

Put Not Your Trust in Princes! (Psalm 146:3)

Writing this column presents me with three major challenges. The first, simply to identify something worth writing about. The second, to say something compelling in 400 words. The third, to maintain a clearly religious focus. I sometimes share my thoughts on important topics where it's difficult to make the religious dimension transparent -- especially in brief -- even though my outlook is shaped by my religious understanding. Among these topics is the event we call 9/11.

What transpired on that fateful day in 2001 remains largely undisclosed. Most people are of course familiar with the official story put out by the U.S. government, a story about an incredibly successful conspiracy involving some twenty Arab Muslim hijackers belonging to *al Qaeda* and led by Osama bin Laden. Whatever truth this story may hold, it is utterly implausible and profoundly deceptive as a sufficient account of the horrific events of that day. For example, there is no way the Twin Towers and Building 7 of the World Trade Center were brought down by plane impact (in the case of the Twin Towers) and fires. The publicly available evidence pertaining to the impact at the Pentagon and the downing of Flight 93 over Pennsylvania does not corroborate the official story either.

We know government leaders concocted "evidence" to justify going to war against Afghanistan and Iraq. We know much of this bogus evidence was obtained from, or more likely merely corroborated by, alleged 9/11 conspirators under torture. We also know that major portions of the official story of 9/11 are corroborated by supposed intelligence gained from interrogation (including torture) of "high value" detainees identified as *al Qaeda* conspirators. Check especially the footnotes to chapters 5-7 of the 9/11 Commission Report. Read carefully and between the lines.

9/11 not only served as pretext for the Bush-Cheney administration's "war on terror" -- the weight of evidence suggests that it was planned and executed for that purpose. If the Obama administration has a clue about what really happened on 9/11, it is not letting on. Obama's "war on terror" policies remain largely in continuity with those of Bush's second term. U.S. foreign policy, and the continued curtailment of domestic civil liberties, do not bode well for the future of democracy world-wide. People of faith -- indeed, all citizens -- must remain committed to the values and virtues of democracy, and ought not to trust indiscriminately any leader, institution, party, or government.

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