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Theorizing 9/11

T he historic events of September 11 and their aftermath have, in the view of
some, opened up a new historical epoch. Certainly, they have produced a
frightening start for a new millennium and require fresh thinking and historical con-
textualization to make sense of the events. In the following analyses, I want first to
suggest how certain dominant social theories were put in question during the world-
shaking events of 9/11, and then offer an analysis of the historical background neces-
sary to understand and contextualize the terror attacks. I take up the claim that
"everything has changed" in the wake of 9/11 and attempt to indicate both changes
and continuities to avoid one-sided exaggerations and ideological simplifications. I
argue for the need for historical contextual understanding to grasp the origins and
nature of the terrorist attacks, and that the events of September 11 show contradic-
tions in the nature of globalization and information technologies that require dialec-
tical analysis of these phenomena. In these ways, I develop a historical and
theoretical framework, which I will flesh out in the following chapters to interpret
the atrocities of 9/11 and their aftermath.

SOCIAL THEORY, FALSIFICATION,
AND THE EVENTS OF HISTORY

Social theories generalize from past experience and provide accounts of historical
events or periods that attempt to map, illuminate, and perhaps criticize the domi-
nant social relations, institutions, forms, trends, and events of a given epoch. In turn,
they can be judged by the extent to which they account for, interpret, and critically
assess contemporary conditions or predict future events and developments. One
dominant social theory of the past two decades, Francis Fukuyama's *The End of
History* (1992), was strongly put into question by the events of September 11 and
their aftermath.[1] For Fukuyama, the collapse of Soviet communism and the triumph

of Western capitalism and democracy in the early 1990s constituted "the end of history." This signified for him "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." Although there may be conflicts in places like the Third World, overall for Fukuyama liberal democracy and market capitalism have prevailed, subsequent politics will devolve around resolving routine economic and technical problems, and the future will accordingly be rather mundane and boring.

Samuel Huntington polemicizes against Fukuyama's "one world: euphoria and harmony" model in his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). For Huntington, the future holds a series of clashes between "the West and the Rest." Huntington rejects a number of models of contemporary history, including a "realist" model that nation-states are primary players on the world scene who will continue to form alliances and coalitions that will play themselves out in various conflicts. He also rejects a "chaos" model that detects no discernible order or structure.

Instead, Huntington asserts that the contemporary world is articulated into competing civilizations that are based on irreconcilably different cultures and religions. For Huntington, culture provides unifying and integrating principles of order and cohesion, and from within dominant cultural formations emerge a number of different civilizations that are likely to come into conflict with each other, including Islam, China, Russia, and the West. For Huntington, religion is "perhaps *the* central force that motivates and mobilizes people" and is thus the core of civilization.

Although Huntington's model seems to have some purchase in the currently emerging global encounter with terrorism and is becoming a new major conservative ideology, it tends to overly homogenize both Islam and the West, as well as the other civilizations he depicts. As Tariq Ali argues (2002), Huntington exaggerates the role of religion while downplaying the importance of economics and politics.[2] Moreover, Huntington's model lends itself to pernicious misuse and has been deployed to call for and legitimate military retribution against implacable adversarial civilizations by conservative intellectuals like Jeane Kirkpatrick, Henry Kissinger, and members of the Bush administration.

Huntington's work provides too essentialist a model that covers over contradictions and conflicts both within the West and within Islam. Both worlds have been divided for centuries into dueling countries, ethnic groups, religious factions, and complex alliances that have fought fierce wars against each other and that continue to be divided geographically, politically, ideologically, and culturally (see Ali 2002). Islam itself is a contested terrain and in the current situation there are important attempts to mobilize more moderate forms of Islam and Islamic countries against Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terror network and Islamic extremism.

Hence, Huntington's binary model of inexorable conflict between the West and Islam is not only analytically problematic, but it also covers over the crucial battle within Islam itself to define the role and nature of the religion in the contemporary world. It also decenters the important challenge for the West to engage the Islamic

world in a productive dialogue about religion and modernity and to bring about more peaceful, informed, and mutually beneficial relations between the West and the Islamic world. Positing inexorable conflicts between civilizations may well describe past history and present challenges, but it does not help produce a better future and is thus normatively and politically defective and dangerous.

Globalization includes a homogenizing neoliberal market logic and commodification, cultural interaction, and hybridization, as well as conflict between corporations, nations, blocs, and cultures. Benjamin Barber's book *McWorld vs. Jihad* (1996) captures both the homogenizing and conflicting elements of globalization. Barber divides the world into the modernizing, homogenizing, Westernizing, and secular forces of globalization, dominated by multinational corporations, opposed to the premodern, fundamentalist, and tribalizing forces at war with the West and modernity. The provocative "Jihad" in the title seems to grasp precisely the animus against the West in Islamic extremism. But Jihad scholars argue that the term has a complex history in Islam and often privilege the more spiritual definitions of "jihad," such as a struggle for religion and spiritualization or a struggle within oneself for spiritual mastery. From this view, bin Laden's militarization of Jihad is itself a distortion of Islam that is contested by its mainstream.[3]

Barber's model also oversimplifies present world divisions and conflicts and does not adequately present the contradictions within the West or the "Jihad" world, although he postulates a dialectical interpenetrating of both forces and sees both as opposed to democracy. His book does, however, point to problems and limitations of globalization, noting serious conflicts and opponents, unlike Thomas Friedman's harmonizing duality of *The Lexus and the Olive* (1999), which suggests that both poles of capitalist luxury and premodern roots are parts of the globalization process. In an ode to globalization, Friedman assumes the dual victory of capitalism and democracy, à la Fukuyama, while Barber demonstrates contradictions and tensions between capitalism and democracy within the New World (Dis)Order, as well as the antidemocratic animus of Jihad.

Dominant dualistic theories that posit a fundamental bifurcation between the West and Islam are thus analytically suspicious in that they homogenize complex civilizations and cover over differences, hybridizations, contradictions, and conflicts within these cultures. Positing inexorable clashes between bifurcated blocs à la Huntington and Barber fails to illuminate specific discord within the opposing spheres and the complex relations between them. These analyses do not grasp the complexity in the current geopolitical situation, which involves highly multifaceted and intricate interests, coalitions, and conflicts that shift and evolve in response to changing situations within an overdetermined and constantly evolving historical context. As Tariq Ali points out (2002), dualistic clashes of civilization also occlude the historical forces that clashed in the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent Terror War.

Consequently, the events of September 11 and their aftermath suggest that critical social theory needs models that account for complexity and the historical roots and vicissitudes of contemporary problems like terrorism rather than abstract theoretical

generalizations. Critical social theory also needs to articulate how events like September 11 produce novel historical configurations while articulating both changes and continuities in the present situation.[4] It requires historical accounts of the surprising origins of current Islamic radicalism and its complicity with U.S. imperialism, as I recount in the next section. I suggest that Chalmers Johnson's concept of ''blowback'' (2000) provides a more convincing account than dualizing civilizational discourses of the September 11 terrorist attacks; that it better contextualizes, explains, and even predicts such events; and that it also provides cogent suggestions concerning viable and inappropriate responses to global terrorism.

The causes of the September 11 events and their aftermath are highly complex and involve, for starters, the failure of U.S. intelligence; the destructive consequences of U.S. interventionist foreign policy since the late 1970s; and the policies of the Carter, Reagan, Clinton, and both Bush administrations. In other words, there is no one cause or faction responsible for the catastrophe but a wide range of responsibility to be ascribed. Taking account of the history and complexity of the issues involved, Johnson's model of blowback arguably provides the most convincing account of how U.S. policy and institutions contributed to producing the worst terrorist crime in U.S. history with fateful consequences still threatening.[5]

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATIONS, THE CIA, AND BLOWBACK

In retrospect, the events of September 11 can be seen as a textbook example of blowback, a concept developed in a book with this title by Chalmers Johnson (2000), who uses it to describe the unintended consequences of unwise policies; it is a shorthand term for describing that a nation reaps what it sows. As Johnson notes: ''The term 'blowback,' which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, is starting to circulate among students of international relations. It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people. What the daily press reports as the malign acts of 'terrorists' or 'drug lords' or 'rogue states' or 'illegal arms merchants' often turn out to be blowback from earlier operations'' (2000, 8).

The concept of blowback, as I attempt to show, can be applied to the September 11 events since bin Laden and the radical Islamic forces associated with the Al Qaeda network were supported, funded, trained, and armed by the CIA and several U.S. administrations. In this reading, the United States' catastrophic failure was not only to have not detected the danger of a terrorist attack on the U.S. and taken action to prevent it, but to have actively contributed to producing the groups who are implicated in the 9/11 attacks and other terrorist assaults on the U.S.

Johnson provides a wealth of examples of blowback from problematic U.S. foreign policy maneuvers and covert actions that had unintended consequences, as when the U.S. became associated with the support of terrorist groups or authoritar-

ian regimes in Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East and its clients turned on their sponsors. For instance, the U.S. helped overthrow a democratically elected government in Iran in the 1950s and install the autocratic Shah. When the Shah was overthrown in 1979, Iranian militants seized the U.S. embassy and took its inhabitants hostage; since then, Iran has maintained hostile, although complex, relationships with the U.S.

In Johnson's sense, 9/11 is a classic example of blowback, in which U.S. policies generated unintended consequences that had catastrophic effects on U.S. citizens and on the American (and, indeed, global) economy. U.S. policy in Afghanistan from the end of the Cold War to the present contributed to the heinous events of September 11. A useful summary by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair describes U.S. covert operations in Afghanistan in the late 1970s that had momentous consequences:

> In April of 1978 an indigenous populist coup overthrew the government of Mohammed Daoud, who had formed an alliance with the man the United States had installed in Iran, Reza Pahlevi, a.k.a. the Shah. The new Afghan government was led by Noor Mohammed Taraki, and the Taraki administration embarked, albeit with a good deal of urban intellectual arrogance on land reform, hence an attack on the opium-growing feudal estates. Taraki went to the UN where he managed to raise loans for crop substitution for the poppy fields.
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> Taraki also tried to bear down on opium production in the border areas held by fundamentalists, since the latter were using opium revenues to finance attacks on Afghanistan's central government, which they regarded as an unwholesome incarnation of modernity that allowed women to go to school and outlawed arranged marriages and the bride price. Accounts began to appear in the western press along the lines of this from the *Washington Post,* to the effect that the *mujahedeen* liked to "torture their victims by first cutting off their noses, ears and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another."
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> At that time the *mujahedeen* was not only getting money from the CIA but from Libya's Moammar Q'addaffi who sent them $250,000. In the summer of 1979 the U.S. State Department produced a memo making it clear how the U.S. government saw the stakes, no matter how modern minded Taraki might be or how feudal the Muj. It's another passage Nat might read to the grandkids: "The United States' larger interest would be served by the demise of the Taraki-Amin regime, despite whatever setbacks this might mean for future social and economic reforms in Afghanistan. The overthrow of the DRA [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] would show the rest of the world, particularly the Third World, that the Soviets' view of the socialist course of history being inevitable is not accurate."[6]

In a 1998 *Le Monde* interview, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski had bragged about how he conceived of arming extremist Islamic militants against the Afghan government as a ploy to draw in the Soviet Union more deeply and thus help destroy their system.[7] What Brzezinski proudly proclaimed as his contribution to defeat the Soviet Union in the Cold War appears

in retrospect as a highly problematic U.S. intervention in the late 1970s that intensi-
fied civil war in Afghanistan. Overthrow of the secular and modernizing regime in
Afghanistan by Islamic fundamentalists helped mobilize and empower the forces
that would turn on the U.S. and institute a reign of global terrorism in the current
situation.

U.S. intervention in the Afghan conflict, which now appears as the last great clash
of the Cold War, helped create the context for the current crisis. As a response to
U.S. intervention, the Soviet Union sent increased aid and personnel to prop up the
moderate modernizing Taraki regime that was opposed by Islamic fundamentalists
in Afghanistan. When Afghan army officers killed Taraki in September 1979, the
Soviets invaded in force in December 1979 and set up a government to avoid a
fundamentalist Islamic and U.S.-backed takeover.

In the 1980s, the U.S. began more aggressively supporting Islamic fundamentalist
Jihad groups and the Afghan project was a major covert foreign policy project of
the Reagan-Bush administration. During this period, the CIA trained, armed, and
financed precisely those Islamic fundamentalist groups who later became part of the
Al Qaeda terror network that is now the nemesis of the West, the new "evil empire."
In the battle to defeat Soviet Communism in the Cold War, the U.S. poured billions
of dollars into Afghanistan to train "freedom fighters" that would overthrow the
purportedly communist regime. This was a major project with overt and covert aid
from the U.S., Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. The military aid
went into training and arming radical Islamic groups who would emerge with a
desire to fight other wars for Islam in the countries that had earlier supported them
in their Jihad against the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan administrations. Bin
Laden and his Al Qaeda network thus emerge as a Frankenstein of U.S. policy.

Indeed, the blowback from the Reagan-Bush-CIA Afghanistan intervention was
astonishing. John K. Cooley in his important study *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan,
America and International Terrorism* (2000) documents the momentous conse-
quences of the U.S. and its allies sustaining the Islamists who fought to overthrow
the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan. Egypt's Anwar Sadat was an early ally
of the support for the Islamists against the Soviets and was repaid with assassination
by fanatic Islamics in 1981. Pakistan's president, Zia al-Haq, whose secret services
played a major role in arming and organizing the Islamic fighters in Afghanistan,
was killed in a mysterious plane crash in 1988 and more radical Islamic forces have
threatened to take over in Pakistan ever since. The Pakistani secret services helped
organize the group that became the Taliban in the mid-1990s and the Taliban even-
tually took over control of most of Afghanistan. The Taliban formed an alliance with
bin Laden and his Al Qaeda group, which used Afghanistan to form networks that
engaged in terrorism throughout the world. These Islamic fundamentalists eventu-
ally turned on the U.S., one of the countries that had helped to fund, train, and arm
them.

Not only did the U.S. secret war in Afghanistan to organize Islamic militia against
the Soviets help create the Islamic terror network that is now the scourge of the

West, but the same Islamic radical forces, with the complicity of the CIA and other foreign intelligence services, produced one the most stupendous proliferations of drugs in history. As Cooley summarizes: "Never has so much South Asian marijuana, opium, and semiprocessed opium products and heroin, reached the drug pushers, the adult addicts, the children, and the general populations of the West, as in the late 1990s. Much of this was another direct consequence of the CIA's holy war of 1979–89" (Cooley 2000, 5). It is, of course, impossible to document how much tonnage of drug products were exported, but although Afghanistan produced mostly for local consumption before 1979, according to UN figures production in 1995–1996 had risen to 2,600 tons of raw opium, increasing to 2,800 tons in 1997 (Cooley 2000, 150). The results were skyrocketing drug addiction in neighboring countries and massive exporting of drugs to the West.

In 1989, Soviet troops left Afghanistan in defeat and a civil war continued for the next several years. The first Bush administration, in one of its most cynical and fateful decisions, decided to completely pull out of Afghanistan rather than work to build democracy and a viable government in that country. In retrospect, this was both inhumane and catastrophic. Over 2 million people had died in the ten years of the Afghan war, and the U.S. had invested billions of dollars in overthrowing the Russian-sponsored regime and in arming, training, and financing the Islamic fundamentalists. But rather than help the Afghan people produce a viable government, the first Bush administration turned away, and the most radical extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups that the U.S. and Pakistan had organized took over the country after some years more of civil war, setting up the present conflict (see Cooley 2000; Rashid 2001; and Ali 2002).

Although later in the 1990s, certain U.S. interests would be attracted to the oil and gas possibilities in Afghanistan and would cozy up to and support the Taliban, in the early 1990s, the first Bush administration had other fish to fry, in particular Iraq—another Bush I intervention that had momentous consequences. For after arousing the Arab ire and opposition to the U.S. military intervention against Iraq, at the end of the Gulf war in 1991, the Bush administration persuaded the Saudi government to allow the U.S. to continue to maintain military forces in their country, the Holy Land of Islam. This auspicious event has yet to be fully perceived in its blowback effects, for it was the permanent positioning of U.S. troops in what was perceived as the Islamic Holy Land that especially angered bin Laden and more radical Islamic groups. When Saudi Arabia continued to allow the presence of U.S. troops after the Gulf War, bin Laden broke with his country and was declared persona non grata by the Saudis for his provocative statements and behavior. It was also reported at this time that the Saudis put out a contract on bin Laden's life, supposedly with the assent of the first Bush Administration (Weaver 1996) and later with the assent of the Clinton administration, although assassination attempts obviously failed and may not have been seriously attempted at all.

After civil war in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s, the Taliban eventually took over control of much of the country (see Rashid 2001). The Taliban were recognized by

the Saudis and Pakistanis as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, but not by the UN or by much of the rest of the world, which recognized the Northern Alliance groups fighting the Taliban as the legitimate representative of Afghanistan. When bin Laden and his associates were expelled from Sudan in 1996, they entered into a fateful association with the Taliban and went to Afghanistan where they solidified their network, developed training camps, and solicited recruits and financing.

The Clinton administration at first engaged the Taliban government in dialogue, but soon broke off relations and failed to deal with the bin Laden problem. In the 1980s and 1990s, bin Laden established an organization of former Afghanistan holy war veterans, called Al Qaeda, "the base."[8] In February 1998, Al Qaeda issued a statement, endorsed by several extreme Islamic groups, declaring it the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens—civilian or military—and their allies everywhere. The bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa later in 1998 was ascribed to the bin Laden–Al Qaeda network, and the Clinton administration responded by shooting seventy Cruise missiles at a factory supposedly owned by bin Laden in Sudan that produced chemical weapons and at camps in Afghanistan that supposedly were populated by bin Laden and his group. The factory in Sudan turned out to be a pharmaceutical company and the camps in Afghanistan were largely deserted, producing another embarrassment for U.S. policy in the Middle East. Clinton later claimed that his administration also was plotting to assassinate bin Laden, but that a change of Pakistani government disrupted the plot.[9]

Although this is rarely mentioned in the mainstream media, the George W. Bush administration became one of the largest financial supporters of the Taliban, providing over $100 million in early 2001 in what they described as "humanitarian aid," as well as a supplemental grant of $43 million in May of 2001 for the Taliban's promise to declare opium production "unIslamic" and thus to cut back on a potent source of the world's drug trade. Critics have suggested that the Bush administration was acting in the interests of the Unocal oil consortium to build an oil pipeline across Afghanistan, and of the Enron corporation, a major contributor to the Bush administration, which had done a feasibility study for the project. Enron and Unocal had lavishly courted the Taliban and encouraged U.S. support of the regime since they were deemed the group most likely to stabilize Afghanistan and allow the pipeline to be built.[10]

In *Forbidden Truth,* Brisard and Dasquie (2002) claim that under the influence of oil companies, the Bush administration initially blocked ongoing U.S. government investigations of Al Qaeda terrorism while it bargained with the Taliban over oil rights, pipeline deals, and handing over bin Laden. This evidently led to the resignation of an FBI deputy director, John O'Neill, who was one of the sources of the story. Brisard and Dasquie contend that the Bush administration had been a major supporter of the Taliban until the September 11 events and had blocked investigations in the bin Laden terror network. Pursuing these leads, the British *Independent* reported on October 30: "Secret satellite phone calls between the State Department and Mullah Mohammed Omar and the presentation of an Afghan carpet to Presi-

dent George Bush were just part of the diplomatic contacts between Washington and the Taliban that continued until just days before the attacks of 11 September.''

Thus, just as Bush Senior turned on Saddam Hussein whom he supported in the 1990s, so too did Bush Junior turn on the Taliban whom he had been generously supporting, supposedly with the hopes that his friends could do energy deals with them. The Taliban, of course, were a highly theocratic and repressive fundamentalist regime that some have described as ''clerical fascism'' (Chip Berlet), or ''reactionary tribalism'' (Robert Antonio). Their treatment of women was notorious, as was their cultural totalitarianism that led to banning of books and media, destruction of Buddhist statues, and other outrages (see Rashid 2001).

The Taliban practice a form of Islam called Deobandism, influenced by a nineteenth-century sect that tried to purify Islam of its modern aspects (see Rashid 2000, 88–90), much as the Saudis' version of ''Wahabbism'' follows strict Islamic law while rejecting much of the modern world. The Taliban went further than the Saudis in trying to purify Islam in a particular antimodern version by following an especially reactionary strain of Muslim fundamentalism that is rejected by the more mainstream Sunni and Shiite Islamic schools. The Taliban have also been the host of Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network since they were expelled from Sudan in 1996 due to U.S. pressure and insistence. Although bin Laden and Al Qaeda were designated enemies of the U.S. since their evident involvement in a series of terrorist crimes, the Bush administration continued to provide support to the Taliban group that hosted and protected them until the 9/11 terror attacks.

Moreover, there has been a close relationship between the Bush and bin Laden families for years. Salem bin Laden, head of the family empire and Osama's eldest brother, reportedly invested in George W. Bush's first business venture, Arbusto Energy. According to several sources, the deal was brokered by Bush's friend James Bath, who was also involved in the infamous BCCI bank scandals, was allegedly a CIA agent recruited by W's father, and was a business agent for the bin Laden family.[11] The bin Laden family has also been involved in other ventures with the Bush family. Internet commentator Sally Slate cited an interesting passage from a PBS *Frontline* website on the bin Laden and Bush connection:

> Like his father in 1968, Salem [bin Laden] died in a 1988 air crash . . . in Texas. He was flying a BAC 1–11 which had been bought in July 1977 by Prince Mohammed Ben Fahd. The plane's flight plans had long been at the center of a number of investigations. According to one of the plane's American pilots, it had been used in October 1980 during secret Paris meetings between U.S. and Iranian emissaries. Nothing was ever proven, but Salem bin Laden's accidental death revived some speculation that he might have been ''eliminated'' as an embarrassing witness. In fact, an inquiry was held to determine the exact circumstances of the accident. The conclusions were never divulged.[12]

This shocking report indicates that the Bush and bin Laden families might have been involved in covert political activities as well as business deals, including the

"October Surprise," one of the most controversial stories of the Reagan-Bush years. There have long been claims that representatives from the Reagan-Bush election team in 1980 negotiated with Iranians to hold Americans hostage until after the 1980 election, depriving then–President Carter of an "October Surprise" from release of the long-held U.S. hostages in Iran that might give Carter the election.[13] The PBS *Frontline* story suggests the longtime, secretive, and highly complex relations between the Bush and the bin Laden families. It is highly suspicious that bin Laden's father and Salem bin Laden, who had inherited control of the family's empire of business and political interests after his father's death, both died in Texas airplane crashes. As I note later, the Bush and bin Laden families were involved in many enterprises. Unraveling these threads will no doubt be an important and revealing task for future historians.

Whatever the bizarre and shady past relations between the Bush and bin Laden family, it is striking that relations between the families continued up until September 11. It has been widely reported that the bin Laden family had been an investor in the Carlyle investment group, in which James Baker and George H. W. Bush are major partners.[14] Moreover, Bush Senior and the bin Ladens were allegedly involved in the earlier major global scandal of its era, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) that funneled the money of spies, criminals, shady businesses, and the CIA during the Reagan-Bush era (see Brewton 1992; Brisard and Dasquie 2002; and Cooley 2000).

The official spin line of Bush and bin Laden family spokespeople is that the family has long expelled and condemned their wayward son Osama and cannot be held responsible for Al Qaeda crimes. But as Sally Slate notes: "Last Thursday on ABC's *Primetime,* Carmen bin Laden, the estranged wife of Osama's brother Yeslam, told Diane Sawyer, in regard to Osama's standing in Saudi Arabia, 'What I have heard is he has the backing of some of the royal family. They think the same way. Not all of them, but some of them. You have to understand, I think in Saudi Arabia Osama bin Laden has a little following. And in my opinion, this is what makes him dangerous. . . . Because he has, I think, he has the backing of a lot of people there.'"[15]

Other commentators have claimed that the bin Laden–Al Qaeda network has been supported by wealthy Saudis, including members of bin Laden's family, and that up until the September 11 terror attacks there were close connections between the Bush administration, the Saudis, and the Taliban. A November 2001 PBS *Frontline* report, "The Saudi Time Bomb," made clear the support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Al Qaeda network by Saudi Arabian groups. It also revealed that many in the bin Laden–Al Qaeda network and the Saudis shared a similar Wahabbi interpretation of Islam that is rooted in an eighteenth-century attempt to return to the early version of Islam, is highly puritanical and repressive of women, and is exceptionally hostile to the West. The Saudis helped fund the Taliban and set up throughout the world fundamentalist Wahabbi Islamic schools that became recruiting grounds for bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network. Other Saudis directly contributed to Al Qaeda through "charitable" foundations or other means.

Not only did the Bush family have a long and mysterious history of dealings with the bin Ladens and with other dubious Saudi families who funded the Al Qaeda network, but, as noted, Bush Senior and friends would strongly benefit from the war through their connections with the Carlyle group, which heavily invests in the military-defense sector and include as investors the bin Laden family, election thief and Bush family friend James Baker, and George H. W. Bush, leading the conservative group Judicial Watch to insist that Bush Senior resign from the group because of conflict of interests. An FBI memo later revealed that the agency was ordered by the Bush administration to stop investigating connections between the Al Qaeda network and bin Laden family and to "lay off the bin Ladens," perhaps because of the longtime Bush–bin Laden family connections.[16]

The Bush-Baker-Cheney-Saudi band have, of course, long been involved in Mideast oil wheeling and dealing and assorted sordid business deals and political intrigue in the region. Many believe that the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan was at least partly motivated by an interest in controlling the flow of Mideast oil and enhancing these business interests—as was the last Bush-Cheney operation, the Gulf War.[17] Reports abound of the tremendous oil and gas reserves in Central Asia and the need to build pipelines across Afghanistan that would secure their passage. Using U.S. government sources, Michael Klare writes that the Caspian Sea basin "harbors as much as 270 billion barrels of oil, or about one-fifth of the world's total proven reserves of petroleum. Only the Persian Gulf, with 675 billion barrels in proven reserves, holds a larger supply. The Department of Energy also estimates that the Caspian Sea region houses some 665 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, representing one-eight of the world's gas reserves." Moreover, "the untapped oil of the Caspian Sea basin . . . was estimated by the Department of State in 1997 to be worth some $4 trillion" (Klare 2001, 15).

The energy industry–oriented machinators in the Bush administration were considering different ways to control the flow of Caspian Sea basin oil and gas, including pipelines that would be built across Afghanistan. The desirability of secure terrain around the pipeline led, according to some, to Bush administration support of the Taliban, who had promised to build the pipeline and create internal security to protect it. But when it was obvious that the Taliban could not be trusted and were involved with the bin Laden network and terrorism, Bush-Cheney turned on their former allies, as did Bush Senior, Cheney, and Powell against Saddam Hussein, who had been a U.S. ally throughout the 1980s (see Kellner 1992).[18]

Of course, it would be a mistake to reduce events like the Gulf War or the Afghanistan Terror War to oil and one needs to factor in the military interests, geopolitical goals, and specific agendas of the Bush administrations. Rather than providing causal analyses that reduce complex events to one factor or dimension, issues like the Gulf War (see Kellner 1992) or Afghan war require multifactored analyses that include economic, political, military, cultural, and other relevant aspects.

In any case, the events of the September 11 terrorist attacks should be seen in the context of several U.S. administrations and the CIA providing support from the late

1970s, through the Reagan-Bush years, to the present for the perpetrators of the monstrous assaults on the United States. This is not to simply blame U.S. policy in Afghanistan for the terrorist assault of September 11, but it is to provide some of the context in which the events can be interpreted. During the hysterical fear of terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 and anthrax attacks, there was a surge of patriotism whereby many argued that anyone who mentions political causes of Arab hostility toward the U.S. is part of the "blame America" crowd. Indeed, even liberals resisted the "blowback" thesis as illicitly blaming the victim. It is rather a question, first, of gaining historical understanding of the context and situation concerning those radical Islamic sectors of the Arab and Islamic world who have declared Jihad against the U.S. Second, it is a question of ascribing responsibility for those in the U.S. foreign policy establishment who helped organize, fund, train, and arm the terrorists now plaguing the U.S. and other parts of the world. If we do not understand the past, not only are we condemned to repeat it, but we also have no chance of constructing an intelligent, enlightened, and peaceful future.

There are, of course, other flaws of U.S. foreign policy over the past decades that have helped generate enemies of the United States in the Middle East and elsewhere, such as excessive U.S. support for Israel and inadequate aid for the Palestinians; U.S. backing of authoritarian regimes; and innumerable misdeeds of the U.S. empire over the past decades that have been documented by Chomsky, Herman, Johnson, and other critics of U.S. foreign policy. Thus, although there were no doubt a multiplicity of contributing factors, the 9/11 events can be read as a blowback of major policies of successive U.S. administrations and the CIA who trained, funded, supported, and armed the cadres alleged to have carried out the terrorist attacks on the United States. The obvious lesson is that it is highly dangerous and potentially costly to align one's country with terrorist cadres, that support of groups or individuals who promote terrorism is likely to come back to haunt you, and that it is hazardous to make Machiavellian pacts with obviously brutal and treacherous forces in violent parts of the world.

Consequently, the conjuncture of Islamic radicalism with the failure of subsequent U.S. administrations to take seriously the threats that terrorist groups posed helped to make possible the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, as did the failure of U.S. intelligence agencies. Before engaging the responses of the Bush administration, Pentagon, and media to these attacks in chapters 2–11, I will raise the question of how the events of 9/11 changed U.S. politics and society.

9/11 AND TERROR WAR:
HAS EVERYTHING CHANGED?

In the aftermath of 9/11, there was a wealth of commentary arguing that "everything has changed," that the post–September 11 world is a different one, less innocent, more serious, and significantly altered, with momentous modifications in the

economy, polity, culture, and everyday life. There were some doubters such as historian Alan Brinkley, who stated in a *New York Times* interview (September 14, 2002): "I'm skeptical that this is a great rupture in the fabric of history."[19] Time alone will tell the depth of the magnitude of change, but there are enough significant shifts that have occurred already to see 9/11 as a *transformational event* that has created some dramatic alterations in both U.S. and global society, signaling reconfigurations and novelties in the current world.

In the context of U.S. politics, 9/11 was so far-reaching and catastrophic that it flipped the political world upside down; put new issues on the agenda; and changed the political, cultural, and economic climate almost completely overnight. To begin, there was a dramatic reversal of the fortunes of George W. Bush and the Bush administration. Before September 11, Bush's popularity was rapidly declining. After several months of the most breathtaking hard-right turn perhaps ever seen in U.S. politics, Bush seemed to lose control of the agenda with the defection of Vermont Republican Senator Jim Jeffords in May 2001. Jeffords's defection gave the Democrats a razor-thin control of Congress, the ability to block Bush's programs, and the ability to advance their own (see Kellner 2001, chapter 11). Bush seemed disengaged after this setback, spending more and more time at his Texas ranch. He was widely perceived as incompetent and unqualified, and his public support was seriously eroding.

With the terror attacks of September 11, however, the bitter partisanship of the previous months disappeared and Bush was the beneficiary of a extraordinary outburst of patriotism. Support for the Bush administration was strongly fueled by the media that provided 24/7 coverage of the heroism of the fire, police, and rescue workers at the World Trade Center. The response of ordinary citizens to the tragedy showed American courage, skill, and dedication at its best, as rescue workers heroically struggled to save lives and deal with the immense problems of removing the Trade Center ruins. New York City and the country pulled together in a remarkable display of community, heroism, and resolve, evident in the ongoing media coverage of the tragedy. There was an explosion of flags and patriotism and a widespread desire for military retaliation, which was fanned by the media.

There was also demonizing coverage of bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network of terrorists and a demand for strong military retaliation. The anthrax attacks, still unsolved as I write this at the end of 2002, fueled media hysteria and mass panic that terrorism could strike anyone, at any time, and at any place. Bush articulated the escalating patriotism, vilification of the terrorists, and the demand for stern military retaliation, and a frightened nation supported his policies, often without seeing their broader implications and threat to democracy and world peace.

There was a brief and ironic ideological flip-flop of Bush administration policy, in which it temporarily put aside the unilateralism that had distinguished its first months in office in favor of a multilateral approach. As the Bush administration scrambled to assemble a global coalition against terrorism with partners such as Pakistan, China, and Russia, which it had previously ignored (or, in the case of China,

even provoked), illusions circulated that the U.S. would pursue a more multilateral global politics. With the collapse of the Taliban and the de facto conclusion of the intense military phase of the Afghanistan Terror War by December 2001, however, the Bush administration has arguably reverted to its old unilateralism. Thus, the Bush doctrine articulated in his January 2002 State of the Union address projected an ''axis of evil'' threatened by U.S. military action, called for unprecedented military action and buildup, and evoked an image of an era of war via U.S. military intervention throughout the world for the foreseeable future. The threat of a new militarism as the defining feature of the Bush era was intensified as his administration came to formulate his doctrine of ''preemptive strikes'' during the summer of 2002.

Previous to September 11, the Bush administration had been rabidly pro–''free markets'' and antigovernment, but it was forced by the September 11 events to recognize the need for stronger government programs. There was widespread consensus that federal funds and programs were necessary to help rebuild New York, provide increased domestic security, and regulate industries like the airplane business, which showed itself to be woefully lacking in security measures. Yet it should be noted that the main government interventions undertaken by the Bush administration were in the areas of ''homeland security'' and a gigantic military build-up. These included a highly illiberal right-wing law-and-order program of unleashing government agencies to surveil, arrest, and detain those suspected of being terrorists in what many see as the most outrageous assault on civil liberties and the open society in U.S. history. There have been no serious initiatives in the area of investing to rebuild infrastructure of cities, highways, or the public health system. Moreover, Bush's proposed ''economic stimulus'' package largely consisted of tax breaks for the wealthy rather than new government programs to help the poor and those losing their jobs during a severe economic downturn.

In addition, government bailouts went mainly to Bush administration allies such as the airlines and insurance industries, with no funds for job retraining and support for laid-off workers. Hence, although the September 11 tragedy created an amazing reversal of fortune for George W. Bush, it has so far not produced any fundamental restructuring of the U.S. economy or polity, outside of right-wing law-and-order programs and tightened airport and domestic security. The 9/11 terror attacks and subsequent anthrax attacks did, however, point to a vulnerability to terrorism and danger not previously experienced on U.S. soil.

The new vulnerability caused a reversal of priorities, both national and personal, for many people, and made it clear that the U.S. had to address problems of globalization and terrorism—issues that were far from the hearts and minds of the average U.S. citizen. For a while, irony was out and seriousness was in, and a new sobriety replaced the usual American concern with triviality and diversion. Americans, like people in most of the world, had to learn to live with finitude, contingency, risk, and other concepts that were previously philosophical categories and were now realities of everyday life. There was a sudden sense that everything could change within

days or weeks, and that technologies that were part and parcel of everyday life, such as airplanes or mail delivery, could be weapons of destruction. Furthermore, fears proliferated that terrorism threatened Americans anywhere and anytime, creating new forms of insecurity and anxiety that the media fueled with hysterical coverage of the anthrax attacks, endless accounts of terrorist networks, and highly dramatized reports of the Afghanistan Terror War.

Crucially, the 9/11 events dramatized that globalization is a defining reality of our time and that the much-celebrated flow of people, ideas, technology, media, and goods could have a downside as well as an upside and expensive costs as well as benefits. The 9/11 terror attacks also call attention to the complex and unpredictable nature of a globally connected networked society and the paradoxes, surprises, and unintended consequences that flow from globalization. Al Qaeda is at once a product of globalization and a response to it. It presents an example of a hidden and secretive decentered network dedicated to attacking the U.S., while their Afghanistan base represented what theorists called ''wild zones'' or ''zones of turmoil'' that exist out of the boundaries of ''safe zones'' of globalized metropoles like Wall Street and northern Virginia (see Mann 2001 and Urry 2002).

Globalization thus generates its Other, its opponents, just as it destroys tradition and incorporates otherness into its modernizing and neoliberal market. For the first time, the American people were obliged to perceive that it had serious enemies throughout the globe and that global problems had to be addressed. No longer could the U.S. enjoy the luxury of isolationism, but was forced to actively define its role within a dangerous and complex global environment. Moreover, the terror attacks of 9/11 put in question much conventional wisdom and forced U.S. citizens and others to reflect upon the continued viability of key values, practices, and institutions of a democratic society. In particular, the events of September 11 force the rethinking of globalization, new technology, democracy, and national and global security. 9/11 and its aftermath demonstrate the significance of globalization and the ways that global, national, and local scenes and events intersect in the contemporary world. The terror spectacle also pointed to the fundamental contradictions and ambiguities of globalization, undermining one-sided pro- or anti-globalization positions.

9/11 was obviously a *global event* that dramatized an interconnected and conflicted networked society in which there is a constant worldwide flow of people, products, technologies, ideas, and the like. 9/11 could only be a mega-event in a *global media world,* a society of the spectacle, in which the whole world is watching and participates in what Marshall McLuhan (1964) called a global village. The 9/11 terror spectacle was obviously constructed as a media event to circulate terror and to demonstrate to the world the vulnerability of the epicenter of global capitalism and American power.

Thus, 9/11 dramatized the interconnected networked globe and the important role of the media in which individuals everywhere can simultaneously watch events of worldwide significance unfold and participate in the dramas of globalization.

Already, Bill Clinton had said before September 11 that terrorism is the downside, the dark side, of globalization, and after 9/11 Colin Powell interpreted the terrorist attacks in similar fashion. Worldwide terrorism is threatening in part because globalization relentlessly divides the world into haves and have-nots, promotes conflicts and competition, and fuels long-simmering hatreds and grievances—as well as bringing people together, creating new relations, interactions, and hybrids. This is the objective ambiguity of globalization that both brings people together and brings them into conflict, that creates social interaction and inclusion as well as hostilities and exclusions, and that potentially tears regions and the world apart while attempting to pull things together. Moreover, as different groups gain access to technologies of destruction and devise plans to make conventional technologies, like the airplane, instruments of destruction, then dangers of *unexpected terror events* at any place and any time proliferate and become part of the frightening mediascape of the new millennium.

Globalization is thus messier and more dangerous than previous theories had indicated. Moreover, global terrorism and megaspectacle terror events are possible because of the lethality and power of new technology and its availability to groups and individuals that previously had restricted access. In a perverted distortion of Andrew Feenberg's theory of the reconstruction and democratization of technology (1999, 2001), terrorist groups seek technologies of mass destruction that in the past were monopolized by the state, and they take instruments of mass transportation and communication run by corporations and the state, like airlines and mail delivery, and reconvert these instruments into weapons of mass destruction and terror. I might parenthetically note here the etymology of the term "terrorism," which derives from the Latin verb *terrere,* "to cause to tremble or quiver." It began to be used during the French Revolution, and especially after the fall of Robespierre and the "reign of terror," or simply "the Terror," in which enemies of the revolution were subjected to imprisonment, torture, and beheading—the first of many modern examples of state terrorism.

Hence, 9/11 exhibited a technological terror that converts benign instruments like airlines and buildings into instruments of mass destruction. Within a short time after the 9/11 terror attacks, in early October, the U.S. mail system was polluted by anthrax. Since infected letters were sent to politicians and corporate media, there was maximum public attention on the dangers of a lethal anthrax attack, making postal work, mail delivery, and the opening of mail a traumatic event infused with fear. This is exactly the goal of terrorism, and media hysteria over anthrax attacks went far in promoting fear and war fever that led the public to unquestionably support whatever military retaliation or domestic politics the Bush administration choose to exert. Curiously, although the Bush administration seemed at first to blame the Al Qaeda network and then Iraq for the anthrax attacks, it appears that the military high grade of anthrax has the genetic footprint of U.S. laboratories in Fort Detrick, Maryland. Eventually the FBI and academic experts believed that the

source of the attacks was an individual working for the U.S. defense and biological weapons establishment.[20]

It is clear from 9/11 that the new technologies disperse power, empowering angry disempowered people, leveling the playing field, and distributing the use and application of information technology and some technologies of mass destruction. Many military technologies can be obtained by individuals and groups to use against the superpowers and the access to such technology produces a situation of asymmetrical war in which weaker individuals and groups can go after superpowers. The possibility of new forms of cyberwar and terrorist threats from chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons creates new vulnerabilities in the national defense of the overdeveloped countries and provides opportunities for weaker nations or groups to attack stronger ones. Journalist William Greider, for instance, author of *Fortress America: The American Military and the Consequences of Peace,* claims, ''A deadly irony is embedded in the potential of these new technologies. Smaller, poorer nations may be able to defend themselves on the cheap against the intrusion of America's overwhelming military strength''[21]—or exercise deadly terrorism against civilian populations.

Hence, the United States discovered that it is vulnerable domestically to terrorist attack. Likewise, it is becoming clear that the more technologically advanced a society is, the more susceptible it is to cyberwar. There are now, of course, serious worries about the Internet and cyberterrorism disrupting the global economy and networked society. It is somewhat surprising that terrorist groups have not, in fact, gone after the Internet and attempted to shut it down since they were obviously attempting to disrupt global business by attacking the World Trade Center and airlines industry. Already Paul Virilio evoked the frightening possibility of the collapse of the Internet through a major technological ''event'' that would cause its shutdown—disruptions previewed by hacker attacks, worms, and viruses over the past years.[22]

Rather, the Al Qaeda terror network used the Internet, as it used globalization, to move its communication, money, people, propaganda, and terror. 9/11 thus dramatizes that all of the most positive aspects of globalization and new technology can be turned against the U.S., or, in general, positive aspects of globalization can turn into their opposite, as in Adorno and Horkheimer's ''dialectic of Enlightenment'' in which reason, science, technology, and other instruments of Enlightenment turned into their opposites in the hands of German fascism and other oppressive social groups (1972 [1946]). Globalization makes possible global terror networks as well as networks of commerce and communication. The circulation of commodities, technologies, ideas, money, and people can facilitate networks of terror, as well as trade and travel. The Internet makes possible the spreading of hate and fear, as well as knowledge and culture. Computers can be an integral part of a terror network just as they are part of businesses everywhere and many of our own everyday lives. And biotechnology, which promises such extravagant medical advances and miracles, can provide weapons of mass destruction as well.

Thus, 9/11 and its aftermath exhibit the contradictions and ambiguities of globalization, the Internet, biotechnology, and technology in general in the contemporary age. Globalization has upsides and downsides, costs and benefits, which are often interconnected and are consequently intrinsically ambiguous. New technologies can be used positively or negatively and in fact are at once potentially empowering and productive *and* disempowering and destructive, and are thus fraught with contradictions. Often, the positives and negatives of globalization and new technology are intertwined, as when the free and open society enabled the deadly movement of terrorists; the open architecture of the Internet enabled terrorists to communicate, circulate money, and organize their terror attacks; and the networked society of globalization, with its dark sides, enabled terrorists to attack the very symbols of American global wealth and power.

Certainly bin Laden's Al Qaeda network represents bad globalization, most would agree, and the perverted use of technology. But in a sense the Al Qaeda Jihad is the reverse image of McWorld, which imposes its Jihad on tradition and local culture, wanting to create the world in its image. Just as Al Qaeda dreams of imposing a radical premodern Islam on the world, taking over and destroying Western infidel culture and replacing it with a homogenized Islamic fundamentalism, so too does McDonald's want to destroy local and traditional eating habits and cuisine and replace them with a globalized and universalized menu, a potent symbol of modernization and Westernization eradicating its other. And just as the Taliban can blithely destroy Buddhist statues that represent sacred traditions and history, so too can neoliberal globalization destroy centuries of tradition and community in the name of modernization and "progress."

Hence, whereas theories of globalization, the Internet, and cyberculture tended to be on the whole one-sided, either pro or con, 9/11 and its aftermath showed the objective ambiguity and contradictions of these phenomena and need for a more dialectical and contextualizing optic. On one hand, the events showed the fundamental interdependence of the world, dramatizing how activities in one part of the world affected others and the need for more global consciousness and politics. 9/11 exposed the dangers and weaknesses inherent in constructions of Fortress America, and the untenability of isolationism and unilateralist policies. It made evident that we are in a global world with global problems, which require global solutions. On the other hand, as the Bush administration pursued increasingly unilateralist policies after seeming to make gestures toward a multilateralist response, the aftermath of 9/11 shows the limited possibilities for a single nation to impose its will on the world and to dominate the complex environment of the world economy and politics.

9/11 also revealed the failures of the laissez-faire conservative economics, which claimed that there was a market solution to every problem. Just as *Grand Theft 2000* revealed the failure of voting technology, the electoral registration process, and the very system of voting, as well as the malfunctioning of the media and judicial system (see Kellner 2001), so too did 9/11 reveal the massive breakdown of U.S. intelligence agencies, the National Security State, and the U.S. government to protect the

people in the country, as well as cities and monuments, against terrorist attack. The privatization undergone by the airlines industry left travelers vulnerable to the hijacking of airplanes and the confused and ineffectual response by the federal government to the anthrax attacks uncovered the necessity of a better public health system, as well as more protection and security against bioterrorist attacks. Going after the terror networks disclosed the need for tighter financial regulation, better legal and police coordination, and an improved intelligence and national security apparatus. Rebuilding New York City and the lives of those affected by the terror attacks showed the need for a beneficent welfare state that would provide for its citizens in their time of need.

Thus, 9/11 ends the fantasies of Reagan-Bush conservative economics that the market alone can solve all social problems and provide the best mechanism for every industry and sector of life. The Bush-Enron and other corporate scandals also reveal the utter failures of neoliberalism and the need for a stronger and more effective polity for the United States to compete and survive in a highly complex world economy and polity (see chapter 9).

On the whole, 9/11 and its aftermath have made the world a much more dangerous place. Regional conflicts from the Israel-Palestine hostilities in the Middle East to the India-Pakistan conflict to discord in Africa, the Philippines, Colombia, and elsewhere have used the Bush administration's discourse against terrorism to suppress human rights, to legitimate government oppression, and to kill political opponents throughout the world. The Bush administration's unilateralism in pursuing the war against terror throughout the world, including against an imagined "axis of evil" not directly related to the Al Qaeda terror network, has weakened multilateral agreements and forces from NATO to the UN and has increased collective insecurity immensely. The Bush administration polarizing policy of "you are with us or against us" has divided alliances, is ever more isolating the U.S., and is producing a more polarized and conflicted world. The alarming buildup of U.S. military power is escalating a new militarism and proliferating enemies and resentment against the United States, now being increasingly seen as a rogue superpower. Finally, aggressive U.S. threats and military action throughout the world, failed propaganda in the Arab world, and what is perceived as growing U.S. arrogance and belligerence is producing more enemies in the Arab world and elsewhere that will no doubt create dangerous blowback effects in the future.

Not only has the Bush administration's unilateralist foreign policy exposed the U.S. to new attacks and enemies, but its domestic policy has also weakened democracy, civil liberties, and the very concept of a free and open society. Draconian antiterror laws embodied in the so-called USA Patriot Act have frighteningly increased government powers of surveillance, arrest, and detention. The erection of military prison camps for suspected terrorists, the abrogation of basic civil liberties, and the call for military trials undermine decades of progress in developing a democratic policy and have produced the most regressive U.S. domestic policies in history.

The Bush administration's economic policy has also done little to strengthen the

"new economy," largely giving favors to its major contributors in the oil, energy, and military industries. Bush administration censorship of websites, e-mail, and wireless communication; its refusal to release government documents; and its curtailment of the freedom of information act signals the decline of the information society and perhaps of a free and open democratic society. Traditional Bush family secrecy explains part of the extreme assaults on the open society, but there are also signs that key members of the Bush administration are contemptuous of democracy itself and threaten to drastically cut back democratic rights and freedoms.

Thus, Bush administration policy has arguably exploited the tragedy of September 11 for promoting its own political agenda and interests, while threatening to undermine the U.S. and world economy and American democracy in the process. 9/11 thus represents a clear and present danger to the U.S. economy and democracy as well as to the threat of terror attacks. Of course, many people lost loved ones in the September 11 terror attacks and their lives will never be the same. Other individuals have returned to the routines and patterns of their pre–September 11 life, and there are thus continuities in culture and everyday life as well as differences and changes. It is not clear if there will be a significant and lasting resurgence of civic reengagement, but it is clear that global politics are now perceived as highly significant and there should be more focus and debates on this terrain than previously.

Still, many corporate and political interests and individual citizens pursue business as usual at the same time that important differences are enforced in the economy and politics. There are, however, intelligent and destructive ways to fight global terrorism and such a virulent global problem obviously requires a multilateral solution, demanding alliances of a complex array of countries on the legal, police, economic, and military fronts. In this global context, there are serious dangers that the Bush administration will make the problem of terrorism worse and will immeasurably harm the U.S. and the global economy and polity in the process.

Indeed, my narrative of the September 11 terror attacks and their aftermath in this book documents stunning economic crisis and the failures of Bushonomics to deal with a complex economic situation; the decline of civil liberties and attacks on democracy in Bush administration policy; a failed policy of unilateralism that is arguably not the appropriate response to terrorism; a flawed military and political policy in the Afghan war; and the dangers of intensified war, militarism, and historical regression in the years to come.

In the next chapter, I analyze the complicity of the mainstream media, especially television, in giving the Bush administration a free hand to pursue its own domestic and foreign policy agenda, often at the expense of the people of the U.S. and the world. I will argue that serious debate concerning the proper response to global terrorism and the September 11 attacks never took place in the mainstream media and throughout this book will argue that the very survival of U.S. democracy requires a many-sided dialogue over the problems of terrorism and the failures of the Bush administration to properly address it. In the chapter that follows, I discuss how certain social discourses were deployed within the media and public policy debates and

served to inform or legitimate policies advanced by the Bush administration that privileged a U.S. military response to the problem of terrorism. In a study of the dominant discourses, frames, and representations that informed the media and public debate after the September 11 terrorist attacks, I show how the Bush administration and mainstream media in the United States privileged the "clash of civilizations" model, established a binary dualism between Islamic terrorism and civilization, and largely generated war fever and retaliatory feelings and discourses that called for and supported a form of military intervention. I argue that such one-dimensional militarism could arguably make the current crisis worse, rather than advance more intelligent responses to the problem of global terrorism. Thus, while the media in a democracy should critically debate urgent questions facing the nation, in the terror crisis the mainstream U.S. corporate media, especially television, promoted war fever and military solutions to the problem of global terrorism.