

Telegraph, that “Bin Laden is not the automatic leader of every terrorist act carried out in the name of Islam. It’s possible that he influenced it; but he’s probably not the man who steered every action or controlled the detailed plan. As for the idea that, sitting in Afghanistan, he could have controlled the last phase of the operation, [this] is something we should not accept without a lot of doubt.”

Kay Nehm, Germany’s chief prosecutor, who directs the investigations into the radical Arab-Islamic underground in several German cities, strongly denied any “hard evidence pointing to the implication of bin Laden.” German and Swiss dailies, soon after Sept. 11, leaked an internal assessment by the German foreign intelligence service BND, that bin Laden’s organization was only one among many groups of Islamic terrorists, and that the role of Baku, Azerbaijan, as a pivot for terrorist connections among Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Mideast, should be looked into more intensely.

Among the hardest hitting comments were those of the German military’s Bundeswehr University Prof. August Pradetto, interviewed in the daily *Die Welt* on Sept. 19. Professor Pradetto stated that the year-long preparations that were required could not have been handled from Afghanistan. “Bin Laden is perhaps a component of the terror commando, but not not the crucial part.” Noting that the secret services of one or another country might be instrumental in the Sept. 11 events, Pradetto warned that “behind this is not blind destructive rage, but calculation. The attack on the most important symbol of the remaining superpower is a targetted provocation. Intelligence services know the reaction of their enemy in advance. The goal could be, to pull NATO into a war against the Islamic world, and we are on the verge of falling into an incredible trap.”

A similar point was made on Sept. 20, in the French daily *Le Monde*, by leading French expert on Islam and the Middle East Gilles Kepel. Under the headline “The Trap Of The Afghan Jihad,” Kepel insisted that what must be urgently clarified, before any precipitous action is taken, are the shady connections between “Islamic warriors” from the Afghan front and the U.S. secret services, emphatically including in the years following the end, in 1989, of the Islamists’ war against the Soviet Union, and the years since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Precipitous “anti-terror” actions, he warned, could soon drag the West into the “clash of civilizations” which, ironically, bin Laden himself feeds upon.

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Pope Counsels Against Revenge After Attacks

by Marianna Wertz

In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, Pope John Paul II, whose leadership, together with Lyndon LaRouche, in the past three decades, has been crucial to holding the world back from the portals of war, is urging that American leaders not allow themselves to be “dominated by hatred and the spirit of retaliation.”

On Sept. 22, the Pope will arrive for a three-day visit in the Central Asian nation of Kazakstan, separated only by Uzbekistan from Afghanistan, the central target of a planned American military strike against the Osama bin Laden organization. Though urged not to make the trip by those who fear for his safety, John Paul said that the trip is necessary now, as its purpose is to promote dialogue between cultures and religions.

On Sept. 12, the Pope sent a telegram to President George W. Bush, with the following message:

“Shocked by the unspeakable horror of today’s inhuman terrorist attacks against innocent people in different parts of the United States, I hurry to express to you and your fellow citizens my profound sorrow and my closeness in prayer for the nation at this dark and tragic moment. . . . I beg God to sustain you and the American people in this hour of suffering and trial.”

Later that day, the Pope dedicated his general audience, celebrated in St. Peter’s Square, to the tragedy in America. After again expressing his “profound sorrow” at the attacks, John Paul said:

“I add my voice to all the voices raised in these hours to express indignant condemnation, and I strongly reiterate that the ways of violence will never lead to genuine solutions to humanity’s problems. . . . How is it possible to commit acts of such savage cruelty? The human heart has depths from which schemes of unheard-of ferocity sometimes emerge, capable of destroying in a moment the normal daily life of a people. . . . Even if the forces of darkness appear to prevail, those who believe in God know that evil and death do not have the final say. . . .”

The Pope then directed prayers for the political and religious leaders in the United States, “in order that, not allowing themselves to be dominated by hatred and the spirit of retaliation, they do everything possible to keep weapons of destruction from sowing new hatred and new death and

strive to bring light to the darkness of human affairs with works of peace.”

A Vision For America

On Sept. 13, with the American mass media intensifying its brainwashing barrage for revenge and war, the Pope received the new United States Ambassador to the Holy See, James Nicholson. He told Nicholson, “You are beginning your mission at a moment of immense tragedy for your country. I pray that this inhuman act will awaken in the hearts of all the world’s peoples a firm resolve to reject the ways of violence, to combat everything that sows hatred and division within the human family.”

He then turned to a vision of a better America, which could play a positive role in the development of the world, instead of leading the world into war. He recalled that, “in my recent meeting with President Bush, I emphasized my deep esteem for the rich patrimony of human, religious, and moral values which have historically shaped the American character. . . . Underlying your nation’s commitment to freedom, self-determination, and equal opportunity are universal truths inherited from its religious roots,” from which spring values including “respect for the sanctity of life and the dignity of each person.”

In the century now opening before us, the Pope told Nicholson, “the possibilities before the human family are immense, although they are not always apparent in a world in which too many of our brothers and sisters are suffering from hunger, malnutrition, the lack of access to medical care and to education, or are burdened by an unjust government, armed conflict, forced displacement and new forms of human bondage. In seizing the available opportunities, vision and generosity are necessary, especially on the part of those who have been blessed with freedom, wealth, and an abundance of resources.”

‘Promote A Realistic Dialogue’

The Pope called on the United States to “promote a realistic dialogue” in the Middle East, as key to resolving the present world crisis. Only such a dialogue “will enable the parties to achieve security, justice, and peace, in full respect for human rights and international law.”

Finally, John Paul pointed again, as he has so often in the past, to the “spiritual roots of the crisis which the Western democracies are experiencing, a crisis characterized by the advance of a materialistic, utilitarian, and ultimately dehumanized world view which is tragically detached from the moral foundations of Western civilization.” He stated that “economic and political structures must be guided by a vision whose core is the God-given dignity and inalienable rights of every human being, from the moment of conception until natural death. . . . Never has it been more urgent to re-invigorate the moral vision and resolve essential to maintaining a just and free society.”

Region Concerned Over Focus On Afghanistan

by Ramtanu Maitra

As Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban have virtually turned down Pakistan’s request to hand over the Yemeni terrorist Osama bin Laden, the probability of an American surgical, or a full-fledged military strike on Afghanistan looms on the horizon. Meanwhile, regional leaders have begun to express their concerns about the impending war.

Hectic diplomatic parleys are in progress in Washington to respond to the ghastly killings of thousands of Americans and foreign nationals, on Sept. 11 by suicide-terrorists. India’s External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra were in Washington to discuss strategy. New Delhi was in close contact with Moscow, and Mishra had spent three days there before arriving in Washington on Sept. 18. Jaswant Singh also had a long telephone discussion with his Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, before coming to Washington. Ivanov, as well as Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, were also scheduled to arrive in Washington that week.

In the region, responses to the U.S. call for eliminating the terrorists who allegedly masterminded attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, have been overwhelmingly positive. India offered its air space and even the use of its air bases, if such need arises. Pakistan has promised “unstinted support” to Washington’s efforts. Bangladesh, a Muslim nation of about 120 million people, is now preparing for its general elections, scheduled in October. Despite the fact that the country has no government in power now, Dhaka has also extended full support to Washington.

Reasons Behind Concerns

Despite such unequivocal support extended by all and sundry in the region, there exist some genuine concerns. India, a victim of Pakistan- and Afghanistan-aided terrorism, is not comfortable with the proposal to dismantle only the terrorist network around Bin Laden and his lieutenants.

In India’s north, Kashmir remains a volatile area where terrorists from outside the area and the Kashmiri separatists have waged war against India’s security personnel for almost 12 years. In 1989, following the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan after a decade of bloodletting, India began to experience a massive increase in terrorism in the Indian part of Kashmir. India’s outcry against such state-backed terrorism was virtually ignored by the rest of the world.

In 1999, the terrorists, aided by Pakistani Army regulars,