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Punishing innocent Afghans not the answer

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THE Americans are patiently waiting for Osama bin Laden while the world is burning. They hope, it would seem, that he would fall into their lap by the help of God or firepower. Law and order are not in the equation.

The more I reflect the less I believe that one of the poorest nations on earth had the capacity and capability to turn America into an inferno. The Afghans, more specifically the group called Taliban or the followers of Osama called the Al-Quaeda, are paying with their blood and possible racial extinction for an atrocity the perpetrators of which have yet to be identified.

No sane person can question the terror of Sept 11 that shook the world; there is no doubt about the immediate victims. The Americans have the right and the might to hunt down the dangerous lunatics who set the world on fire. Hunt them down relentlessly, I have said previously. Find them! Bring them to justice. Restore the world's confidence in law and order. Give peace, prosperity and hope back to the people.

The Americans, and Tony Blair, seem to have made a quantum leap to brand the Afghans as the perpetrators. All because Osama is reputedly in hiding in Afghanistan. The Americans have been looking for him since 1998, with no sightings, only second-hand rumours that he is holed up in some unknown lair in Afghanistan.

The World Trade Center was a symbol of international trade and nationals of several nations died in the tragic attack. The two Boeings, with 157 and 45 passengers, that took off from Boston were piloted by the enemies of mankind; whether the actual hijackers were Arabs or Afghans or Iranians or Colombians or Irish, is immaterial. They were criminals of the highest order. They must be run down to earth and given their desserts.

Putting the blame on the Afghans is no better than the usual police habit of rounding up the usual suspects. The real criminals are probably having a good laugh at the inadequacy of a great nation stricken by a monumental tragedy. These miscreants must not escape justice. America seeks justice, so does the rest of the world, including the Afghans. Rule of law punishes only the actual criminals, not their relatives, friends or compatriots.

The Taliban are a caliban creation of the CIA who have used them to their own ends as it suited them.

We know armageddon has engulfed Afghanistan. The daily rain of fire over the country is likely to make the innocent people feel confused, bewildered and utterly devastated. They do not know why they are being attacked. They are mainly illiterate people with no television or radio or access to newspapers. They can only believe what they experience, which is injustice and cruelty. We will lose them and along with them many others both in the West and elsewhere. British MPs have started questioning the wisdom of bombing Afghanistan.

How much damage has been inflicted on the Taliban is difficult to assess. They may have enough strength left to continue their stronghold for months and months, while the innocent suffer and die of firepower or hunger.

The burgeoning armageddon is a wake-up call for nations which are likely to get destabilised: Iran, Tajikistan, India, even China which has Tibetan and over 60 million Chinese Muslims as its nemesis.

While Tony Blair and Bush are at pains to show the world that they are

not at war with Islam or the Middle East, which has other religions as well, the people of Afghanistan can only regard their declarations as delusionary rhetoric.

The perpetrators of the tragedy of Sept 11 have yet to be identified and arrested, but their so-called accomplices are meted out life-destroying bombardment.

In labelling the Afghans as terrorists or accomplices of terrorists, the Americans have created a moral panic in the hope that the good citizens of America, Britain and other countries will fear the "terrorists" and lend support to the measures that are being taking against them.

The truth is this war of propaganda is beginning to take its toll both on Britons and Americans. Both economies are badly affected, with the certainty of a world-wide recession in the offing. People are afraid to spend and are scared to go out. MacDonald's restaurants, especially those in Edgware Road in London, are beginning to have a ghostly emptiness.

The anthrax scare is truly biological warfare unleashed, if it is a planned act at all, by a malevolent power who can have little regard for anybody in the world. It is going to be far more difficult to track down the perpetrators of this crime against humanity than the mad bombers.

It is ludicrous to say that Malaysia is a terrorist state exporting anthrax to the States. Malaysia has everything to lose and nothing to gain from such a mad act. A paid Malaysian or Malaysians may be involved but not at the behest of the Government.

There is nothing to stop an enemy of Malaysia or of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to post a whiff of anthrax in an envelope.

I hope Robert Zoelich, the US Trade representative, got a true picture of Malaysian innocence during his meeting with Dr Mahathir and Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

I cannot understand this Nietzschean enthusiasm for war. I, and I am sure all other people, want to see the perpetrators of Sept 11 brought to justice.

Punishing the Afghans on suspicion is as mad as mad can be.

Politics, it is said, is the art of looking for trouble; in international politics it is the art of creating trouble to fish in troubled waters.

Thinking of the unthinkable has led to doing the undoable, annihilating the innocent, the poor Afghans.

Who is Osama? Where is he? He seems to be in no hurry to surface, if he does exist at all. Maybe he is dead. Maybe we are waiting for Beckett's Godot.

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