. This is not a new idea, and economic, political, and military means have been used to further its advance, as have been birth control programmes and other eugenic devices. In 1962 David Ben-Gurion (born in Poland as David Grün and educated in England), the first prime minister of Israel, spelt out his vision of the world in the late eighties with the cold war being a thing of the past, a democratisation of the Soviet Union, the predominance of Social Democratic governments in Western and Eastern Europe, and a World Alliance with an international police force at its disposal. All armies, he said, would be abolished, and there would be no more wars; Jerusalem would be the seat of the supreme court of mankind to settle all controversies among the federated continents: The Zionist dream of world domination. Of course, to abolish all existing standing armies, there will have to be wars, until all of them are brought under US/UN control. But the outcome is certain, as James Paul

Warburg put it in the United States Senate in 1950: "We shall have world government, whether we like it or not. The only question is whether world government will be achieved by conquest or consent." The current crusade against the ideology of fundamentalist Islam is as much part of the strategy as was the dismantling of the Islamic caliphate at the beginning of the last century, and Israel's role in the game plan is, and will remain, pivotal. However, until this world government unleashes its global reign of terror, it will need to rely on popular consent. As most people do neither understand nor share Zionist aspirations, the packaging becomes all the more important to the successful sale of this venomous product.

The use of propaganda

All generals know that people cannot be enticed to fight unless it is for something they believe in, against something they fear, or in order to gain booty. The continuance of affluent lifestyles in the West helps softening the moral conscience of its inhabitants when it comes to the dire consequences of Third World exploitation. Western, interest-based economies, whose money supply is artificially created by the issuance of debt, are fragile, however, and they require continuous expansion for their survival. Because the world is a limited place, and unlimited growth a natural impossibility, destructive weapons play an important role in letting steam off the economy. The problem with people used to a life of comfort is, that they become disgruntled and rebellious when faced with hardship. As the luxury of the Western way of life cannot be sustained indefinitely, stricter crowd control measures need to be brought in and tighter laws to limit individuals' capacity to resist government directives. Propaganda is an important tool to achieve compliance both with respect to support for the war effort and keeping the peace at home.

Dajjal's double-speak

People who are constantly told that there is not enough money for basic social services, healthcare, etc., don't take kindly to a multiple of those sums being used to drop missiles on bare mountains several thousand miles away. They would never approve of such waste, unless there was a credible threat. The fear of terrorism is an essential ingredient in any attempt to get people behind the war effort and to make them accept the curtailment of their own civil liberties. Media stereotyping, the control of media outlets, including the entertainment industry, and the manipulation of public discourse are precious, unfailing instruments of a well-oiled propaganda machine. The readiness with which Western intellectuals and ordinary people accepted the fall of the Berlin wall, the speed by which new buzz words and political claims become common currency, is a credit to the

efficiency of this mind control apparatus which would have made Göbbels go green with envy and renegades Orwell's 1984 to the realm of fairytale stories. War is Peace. Good is Bad. Double-speak has become an art. For Muslims, the time of Dajjal, the anti-Christ, whom we have always been warned about, has come.

The West versus Islam?

Half a decade ago Samuel Huntingdon publishes his "Clash of Civilizations and the Making of World Order" on behalf of an American think tank. He argues that as people increasingly define themselves by ethnicity and religion, the West will find itself more and more at odds with non-western civilizations that reject its ideals of democracy, human rights, liberty, the rule of law, and the separation of the church and state, leading to an accelerated conflict between the West on the one hand, and Islam and China on the other. His theory was denounced by multi-cultural commentators just as these days everybody busies themselves with assuring us that the first war of the millennium is not directed against Islam or Muslims and that Bush's use of the word crusade was an unfortunate slip of the tongue. We are fed the idea that there is good Islam and bad Islam, the former moderate, liberal and cooperative, the latter fundamentalist, intolerant and terrorist. However, the distaste of and despise for Islam displayed by totalitarian liberal fundamentalists can often not be hidden from view in the media.

The threat of Islam

Islam, after all, is the only religion of substance resisting modernisation and insisting on stubbornly abiding by the book. It is also a political religion, one that does not separate private religiosity and public engagement. It further opposes corruption, oppression, and economic exploitation, most vociferously in its strong condemnation of interest dealings, gambling, and speculation. Whilst it is true that most Muslims are as caught up with the business of making ends meet and keeping apace in the competitive race of consumerism, their refusal to bow to a higher human authority or have their religion redefined and adjusted for them by a government-controllable priesthood makes them a thorn in the eye of anybody demanding unmitigated submission and subservience. Even in Turkey, where secularism became compulsory, the Islamic sentiment could ultimately not be destroyed, and whilst the Turkish language changed from the Arabic to the Latin script, the decree forcing all religious activity, including the prayer and the Adhan, to be conducted in the Turkish language had to be reversed. Several times an elected government with Islamic leanings had to be outlawed by the courts to ensure the continuance of fundamentalist secularism. In Algeria, the army had to move in, supported by former colonial overlord France, to make people understand that an Islamic party was not an option in the democratic election of

government. And in the West itself, Islam was growing fast, whilst the inherited Christian tradition was in decline. Any attempt to create an Islamic reformation failed utterly, and numerous attempts at discrediting Islam, be it during the Rushdie affair, or during the Gulf War, for example, had the opposite effect in the long run: an increased public interest in what Islam stood for. To bring the one billion Muslims of the world in line, there has to be a better way.

The Mahdi

There is no doubt that the power-hungry one-world advocates, notwithstanding their hatred for Islam and Muslims, have studied the subject closely. During the British colonial period the academic science of Orientalism was born specifically to understand and reinterpret the religion of the new subjects of the British Empire. Today's strategists have no less a profound knowledge of the tenets of Islam. They are often more familiar with the source literature of Islam than most Muslims themselves, and they are well aware of the end-time predictions of the Qur'an and Hadith. They may not benefit from the wisdom contained therein, but they will certainly try to use this knowledge in order to control and manipulate Muslim reaction to their plans.

In simplified terms, the Muslim version of the apocalypse envisages a showdown between the Romans (the West), united under 80 banners (the UN), who will march against the Muslims after breaking their treaty with them. There will be fighting over mountains of black gold (oil) near the Euphrates (Iraq) bringing about previously unknown death tolls and destruction. Thereafter black banners will be raised from the East, the Muslims will unite, and they will swear allegiance to the Mahdi during Hajj in Makkah and Madinah. He will lead the Muslim armies victoriously until the Dajjal (anti-Christ) makes a personal appearance near Syria. Isa (Jesus), peace be upon him, will descent to earth at this stage and kill the Dajjal and establish a just system for a number of years. The person of the Mahdi is crucial to directing the confused Muslim masses, and there have been many claimants to the title already, but none successful. He needs to have a similar name to that of prophet Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, peace be upon him, and his image must be one of piety.

Fact or fiction?

In 1981, shortly after the Islamic revolution in Iran, the political novelist A. J. Quinnell wrote "The Mahdi", which was first published by Macmillan and re-published shortly after by Charnwood and by Futura. The plot is the attempt by the American and British intelligence services to unite, and subsequently control, the worldwide followers of Islam by providing a new Mahdi for them, equipping him with virtual reality miracles in the sight of millions during the annual

pilgrimage to Makkah, and thus gain supremacy over the politically restless Muslim nations and individuals of the world. In the novel the plot fails, and any real-world attempt of it would also have to fail, no matter how ingenious, due to the overriding divine plan. The idea is, however, an interesting one and worth taking note of. Fiction and science fiction are often used for the exchange of ideas before acting them out in practice, and there is no reason to believe that the aspiring rulers of the world would not try the method if it promised even a limited chance of success. Enter Bin Laden.

At the start of the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussain, was heralded by many Muslims as a new Salahuddin, but his past misdeeds and his shaven face made him an unsuitable Mahdi-candidate even if he was frequently shown on television as praying and Middle East correspondents habitually were filmed in front of a mosque. Bin Laden's past as nouveau riche student at Oxford, on the other hand, is mainly obscured, and his long beard, Kalashnikov, and austere mountain existence make him infinitely more credible, and as Muhammad bin Laden bin Abdullah he even has the right name. Recent events have given him the status of a hero in the Muslim World akin to the Ché Guevara of the student protests in the seventies. Of course, he may be genuine, fighting for a cause he believes in. But if he slips through the net of CIA surveillance and suddenly ends up outside Afghanistan and, to top it, puts in an appearance at the annual pilgrimage, extreme caution might not be unwise.

Where do we go from here?

There are, as always, more unanswered questions than answers when dealing with the turbulence of current affairs. It will take half a century before some of the relevant documents lifting the lid on the activities of Western governments will be declassified, if at all, and whilst a lot can be learnt from the past, such knowledge does not provide an accurate tool for predicting the future, even though history is often bound to repeat itself. Having attempted to examine some of the issues involved, we are in no position to provide final and definitive explanations. Many readers might object that much that has been discussed is conjecture, but if an investigation of events is intended to produce at least some valid leads, it must not be narrowed down too much from the outset. It is important that we keep an open mind. Numerous Muslims have previously joined the Mujahideen and later the Taliban forces in the sincere belief that they were fighting for a just cause and oblivious to the manipulative machinations of the CIA and other players around them. One of the principles of Islam is that everybody is rewarded in accordance with his or her intentions. But we must not turn a blind eye to the fact that the Muslim mind has become as important a battle ground for Islam's enemies as the resource-rich soil of their countries. As

Muslims, we must be in a high state of alertness, try to be as well informed as possible, and prepared for all eventualities. At the same time, we must begin to act rather than be bystanders at world events played out before our eyes to which we merely react clumsily every now and then.

Building bridges

Part of this action must be to disseminate information and generate open discussion, to propagate the truth as the best weapon of counter-propaganda against the war and hate mongers. Not all people are fooled by the official version of events. Most lies are eventually found out. We must be prepared to build bridges and help common people to express their manifest interests, which are best served by peace and harmony, against those who would like to use them as pawns in their grand chess games. Unquestioningly, war and war propaganda divide people, and the recent events have created a level of polarisation within our societies. However, we must be mature enough not to fall for the simplistic clichés, which well-spoken demagogues - including within our own ranks - want us to subscribe to. The Hadith reveal that the two camps, into which people will eventually divide, will be one of faith, in which there is no hypocrisy, and one of hypocrisy, in which there is no faith. There are hypocrites amongst the Muslims, and there are people of faith amongst the non-Muslims, people who genuinely oppose the injustice they see brought down upon Muslims across the world, and who sincerely seek a better understanding of Islam. Instead of denouncing them all as disbelievers, we owe it to them to enlighten them, in word and deed, about the real meaning of Islam, the willing submission to the Creator, through which alone man can achieve peace with himself and with his fellow-beings.

