

Publishing Editor's column

BY the time anyone reads these words the first anniversary of the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre will have come and gone. At the time it was described in such terms as 'the beginning of World War III' and 'a wake-up call to the world'. One year on, these statements seem to have been rather exaggerated; not much has actually happened. There was a war against Afghanistan in which a rather nasty regime was overthrown, but it did not really affect us much. Stock markets recovered from their initial slump, and their subsequent decline is attributable more to general worries about the economy and loss of confidence in big business due to several major accounting scandals, rather than to concerns about war.

Were the statements made in the aftermath of 11 September exaggerated? Can we forget about it all? We must not overlook the fact that from time to time further terrorist acts seem to have been averted. Just before these words were written a man carrying a concealed gun was arrested when attempting to board a plane in Stockholm bound for London. Stories are emerging that he intended to crash it into a building in London. We never know when some new disaster might happen. The originators of the 11 September terrorism have not been eradicated as a threat.

Then there is George Bush's apparent determination to wage war on Iraq. It is obvious that such a course of action has the potential to go horribly wrong for America and the world, so why is it being considered? A leading American hawk said the consequences of not going to war against Iraq are greater than the consequences of going to war. One suspects that there is more going on than meets the eye, and that there is a very real threat to America, the full details of which are not being revealed. At the time of last year's disaster I suggested that the fall of the twin towers and the accompanying attack on the Pentagon were symbolic of disaster to come for America's economic and military might. Who knows what the launching of an attack on Iraq might lead to, or what Iraq might do first in response to the threat of such attack.

When Assyria overthrew Israel, and Babylon overthrew Judah, there were periods of crisis followed by periods of peace and an apparent going away of the threat of judgement. False prophets ridiculed the true prophets of God who said judgement would come, but come it did. Likewise in the first century, the final judgement came after a time of peace in which it seemed that the Roman threat had gone away. The Apostle Paul's words to the Thessalonians, "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them", can surely be applied to today's world; not to Israel prior to Gog's invasion, but the world at large. But, as the whole passage says, the brethren and sisters of Christ should not be taken by surprise; they should be expecting such to come upon the world. How prepared are we for the dramatic events which are to come upon the world and which may well shake our whole way of life prior to our call to judgement?

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