

9-11 was excuse to go to 'war'

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There is the old truism, "Children learn what they live."

Children become adults and model learned behavior.

So . . . half a year into the cult-of-fear-based "war on terrorism," it takes only a cursory look at some recent Star Tribune stories to see where we're at: "Deadliest day in 17 months" (in Israel); "U.S. plans for nuclear scenarios — 7 nations named in secret report"; "India: Fanaticism claims another triumph"; "Maj. Gen Frank Hagenbeck, commander of the [Afghan mountain] operation near Gardes, said of Taliban and Al-Qaida, 'We body slammed them today and killed hundreds of these guys.'" The list goes on and on.

Seven months after Sept. 11 Osama bin Laden and Mullah Muhammad Omar have not been caught and brought to justice. Though it no longer seems to be the case, for a while I thought that the official story would be that they were presumed dead in some bombed cave, like Hitler in his bunker in 1945. And were their families to be killed, I wouldn't expect that fact to get much attention — it might give too human a "spin" to the story of war.

The entire brunt of this "war," so far, has been on Afghanistan and its people, though not a single Afghani was among the 19 perpetrators Sept. 11. We forget that this campaign against Afghanistan was not a war of liberation of Afghan women; nor is it a war for "freedom"; rather it was a campaign for other motives, some of the most important motives likely unacknowledged.

Until Sept. 11, we couldn't have cared less about Afghanistan. Sept. 11 was an excuse to go to war.

Not a single high-level mention has ever been made of possible action against Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which were home to

the perpetrators.

While the administration will not acknowledge officially any innocent civilian death toll in Afghanistan, credible sources monitoring the war make it clear that the civilian death toll, just from the bombing, far exceeds the Sept. 11 death toll — and this in a country about the size of Texas with only 8 percent of the U.S. population.

No one mentions that Al-Qaida, like all terrorist groups, will never be eradicated — that the policy to bomb violence out of existence will achieve only the objective of making certain that violence will continue to be a way of life far into the future.

Some of us seem to harbor the naive notion that Al-Qaida, and others like it, are incapable of continuation-of-government initiatives. Likely they are masters of it, and we simply imitators. They are masters of stealth, and in this era of the Internet and a shrunken world, will always be several steps ahead of the law. Stamp out one cell, and another will spring up . . . or two or three.

A once-popular song again needs to become the anthem of this nation. "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" asks, "When will we ever learn? When will we ever learn?"

Until we learn to truly wage peace and justice, all is lost. So long as two-thirds of the Muslim world has serious issues against us — issues that are not contrived, and by and large not constructively addressed — we will continue to have problems. And our children and their children and grandchildren will inherit from us a truly dismal future.

Wage peace and justice.

Who was it who said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself"?

— Dick Bernard, Woodbury. Retired teachers' representative.

NOTE:
NOT A
SINGLE
MENTION
OF
"IRAQ"