

# What do we do now?

It's impossible to put into words the horror of Tuesday, September 11th.

It is no longer a cliché: our lives are changed forever. We know for a certainty there are men who are willing to give their lives to kill Americans and try to bring this country to its knees. And all they need is fanatical motivation, some expertise, sharp organization and small knives, plastic or otherwise.

We can beef up security at airports and on airplanes. We can find the immigration officials whom I believe are regularly bribed to let unsavory and suspicious people into this country. We can review our immigration policy — which often makes no sense. We can establish some kind of communication with our own military in case of another attack on the capitol complex. Our public health officials can learn more about biological warfare, which is next on the horizon and has already been tried by a religious cult in one Western U.S.A. community.

But our situation is similar to our efforts to keep unwanted people and danger out of our homes. We can have locks and lights and security systems, but if someone really wants to get in, they will find a way.

Every time we try to find and eliminate terrorist leaders, such as Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, and fail, they gather more strength and we seem powerless. Our bombs and missiles accomplish very little. Our sanctions against Iraq have had no effect except to punish innocent citizens and children.

An Afghani on the internet says, "The Taliban and bin Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think of the people of Afghanistan, think of the Jews in the concentration camps."

He says Afghans found themselves weak, starved, exhausted, hurt and incapacitated when the Taliban began to control the country. (After years of war with the USSR and civil war.) They haven't had the strength to fight. The writer continues, "The United Nations estimated there are 500,000 disabled orphans in a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with land mines and the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets."

So should we make the Afghans suffer? The writer says they already are.

"Level their homes? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Someone already did all that."

The Bush administration seems to understand that a prolonged ground war with specific targets is the only way to

retaliate.

What else can we do? We must try to find out and understand what is at the root of such hatred and violence towards our country. The Middle East has always been a hotbed of religious differences, but ever since Israel was literally carved out of Palestine in 1947, that region has hardly had a month of peace. On the heels of the Holocaust in World War II, Britain and the United States supported establishing a Jewish State. The political movement was termed "Zionism." The day after the United

States recognized the State of Israel, Arab forces from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq invaded the new nation. By the end of that war, Israel won 50 percent more land. With other military events, Israel gained 200 percent more land. The aggression from both sides has never stopped.

The United States has been supportive of Israel for 54 years, although it has tried to broker peace year after year. It seems to me the Desert Storm war mostly served to antagonize Arab countries, even though we apparently salvaged our oil interests in

Kuwait.

On our list of preventive actions should be a close examination by Congress of our foreign policy in the Middle East. Perhaps we should discontinue a policy which might have seemed logical 54 years ago but no longer is — that of providing Israel with money and military equipment to be used against the Arab world.

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