

BUSH AT WAR

Book Review

Qadar Bakhsh Baloch*

Title of the Book: *Bush At War*
Author: Bob Woodward
Publishers: Simon & Schuster Rockefeller Center
New York
Year of publication: 2002
Price:

Bush at War is written by Bob Woodward, an assistant managing editor of *The Washington Post* who has been a newspaper reporter & editor for more than 30 years. The author tells behind the scenes story of how President George W. Bush led the nation to war in Afghanistan (& subsequently to war in Iraq). Based on interviews with more than a hundred sources and four hours exclusive interviews with the President, *Bush At War* reveals a telling story of how the incumbent President demonstrated his instinctive eagerness to “seize the opportunity to achieve big goals; and there is nothing bigger than to achieve world peace” (p. 339).

If you read his overriding passion in conjunction with candid recommendation of Richard Nixon, you can easily appreciate the meanings and implications of his “world peace”. — an other expression for the U.S Imperialism.

Nixon, it may be recalled, advised the United States soon after the demise of the Soviet Union “...now is not the time for complacency but

¹. Mr. Qadar Bakhsh Baloch, a PhD Research Scholar in the Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar, is serving as Additional Registrar, in Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology, D.I.Khan, Pakistan. E.Mail: qbuzdar@yahoo.com

instead for summoning the West to win the final battle for democracy and free-market principles in the East”.¹ In other words, the U.S and its Western allies should extend their victory to the Muslim World, including China, as China too, is bracketed with the Muslims and establish U.S Imperialism.

Unfortunately, the book under reference is not an objective, dispassionate, & exhaustive critique of the views of both the warring sides. For instance, there is absolutely nothing—not even a passing reference—to the basic stance of Usama bin Ladin, his so-called Al-Qaeda or his hosts, that is, Mullah Omar & the Taliban. It is indeed an exclusive and one-sided picture of the views of President Bush and his war cabinet. In spite of being half a story, a perceptive reader can easily piece things together and see how a brutal war of naked aggression has cleverly been cast as a defensive war of retaliation, by riding on a high tide of global sympathy. In this over-view, we have quoted profusely from the original and let the book speak for itself. Our own brief comments/observations punctuated here and there, are kept mostly in parenthesis so that the reader may judge matters on his own by reading the select passages from the book.

1. Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor to George W. Bush, the President of the United States made the following observations:

“The question would sooner or later arise about what the Bush administration knew about the bin Ladin threat, when they knew it and what they had done about it”. (p. 34).

Likewise, Rumsfeld had raised the questions: “Who are the targets? How much evidence do we need before going after Al-Qaeda? How soon we act?” (p.32). In this over-view, attempt will be made to find, amongst others, the answers to these and similar other nagging questions.

2. About a week before Bush’s inauguration, C.I.A team consisting of George Tenet (Director of Central Intelligence) and Jim Pavitt, held a briefing session with George W. Bush, the President-elect and Dick Cheney the Vice President- elect. In this session, C.I.A team underlined bin Ladin, “as one of the three top threats facing the United States. The other two were the increasing availability of the weapons of mass destruction (apparently the reference seems here to Iraq) the rise of Chinese power, military & other”. (P.35)

3. It may be observed that this was not the solitary instance where C.I.A recognized and emphasized the threat-value of bin Ladin. In fact, C.I.A. according to its own confessions had been chasing bin Ladin for the Last 5 years; that is, since 1998. (P.5).

- During the Clinton administration, it may be recalled, U.S fired 66 cruise missiles to kill bin Ladin.
- In 1999 C.I.A commenced a covert operation to train 60 commandos from the Pakistan intelligence to enter Afghanistan in order to capture bin Ladin. But the operation was aborted because of military coup in Pakistan. (p. 5).
- The U.S.A contemplated a helicopter borne night assault on bin Ladin with small elite U.S Special Forces Unit of 40; but the plan was dropped by recalling the fate of a similar operation conducted during the Jimmy Carter regime in 1980 in Iran (p. 5).

- At one point, thirty (30) Afghans were recruited by C.I.A for covert action. And these men were paid \$10,000 per month for several years; but with no success as they were unable to buy some one from the inner circle of Usama bin Ladin. (p. 6)

4. During the Bush regime, both Colin Powell & Armitage (i.e. the officials of the Sate Department) had agreed that bin Ladin was a sufficient threat to justify arming the Northern Alliance on a large scale. (p. 35).

5. During July 2001, the deputies' committee recommended a comprehensive plan not just to roll-back Al-Qaeda but also to eliminate it (altogether). It was a plan to go on the offensive and destabilize the Taliban. (p. 35).

6. On September 4, 2001, the Principals (i.e. the Secretaries of the State & Defense) approved & recommended a plan that would give the C.I.A \$125 million to \$200 million a year to arm Northern Alliance (p. 36).

Above cited war-footing preparations prior to 9/11 do call for some sort of an explanation as to:

- Why the U.S was itching to roll-back & eliminate Al-Qaeda?
- Why were they anxious to destabilize Taliban who had under their control over 90% of Afghanistan and established peace especially in the area under their control?
- It looks as if the war was fully pre-meditated & thoroughly worked out way ahead of time.
- It looks as if the Bush Administration was just hunting around for reasonable pretext to unload their bombs on Afghanistan.

- May be the attacks on WTC & Pentagon were skillfully managed by C.I.A or other secret agencies for providing the much-needed justification for brutal and aggressive war by the U.S.A.
- May be the election of Bush (as President) was manipulated mainly because he was deemed more suitable for realizing the war agenda.

7. However, to down-play the aggressive war and cast it into a defensive and retaliatory war, Bush himself goes onto the stage to play his role in this gory drama. He admits, “Though Condi Rice and others were developing a plan to eliminate Al-Qaeda, no formal recommendations had ever been presented to the President”. Again he affirms, “I know there was a plan in the works... I don’t know how mature the plan was”. In any case, he did try to mitigate the gravity of the issue by asserting that “bin Ladin was not his focus or that of his national security team” (p. 39).

[This statement sounds strange when it is recalled that both George Tenet—Director C.I.A; and Colin Powell—Secretary Defense, are members of Bush’s National Security Council and their respective statements concerning bin Ladin have already been recorded above].

Bush contends that there was a significant “difference in my attitude after 9/11. I was not on point, but I knew he was a problem. I knew he was responsible or we felt he was responsible for the [previous] bombings that killed Americans. I was prepared to look at a plan that would be thoughtful plan that would bring him to justice and would have given the order to do that. I have no hesitancy about going after him. But

I didn't feel that sense of urgency, and my blood was not nearly as boiling". (p. 39).

[If we recall pre-inaugural briefing of the C.I.A, wherein it was emphasized that bin Ladin was a "tremendous" & "immediate" threat to the United States; and subsequent recommendations of the State Department as well as the recommendations of the deputies and of the principals to roll-back and eliminate Al-Qaeda and destabilize Taliban; their approval to provide millions of dollars to C.I.A for supplying arms to the Northern Alliance; Bush's statement looks like a poor attempt to cast the pre-meditated aggressive war into a war of retaliation by feigning ignorance of war-preparations at different levels prior to 9/11].

8. George Tenet (Director C.I.A) was busy taking breakfast with former Senator David L. Boren (the man who recommended Tenet for his present post) and was expressing his worries about bin Ladin. "Oh George, Boren said: "for the last two years he had been listening to his friend's [Tenet's] concerns about bin Ladin. How could one private person [living in caves in Afghanistan] without the resources of a foreign government be such a threat", he asked. [Sometimes truth shines through even when the best of efforts are made to hide & suppress it.]

"You don't understand the capabilities and the reach of what they are putting together," Tenet said. (p. 3).

Boren was worried that his friend had developed an unhealthy obsession about bin Ladin. (p. 4).

Tenet did acknowledge: "nothing had happened but it was the issue that he was losing sleep over". (p. 4).

Suddenly several of Tenet's security guards rushed towards him and told him that the World Trade Tower had been attacked. Tenet instantaneously told Boren, "this has bin Ladin all over it". (p. 4).

It is important to note that Tenet without any investigation and without any proof whatsoever, immediately nominated bin Ladin not as a prime suspect, but the main culprit.

- Also it is shocking to see that not a single person from the Bush Administration or from his NSC ever asked C.I.A or F.B.I or other law-enforcing agencies as to why did they fail to prevent the culprits from attacking the WTC or the Pentagon prior to 9/11.
- These queries assume special significance when one recalls what C.I.A had been doing for the last 5 years.

9. In spite of these glaring flaws, Tenet has had the audacity to claim that the evidence of bin Ladin's complicity in 9/11 disaster was quite "conclusive" (p. 40). Although the sole evidence that he could ever advance was:

- "Al-Qaeda was the only terrorist organization capable of such spectacular, well-coordinated attacks. Intelligence monitoring had over-heard a number of known bin Ladin operatives congratulating each other after the attacks". (p. 27).
- When Bush was informed about these terrorist attacks, he said, "This is not just an act of terrorism. This is an act of war." (p. 30).

Bush further emphasized that America was in a state of war. And, "We will make no distinction between those who planned these attacks and those who harbor them."(p. 30).

When Tenet briefed Bush that Al-Qaeda has its headquarters in Afghanistan but it operates world-wide. We have a sixty-country problem; “Let us pick them off one at a time,” said the President. In his state of Union address, Bush again emphasized that “one by one, the terrorist would come to understand the meaning of American justice.” In brief, Bush declared his war against terrorism without any evidence, without any proof.

10. Obviously there was no substance in the so-called proofs or evidence offered by Tenet. No wonder they were seriously contested even within the inner circle of NSC. For instance, Powell who was least impressed by the “conclusive” evidence of Tenet kept insisting: “*a public case had to be made that bin Ladin was the guilty one. That was important. Evidence mattered*”. (p. 88). Again he contends: “*they need to build a case that the Al-Qaeda was behind the attacks*”. (p. 104). He voiced his apprehensions that in the absence of persuasive evidence, it would be difficult to have the European countries or the Muslim World on board in their fight against terrorism.

Don Rumsfeld, on the other hand, was deadly opposed to the very wisdom and rationale of offering any white paper. “Are we going to have to make our case every time”? (p. 177). His main worries were that if the white-paper was not found convincing, what would they do then? Not attack? (p. 177).

He underscored that national security decisions about military action often had to be made on the best available evidence, and that might fall far short of courtroom proof. They could be setting themselves up.... The evidence of 9/11 was controversial and somewhat fragmentary though there were some hard nuggets. The danger of issuing of white-paper that presented evidence was that it could condition people to view the war on

terror as law enforcement operation within the model of judicial system with its evidentiary standards, burden of proof on the government and proof beyond a reasonable doubt, -- things that could not possibly be met.” (P.135-136). [Since the U.S was returning to Hobbesian “state of nature” where might would determine the right, they were averse to any ethico-legal or judicial norms, and international law; hence Rumsfeld was disparagingly rejecting any demands for a clear proof or a convincing evidence.]

Dick Cheney, the Vice-President was more inclined to Rumsfeld’s contentions. He was of the opinion that the U.S should rely on an umbrella justification for all sorts of wars against terrorism. “...We just need to say we reserve the right to use any means at our disposal to respond to any use of weapons of mass destruction. That is the Gulf War formula used in 1991 war on Iraq”; and the same formula could be extended to any war now or in the future. (p. 218)

President Bush summed up his position by declaring that he doesn’t “owe any explanation to any body. That is the interesting thing about being the President”. (P.146). “The new policy”, he underlined “would stress pre-emption of future attacks, instead of investigating, gathering evidence & prosecution”. (P.97). His vision of a new world order clearly included “an ambitious re-ordering of the world through pre-emptive &, if necessary, unilateral action...” (P.341). “At some point”, he said, “We may be the only ones left. That’s okay with me. We are America”. (P.81)

11. Whilst serious differences were still lingering on within NSC, Pakistan’s foreign office stepped in to bail out the U.S from this mounting crisis. Pakistan’s foreign ministry announced that the U.S had supplied sufficient evidence of Bin Laden’s complicity in Sept, 11 that

they could bring an indictment in court”. (P.196). [Probably they meant in Pakistani courts because our judiciary has been rendered spineless by frequent military interventions]. “The clear endorsement of the American case by a Muslim State was a boon. In a day, the issue of a white-paper that had put Powell and Rumsfeld [& other members of NSC] at loggerheads had floated away. (P.196)

12. Pakistan’s declaration exonerated the U.S from any demand for legal or moral justification for their attacks on the poor Afghans. By this rescue mission, Pakistan might have improved its credentials as a front-line state but it did spell death and destruction for the poor Afghans. This was not the all that Musharraf did to prove his loyalties to the Bush administration. As we would come to see later, he even dismissed General Mahmood, Director ISI and several of his key – lieutenants, a step highly lauded and appreciated by C.I.A chief. The new chief of ISI was advised to remove whatever Pro-Taliban elements were left in the intelligence department of Pakistan. (P. 214)

13. At the State Department Powell & Armitage were focused on Pakistan -- the linchpin for any strategy to isolate and eventually to attack Al-Qaeda & the Taliban in Afghanistan. “Powell had already told Bush that what ever action he took, it could not be done without Pakistan’s support. So the Pakistanis had to be put on notice. Squeezing Musharraf too hard was risky, but not squeezing him at all was riskier”, Powell told Bush. Bush allowed Powell to go ahead and “do what ever you have to do”. (p. 58).

Incidentally General Mahmood (Director ISI) was already in Washington. Jim Pavitt got hold of him and apparently talked bitterly about Mullah Omar. General Mahmood felt obliged to defend Mullah

Omar. He said that in his opinion Mullah Omar was religious, a man of humanitarian instincts, not a man of violence, but one who had suffered greatly under Afghan war-lords. (p. 47).

“Stop”, Jim Pavitt interrupted rudely and arrogantly asked General Mahmood: “Spare Me...” (p. 47).

Then Armitage invited Gen.Mahmood to the state department. He began by saying it was not clear yet what the U.S would ask of Pakistan but the request would force “deep introspection. Pakistan faces a stark choice, either it is with us or it is not.² This is a black & white choice with no gray”. (p. 47).

Mahmood said that his country had faced tough choices in the past but Pakistan, he pointed out, was not a big or mighty power.

“Pakistan is an important country”, Armitage cut in. Mahmood returned to the past [& probably referred to some of the instances where Pakistan was used by the U.S and then abandoned in an un-ceremonial manner].

“The future begins to-day”,³ Armitage said. Pass the word to General Musharraf, the President of Pakistan. “With us or against us.” (p. 47).

14. Powell & Armitage later drew a list of *seven demands*⁴ with a view to presenting them to Musharraf. These demands were:

- “Stop Al-Qaeda operatives at your border intercept arms shipments through Pakistan and end all logistical support for bin Ladin.”
- “Give the US Blanket over flight and landing rights for all types of operation”
- “Access to Pakistan, naval bases, air bases and borders.”
- “Immediate intelligence and immigration information.”

- “Condemn the September 11 attacks and “curb all domestic expressions of support for terrorism against the [United States], its friends or allies.” Powell and Armitage knew that was something they couldn’t even do in the United States.”
- “Cut off all shipments of fuel to Taliban and stop Pakistani volunteers from going into Afghanistan to join the Taliban.”
- “The seventh demand was the one that Powell would trip up the Pakistanis or cause Musharraf to balk: “should the evidence strongly implicate Osama bin Ladin and the Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan AND should Afghanistan and the Taliban continue to harbor him and his network, Pakistan will break diplomatic relations with the Taliban government, end support for Taliban and assist us in the aforementioned ways to destroy Osama bin Ladin and his Al-Qaeda network.” (p. 58-59).

In a way, the U.S directed Pakistan to take a U-turn on Afghanistan and destroy with their own hands whatever they had created and maintained, that is, the Taliban. Armitage called General Mahmood again and handed over the list of demands to him by saying; “this is not negotiable... you must accept all seven demands”. (p. 59).

At 1:30 P.M. Powell called Musharraf “as one General to another. He said, “We need someone on our flank fighting with us. Speaking candidly, the American people wouldn’t understand if Pakistan was not in this fight with the United States.” (p. 59).

Musharraf to Powell’s utter surprise said that Pakistan would support the United States with each of the seven actions. (p. 59). Later Powell read out these demands to President Bush and proudly reported

that Musharraf had already accepted them all. On hearing this Bush said gleefully, “it looks like you got it all”. (p. 61). Bush thought it was the State Department at its best. He later recalled that “Powell was very good with Musharraf. He single-handedly got Musharraf on board”, and was able to put a coalition together. (p. 342).

15. Bush goes to National Cathedral & sings the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”. Bush reflected later that in the Church, he expressed his religious and spiritual sentiments rather than declaring his war-policy. Nonetheless, he felt as if he was in his Lord’s hands, virtually a man with a mission—mission being “to rid this world of evil”. (p. 67). In fact, he felt that he had a “vision of God’s Master Plan” and deemed himself as the chosen custodian of this plan. In the light of this pre-ordained mission, Bush was driven to a conclusion:

“The enemy was not only a particular group, but also a “frame of mind” that fosters hate. They hate Christianity. They hate Judaism. They hate everything that was not them” “This Crusade, this war on terrorism is going to take a while”, Bush added. (p. 94).

Bush goes further: “I will seize the opportunity to achieve big goals. There is nothing bigger than to achieve world peace”, that is to establish U.S Imperialism and reduce the rest of the world to sub-servient status—robbing it of its defense potential, financial independence and political sovereignty.

Bob Woodward in his “Epilogue” provides us with quite an insight into Bush’s mind and character.

“During the interview, the President spoke a dozen times about his “instincts” or his “instinctive” reactions, including his statement, “I am not a text-book player, I am a gut player”. It is pretty clear that Bush’s

role as a politician, President and commander in chief is driven by a secular faith in his instincts—his natural & spontaneous conclusions and judgments. His instincts are almost his second religion.” (p. 342).

[If these elements are juxtaposed, one can easily find the Christian fanatic in George W. Bush or call him a born-again Christian, committed to Christian-Zionist’s views]

16. In an interview, Bush described his first meeting with Putin on June 16, 2001 in Slovenia:

“And in comes Putin, and he sits down and it is just me, Condi Rice, Putin...and the interpreters from both sides. And he wants to get started. And I said, “Let me say something about what caught my attention, Mr. President, was your mother gave you a cross which you had blessed in Israel, the Holy land”. And he said, “It is true”. I said that amazed me, here you were a Communist, KGB operative, and yet you were willing to wear a cross. That speaks volumes to me, Mr. President. May I call you Vladimir (when you address someone by his/her first name, it is deemed as a sign of closeness and intimacy in Western culture). So it became Vladimir and George after that”, he said. (p. 118-119).

Putin showed the cross to Bush a month later at a meeting in Genoa, Italy. “We have a very successful meeting. And I had convinced him that I no longer viewed Russia as an enemy and I viewed him on a personal level as somebody with whom we could deal”.

Now Bush calls Putin again in Sept. 2001. This phone-call was important. What Putin was saying was, “Go get them; we want you to be successful”. “We are going to support you in this war on terror,” Putin said. (p.118). Further, he assured that Russia would grant the U.S over

flight clearness but for humanitarian purpose only. “We cannot put any Russian troops on the ground in Afghanistan. That makes no sense for you or for us.” (p.118). Bush asked for the basing rights in the Central Asian States—an area still under Russian influence. Putin promised that he would ask the concerned states to cooperate as the need was only temporary (not permanent) and the purpose was to fight against terrorism.⁵ Putin sensed in this war (against their former foe) a “sense of common security”. In brief, “I am here to help”, was Putin’s message. (p.119)

[Reader cannot miss the religious fervour with which Bush had tried to Baptize Putin to Christianity and cultivate in him a true spirit of the Crusades. It is interesting to note that his missionary zeal did ignite Putin to respond with equal fervour.]

As a consequence thereof, the Russians soon sent a team to C.I.A to provide extensive on-the-ground intelligence especially about topography and caves in Afghanistan. In brief, through Russian help U.S.A was able to find access to airbases in Tajikistan, & Uzbekistan.⁶ Later C.I.A even purchased for Northern Alliance, Russian arms worth \$10 million dollars. Not only that the Russians sent troops in thousands to help U.S.A in their war against Taliban.

17. After taking care of these preliminaries, Bush asked Powell to issue an ultimatum to the Taliban. He said, warn the Taliban “to turn over bin Ladin & his Al-Qaeda or they will suffer the consequences. If they don’t comply, we will attack them. Our goal is not to destroy Taliban but that may be the effect. We will attack with missiles, bombers, and the boots on the ground”, he said. “Let us hit them hard, we want to signal this is a change from the past. We want to cause other

countries like Syria and Iran to change their views. We want to hit as soon as possible”. “We are going to rain holy hell on them”. (p.98).

[This is how a superpower shows respect to the international law. Assuming without conceding that bin Ladin and his Al-Qaeda were criminals, does any law worth the name, recommend that the criminals be handed over to the aggrieved party rather than taking them to the court for a due process of law.]

Don Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney were beyond hell-bent to attack Iraq along with Afghanistan. “Why shouldn’t we go against Iraq, not just Al-Qaeda” (p. 49), they insisted. Their opinion was that WMD in Iraq were posing a serious threat to the United States. And if we were to take the war against terrorism to some logical end, we would have to turn to Iraq sooner or later. Bush & Powell, however, were opposed to attacking Iraq at that moment. They contended that to open two or three fronts at the same time might over-stretch them and they might lose focus. (p. 84)

18. U.S war strategy was to make this war look like a war against the non-Afghans, the outsiders, particularly the Arabs. “We want to structure it as Afghanistan versus the outsiders. We are not invading. We are not occupying. Mullah Omar betrayed the Afghan people. He let in the outsiders. That is the problem”. (p. 128). Bush added: “ this should be a template for our strategy. We should use the Afghans [against the Afghans] in this struggle.” (p. 128)

It was decided that leaflets would be dropped explaining that the United States was there to liberate the Afghan people from the invading bin Ladin & Al-Qaeda; and that this was not a war against Islam. (p. 165).

These were the essentials of war propaganda. So for as the field struggle was concerned steps were simple & inter-connected.

First step obviously was to isolate Afghanistan from Pakistan, the linchpin to Afghan problem. This objective was realized by bringing Pakistan to its knees by a mid-night call wherein Pakistan agreed to comply with seven demands asked of Musharraf.

Second step was to detach Al-Qaeda from the Taliban & cut their roots from the local community. Once that objective is realized, it would be easy to kill them.

Third step should be to detach the so-called moderate Taliban from Mullah Omar and his die-hard partners and urge them to go for a regime change.

Fourth step should be to buy the loyalties of different war-lords and thus weaken the defense potential of Taliban.

Fifth step should be to use Northern Alliance against the Taliban and help them move on the ground to take control of Kabul.

20. Pentagon's name for the operation was "operation infinite justice". However, it was reworded as "Operation Enduring Freedom" in order to accommodate the criticism of some Islamic scholars who contended that infinite justice could only be attributed to God Almighty—and not to any human agency. (p. 134-135).

[One cannot fail to appreciate the religious sensitivities of Islamic Scholars. Of course, they could find nothing else objectionable in this brutal & baseless war of aggression.]

It was the expectation of U.S and its allies that the "shock and Awe Bombing" would lead to an early collapse of Taliban, "with the enemy

shrinking to a small number of hard-core Mullah Omar supporters”.
(p.187)

21. Money talked in Afghanistan. “War-Lords or sub-commanders with dozens or hundreds of fighters could be bought off for as little as \$10,000 to \$50,000 in cash. If we could do this right, we can buy off a lot more of the Taliban than we have to kill them”. In fact, C.I.A was buying its way across Afghanistan. (p.194)

“The War Cabinet has had many discussions of the Afghan culture, and the deadly joke was, “you can’t buy an Afghan, but you can rent one.” It was a world of no permanent even semi-permanent loyalties. The war-lords followed money and victory. They were attracted to the winning side, would shift in the blink of an eye”. (p. 253)

Strangely enough the total money spent for purchasing the loyalties of the war-lords was just \$ 70 million in all; it also included the payment for field hospitals. When this amount was brought to the notice of the President Bush, he called it the biggest “bargains” of all time.
(p. 317)

[In brief, cash was used to buy loyalties and thousands of Taliban changed sides by receiving cash. And whatever was left unchanged, was subjected to massive “shock and awe bombing” including daisy cutters weighing 15,000 pounds each. This relentless bombing, nearly 58,000 sorties over a period of less than 2 months -- reduced even the mountains and caves in Afghanistan to sands and deserts. Everything was flattened. Cash and cutters are, in fact, the new instruments of American Imperialism, which is, covered under the garb of new vision for world peace, or New World Order or more generally a war against terrorism].

22. “In all the U.S commitment to overthrow the Taliban had been about 110 CIA officers and 316 Special Forces personnel plus massive air-power”. (p. 314). Of course, the Northern Alliance was used to move on the ground and capture Kabul; whilst the Pakistani forces were asked to control the borders: “Pakistan forces were posted on their side of the border to interdict the fleeing terrorists and they captured several hundred. The Afghan tribes were supposed to do the same on their side, but they had done a sorry job. (p. 315)

23. General Franks, Commander of U.S Central Command. (CENTCOM) offers his assessment of Gen. Musharraf:

“Musharraf is calm, confident and committed. We have to recognize that what we do in Pakistan creates problems for him in his streets and we have to be sensitive to that”. He reported that the Pakistani leader had told him, he would like the things [war & bombing] in Afghanistan to end soon. He said, he had responded by telling Musharraf, “That will depend more on you than it does on me”. (p. 289). “Pakistan was the linchpin of the operation”. (p. 289).

[From this assessment one could easily guess the nature and quantum of Pakistan’s involvement in U.S led war against the poor Afghans. More detailed account of it could be seen in CENTCOM website reporting offered by Gen.Franks].

24. Musharraf said [to Bush] his deep fear was that the United States would in the end abandon Pakistan and that other interests would crowd out the war on terrorism. Bush fixed his gaze: “Tell the Pakistan people that the president of the United States looked you in the eye and told you, we would not do that. (p.303).

Musharraf draws the attention of the U.S President Bush to an article in *The New Yorker* by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, alleging that the Pentagon, with the help of an Israeli special operations Unit, had contingency plans to seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons should the country become unstable. "Seymour Hersh is a liar", Bush replied (p. 303).

[One can easily see the quality of assurance given to Musharraf to assuage his deep concerns/worries about Pakistan and her problems. No wonder he is still busy, day and night, in proving his loyalties to the U.S and its President, George W. Bush. In spite of the fact that Pakistan has taken frequent U-turns, such as, U-turn on Afghanistan, U-turn on Taliban, U-turn on Kashmir & Kashmiri mujahideen, U-turn on nuclear scientists and may be nuclear deterrence as well, U-turn on the ideology of Pakistan, U-turn on the Muslim World etc. Of Course, in this process of winning the West, we have lost our credibility with the East as well. Under these circumstances, Pakistan stands totally isolated and may be forced to yield further ground on issues of vital concern to the nation.]

25. Dick Cheney was not convinced that holding the Northern Alliance was the most expedient strategy. He was of the opinion that "we should encourage the Northern Alliance to take Kabul". (p. 215). "We need a victory", Bush said. And the "only victory to the world might be taking the Capital [Kabul]", Cheney replied.

Tenet summed up the situation: "We cannot stop the Northern Alliance from trying to take Kabul – the only issue is whether they can do it or not". (p. 215). The war-cabinet did discuss the possibility of accommodating the wishes of Pakistan, which was apprehensive of the negative influence of Russia, Iran and India if Kabul were to be occupied by the Northern Alliance. It is interesting to note that while Bush was

busy assuring Musharraf that we would ask our friends, that is, the Northern Alliance to head towards the south and avoid taking Kabul, the rest of his war-cabinet members were busy urging Dostum and others to go for Kabul. They contended that all that they needed was to “Calm the Pakistan down” – [which they did] and the Alliance captured Kabul. (p. 226). However, Hamid Karzai, a pashtoon from the Southern Afghanistan was found out to take the oath of office in Kabul on Dec. 22, 2001 with the expectation that he would be able to serve the dual interests of the U.S & the Northern Alliance. This is how the regime change was accomplished in 102 days after the so-called terrorist attacks in the United States. (p. 315).

26. Initially Bush was opposed to invading Iraq mainly because he wanted to concentrate and focus on Afghanistan. But Iraq did pop up quite frequently in the war-cabinet meetings – actively for Cheney & Rumsfeld, passively for Powell. Those who were committed to the protection of Oil and Israel were naturally hell-bent to invade Iraq at the earliest. Now that the Taliban were ousted from power, and that too so cheaply, Bush & his war-cabinet members were emboldened to go next for Iraq. Here they had two problems: -

- How to ensure that Iraq had no more the weapons of mass destruction so that if and when they do decide to attack Iraq, they didn't have to pay the price of oil in blood?
- How to acquire some sort of a cover to disguise their naked aggression & move from Unilateralism (or pre-emptive strikes) to Universalism & add some other partners to crime.

In order to address them to the first problem, the U.S insisted that U.N inspectors' teams should be sent to Iraq in order to verify as to how far

Iraq had complied with the U.N instructions and had destroyed its weapons of mass destruction. This was deemed essential for determining the status of WMD:

“ The fear was that Saddam was still attempting to develop, obtain & eventually use weapons of mass destruction, and without United Nations inspectors in the Country, there was no way to know the exact nature of the threat they faced. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 gave the U.S a new window to go after Hussain”. (p. 83).

The U.N inspectors were sent to Iraq and they repeatedly announced that they could find no such WMD or smoking guns in Iraq. Their findings were somehow dismissed by U.S solely because Bush didn't want to compromise his right to unilateral pre-emptive strikes. [So a close examination of the situation would drive us to the conclusion, that it was not the presence, but the absence, of WMD that inspired & prompted the U.S for its Iraq invasion].

For the second problem, the war-cabinet recommended that Bush should address the UN and pressurize her to issue fresh resolution to U.S and its allies empowering them to take any measures necessary for ensuring that Iraq had relinquished her WMD. Further Bush should emphasize that if the UN or the Security Council fails to satisfy these requirements, it would run the risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant. Somehow Bush agreed to these recommendations and decided to give UN a chance. (p. 335).

At the same time, Bush started to uphold his own plan for Iraq invasion. To begin with, in his state of Union address on Jan. 29, 2002 he declared that Iraq, Iran and North Korea were “Axis of Evil”. The real danger, he

underscored, were their weapons of mass destruction, which could fall into the hands of the terrorists. Hence his decision, “I will not wait on events” [to overtake me]. On the contrary, he would exercise his right of pre-emptive strikes against the actual or the potential enemies. In order to hasten up his plans he allocated \$ 100 million to \$200 million to CIA with the directions to initiate & accelerate the covert action in Iraq. (p. 329).

In April, the President began publicly declaring his policy of regime change in Iraq. In June, he declared that he would launch pre-emptive strikes against countries believed to be serious threat to the United States. (p. 330).

Colin Powell was all along opposed to any attack on Iraq. In his opinion, it could turn the Middle East into a “cauldron and thus destroy the war on terrorism”. (p. 331). Powell felt that any attack on Iraq without linking her to Al-Qaeda or any reasonable cover would imply that America was guilty of showing disrespect to world opinion. Further, he was convinced that Iraq was thoroughly “contained and deterred after the gulf war” (p. 333) and was no longer a threat to the U.S or its immediate neighbors. In any case, he insisted that U.S would require the blessings of the U.N or an international alliance for its contemplated action. So when the war-cabinet decided to approach the Security Council for a fresh resolution, Powell felt relieved.

While the issue was still pending before U.N Security Council, on Oct.10 & 11, the House and the Senate overwhelmingly voted to grant the President full authority to attack Iraq unilaterally. In order to establish their imperialist credentials and to prove that U.N or Security Council were truly irrelevant if they were not willing to oblige U.S – Bush

lunched its pre-emptive strikes against Iraq on March 20, 2003. Money spent by CIA in Iraq also paid dividends and Baghdad was captured without much of a resistance. Later, Saddam was shown to have been arrested by the U.S forces. Now the country is placed under U.S controlled interim arrangements. War and violence are still in process in Iraq as they are in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Bush and his war-cabinet are busy in enjoying their uneasy victory. In only Iraq, till October, 2006, more than 650,000 Iraqis are killed so far.⁷

27. Palestine was still burning. Bush asked Powell to go to Israel and do some fire-fighting. Powell was reluctant initially but was somehow made to obey the orders. Once he was there, both the Republicans and the Democrats were vying with each other to register their sympathies for Israel. They were apprehensive that Powell was going too far and the Bush administration would be well-advised to ask Powell to scale back his statement, make less of a commitment about future negotiations. (p. 324-25)

28. To conclude, we may point out that the real beneficiaries of U.S war against terrorism are: -

- Bush – who got a net raise in defense budget up to the tune of 24 %.
- George Tenet who should have been sacked for poor performance got instead his budget enhanced up to 42 %, besides getting an open license for lethal covert actions around the globe without any need to seek prior permission before launching any operation.
- Under the Patriot Act, the U.S citizens lost their democratic right to function as watch-dog to their state and its functionaries at least for a period of 4 years.

- And, of course, the sovereign states have lost their sovereignty because they are pushed to a “state of nature” where might would determine the right & they could be subjected to pre-emptive strikes by any of their aggressive neighbors.
- The U.N has lost its legal and moral authority and is made totally irrelevant for resolving issues through peaceful means.
- The world is apparently crawling under the shadow of U.S imperialism and it would call for another catastrophe to effect a change & restore the original order.
- The U.S Imperialism has tightened its noose particularly around the Muslim World; now it is difficult to say whether they would ever make any concerted efforts to wriggle out (of this noose) or allow themselves to be strangled to death.

End Notes:

- ¹ . Richard Nixon, *Seize the Moment*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1992, see flap cover.
- ² . The same point is confirmed by *In the Line of fire*, by General Pervez Musharaf. However, Bush refuted the point and expressed his ignorance about any such remarks.
- ³ . Abdul Sattar, *Pakistan Foreign Policy: 1947- 2005*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.244
- ⁴ . These Seven demands are also confirmed by then Pakista's Foreign Minister Mr. Abdul Sattar in his book, *ibid*
- ⁵ . On assessing US intentions of staying in the region permanently, China and Russia joined hands to check the US plans by urging the U.S. to declare a timetable for withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Uzbek and Kyrgyz bases in the region that were established to support the Afghan operations. See: Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation Regarding the International Order of the 21st Century," signed by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin on July 2, 2005
- ⁶ . SCO Summit Declaration dated 5th July 2005.
- ⁷ . John Hopkins, Al Mustansiriya, "The Study of Iraq Mortality", *The Lancet*, London, October, 2006. Also see *The News*, Islamabad, "Grim Report on Iraq", October 14th, 2006.