

Introduction: The Bush Administration and the September 11 Attacks

On September 11, 2001, there were alarming reports that an airplane had crashed into one of the towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City. Shortly thereafter, another plane plowed into the second WTC tower, and television images captured its impact and explosion. During the same hour, a third jetliner hit the Pentagon, while a fourth plane, possibly destined for a White House collision, went down in Pennsylvania. The latter was reportedly crash-landed by passengers who had learned of the earlier hijackings and struggled to prevent another calamity.

The world stood transfixed with the graphic videos of the World Trade Center buildings exploding and discharging a great cloud of rubble. Subsequent images depicted heroic workers struggling to save bodies and then themselves becoming victims of the unpredictable collapse of the towers or shifts in the debris. The World Trade Center towers, the largest buildings in New York City and a potent symbol of global capitalism, were down, and the mighty behemoth of American military power, the mythically shaped Pentagon, was penetrated and on fire. Terrorists celebrated their victory over the American colossus, and the world remained transfixed for days by the media spectacle of “America under attack” and reeling from the now highly feared effects of terrorism.

TERRORISM AND THE RISKS OF UNILATERALISM

For some weeks after the September 11 attacks, there was intense debate and speculation concerning the U.S. response (see chapter 2). On October 7, 2001, George

W. Bush announced the beginning of a military campaign in Afghanistan to destroy the Al Qaeda network and the Taliban regime that was hosting them. Within two months, the Taliban was in retreat and Afghanistan entered a highly uncertain stage. Although the media and public have generally accepted the Bush administration's policy as a success, its primarily unilateral and military response to terrorism is highly flawed and potentially disastrous in its short- and long-term effects.

The Bush administration and Pentagon policies in the Afghanistan war were poorly conceived, badly executed, and are likely to sow the seeds of future blowback and reprisal. Hence, although the overthrow of the Taliban regime and the assault on the Al Qaeda infrastructure were arguably justifiable and a salutary blow against global terrorism, the Bush administration and Pentagon's campaign in Afghanistan was arguably misconceived and, in many ways, unsuccessful. Terrorism is a global problem that requires a global solution. The Bush administration's policy, however, is largely unilateral; its military response is flawed and has hindered more intelligent and potentially successful efforts against terror networks, while quite possibly creating more terrorists and enemies of the United States.

A global campaign against worldwide terror networks will require multilateral and coordinated efforts across many fronts: financial, legal-judiciary, political, and military. On the financial front, the Bush administration has failed to adequately coordinate large-scale efforts to fight terror networks, and reports indicate that Al Qaeda has continued to be able to raise and distribute significant funds and the global effort to shut down their financial network has not been a success.¹ Domestically, critics argue that conflicts between the Treasury Department, Commerce Department, and Justice Department have hampered coordination even in the United States. The Bush administration had systematically pursued a deregulatory policy toward financial markets and has not been able to successfully regulate the flow of funds supporting either the terror networks or the other global criminals and corporate allies of the Bush administration that prefer to secure and launder their funds in offshore banks.

On the legal and judicial front, the Bush administration has also failed to construct a lasting and active international alliance against terror. Whereas many foreign countries have arrested and broken up terror networks in Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Singapore, and elsewhere, the U.S. Justice Department has not been so successful and the Bush administration has failed to adequately coordinate global anti-terrorist activity with other countries.² On the whole, the U.S. has alienated itself from many of its allies in the war against terror by its aggressive unilateralism and efforts to affirm and assert U.S. military hegemony. Moreover, it has alarmed and offended many in the global community by its arrest of suspects that have been held in detention camps without legal rights and forced to face military tribunals and death penalties. In particular, the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has generated worldwide controversy and driven many European allies to question cooperation with the U.S. because of the conditions of the incarceration of suspects, the proposed military trials, and threatened use of death penalties.

Politically and militarily, the Bush administration has failed to develop a global coalition against terrorism because of its largely unilateral and military-centric approach. Rather than engage the UN and NATO on the political and military fronts, the Bush administration largely chose to go it alone, turning Afghanistan into a battlefield with the U.S. military alone leading the fight to destroy Al Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban—a policy with at best mixed results. The Bush administration chose not to criminalize bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network, preferring a largely military solution and thus shunting aside development of a worldwide political and judicial campaign to shut down the terrorists. Many countries are reluctant to send terrorist suspects to the United States because of the secret military courts, lack of standard legal procedures, and dangers of capital punishment that are banned in much of the world. Moreover, the Bush doctrine that maintains “you are with us or against us,” and that constantly expands its “axis of evil,” has positioned the U.S. as a strictly unilateralist force carrying out *its* war against terror, and has thus undermined developing a more global and multilateral campaign against terrorism. In particular, threatening war against Iraq has alienated the U.S. from both its European and moderate Arab allies, while the Bush administration’s escalating threats against other countries is isolating the U.S. and making multilateral coalitions against terrorism extremely difficult.

There is also a sense that the U.S. is losing the struggle for the hearts and minds of Arabs and Muslims because of its bellicose nationalism, aggressive militarism, often uncritical support of Israel, and failure to improve relations with Muslim nations and peoples. As I will show in my analysis of the Afghanistan war, the excessive bombing of civilians, the lack of a decent U.S. humanitarian program or plan to rebuild Afghanistan, and Bush’s unsuccessful propaganda efforts have perhaps produced more enemies than friends in the Arab and Muslim world, and thus have increased the potential for the rise of future terrorist Islamist cadres against the U.S.³

This situation was especially aggravated as hostilities exploded between the Israelis and Palestinians in 2002. In much of the Arab world, the United States is seen as the major supporter of Israel and the inability of the Bush administration to mediate growing conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians, combined with the Bush administration’s neglect of the problem during its first fifteen months, has helped create an explosive situation in the Middle East with no solution in sight. In addition, the lack of ability and will of the Bush administration to moderate the aggressive Israeli responses to suicide bombings and terror acts against Israel in 2002 have created more hatred of the U.S. in the Arab world and a growing tendency to equate Israelis and Americans, Jews and Christians, as the main enemies of Islam.

Thus, the goals of creating better images of the United States in the eyes of the Arab, Islamic, and global world, and improving relations between the U.S. and Arab world, have failed miserably. The incapacity to enhance U.S. and Western relations with the Islamic world is largely the result of the botched military campaign, an inept political strategy, and the failure to engage in a fruitful dialogue with Arabs and Muslims. Consequently, Bush administration policy is inhibiting the creation

of coalitions for peace and the rebuilding of devastated parts of the Arab world like Afghanistan. Part of the justification for the Afghan war was to not only eliminate Al Qaeda terrorist forces, but to forge more creative relationships with Arab and Islamic countries, and this goal remains unrealized and unrealizable under the Bush administration's unilateralist policy.

A successful campaign, then, would communicate the message that the United States respects the Islamic world; wants to carry out more productive activities with it; and desires dialogue, peace, and better relations. But this project has not succeeded, in part, because of the violent and destructive military campaign of the Bush administration and Pentagon, which put military priorities over beginning the reconstruction of Afghanistan well into 2002 (see chapter 11). In addition, the propaganda efforts undertaken by the Bush administration have been extremely crude and have mostly backfired, losing more hearts and minds than were gained, as I will document in the chapters that follow (see especially chapters 4 and 11). Later historians of the Afghanistan war and its propaganda campaign will find Bush administration policy in the war of ideas embarrassingly inept, pointing to another serious deficiency in its handling of its war against terrorism.

From a strictly military standpoint, the major goals for the Afghanistan war were not achieved and the deeply flawed campaign will be costly and consequential in its later effects. In particular, the Afghanistan campaign is at best a partial military success because of the failure to capture or destroy key Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership and cadres. This was largely due to a refusal to effectively use ground troops to deal with the Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership and their major fighting forces. The Afghanistan campaign, like the Gulf War, Kosovo War, and other U.S. military interventions in the past decade, relied largely on bombing at a distance and the refusal to use U.S. ground troops, following the "zero casualty tolerance" policy of the past years. The result was that in the decisive battles of Kandahar and Tora Bora, significant numbers of Al Qaeda and Taliban forces escaped, including their leadership and perhaps Osama bin Laden himself (see chapter 7).

Moreover, the military component of the Afghanistan campaign was excessively privileged to the detriment of dealing with humanitarian problems in Afghanistan and helping to reconstruct the country. For months, the United States refused to allow humanitarian aid groups in the country and opposed British and European Union (EU) proposals and efforts to solve the human crisis and to begin the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Instead, the Bush administration insisted through the last months of 2001 (after the fall of the Taliban) and into 2002 that its military forces must finish its mission of destroying the Al Qaeda and Taliban and that "humanitarian" efforts must be considered a distraction. Since the fall of Kandahar in December 2001, however, U.S. military efforts have been highly problematic due to an unfortunate reliance on local intelligence and Afghan forces that used the U.S. to gain revenge against old opponents. This "proxy war" has resulted in a long string of U.S. military actions against noncombatants, with a large number of civilian deaths,

ambushes of American troops, and the continued escape of key terrorist forces that were the intended targets of the Bush administration war against terrorism.⁴

What is needed, then, is an international and multilateral mission in Afghanistan and elsewhere that combines political, military, police, humanitarian, and reconstruction efforts. The United States initially said it will train an Afghanistan army but not use U.S. forces for police or security action. In fact, given the chaos in Afghanistan, it is unwise to separate military and police forces. Likewise, a multilateral force of European Union countries, the United States, and Arab and other countries should train an Afghanistan military as they police and patrol the country, fight remnants of Al Qaeda and the Taliban, and rebuild the country. The Bush administration policy, by contrast, has not adequately dealt with humanitarian, security, or the sociopolitical needs of the country, preferring to focus primarily on military action against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces.

In 1989–1990, the first Bush administration pulled out of Afghanistan after the U.S. had supported Islamic forces against the Soviet Union occupation, thereby helping to create the vacuum and chaos that produced later terrorism. There were charges, justified in retrospect, that the United States had abandoned Afghanistan in the 1990s after using it as a Cold War battlefield, choosing not to help rebuild and stabilize the country. The result was civil war in Afghanistan, the takeover by the Taliban, their fateful alliance with Al Qaeda, and another war in Afghanistan that is not yet over (see chapter 1).

Moreover, there are worries that once again the U.S. and the West will abandon Afghanistan amidst signs that the U.S. is currently not adequately involved in securing and rebuilding Afghanistan and that, once again, the country will be a harbor of terror that will threaten U.S. and other lives and interests. The current Bush administration seems to have no end strategy for their intervention in Afghanistan and no vision for the region beyond securing the interests of the oil companies to which they are allied and getting military contracts and construction jobs for their supporters.

The primarily military and unilateral strategy of the Bush administration in their response to terrorism constitutes the major Achilles' heel of its policy, with its decision not to engage in a multilateral approach to international terrorism. The unilateral U.S. policy has produced an excessive militarizing and inadequate criminalizing of the problem of dealing with terrorism, and Bush administration policies are increasingly isolating the U.S. from potential allies in a global campaign against terrorism. Moreover, the Bush administration's unilateral policies will more than likely position the U.S. and its citizens as the targets of future terror attacks. Increasingly, the Bush administration's foreign policy is being resisted by much of the world and is encountering mounting hostility from allies and enemies alike. This is especially so since Bush's "axis of evil" speech and since the intensification of the Israel and Palestine conflict, generated in part by the Bush administration's failure to successfully mediate it.

By contrast, a multilateral campaign would make it clear that in a worldwide

struggle against terror, it is the combined forces of civilization that are allied against international terror networks. Such a campaign would rely on global forces on political, judicial, economic, and military fronts, rather than privileging the militarist solution of war. Indeed, since December 2001, the Bush administration has expanded the front of its “war against terrorism,” sending U.S. troops to the Philippines, Pakistan, and a whole ring of Central Asian countries, while threatening military action in Somalia, Indonesia, Yemen, and the infamous “axis of evil”: Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. The list was expanded in May 2002 to include Syria, Libya, and Cuba. George W. Bush has declared that unrelenting Terror War is the major focus of his administration and the Pentagon has discussed developing smaller nuclear weapons to be used against terrorist forces, as well as other hi-tech weapons, ruthless bombing, and covert assassination.

In addition, the Bush administration manipulated the September 11 terror attacks to push through a hard-right domestic agenda that constitutes a clear and present danger to U.S. democracy. As governor of Texas, George W. Bush consistently performed favors for his largest contributors, like the Enron Corporation and oil and energy companies, and as president he has done the same (Kellner 2001). Since September 11, the Bush administration has exploited the fear of terrorism to push through further bailouts of corporations that contributed to his campaign, and the center of its economic program has been to create tax breaks for the most wealthy while cutting back on liberal social programs and environmental legislation and while carrying out the most right-wing law-and-order domestic policy in U.S. history.

On the foreign policy front, the Bush administration made use of the September 11 tragedy to renounce arms treaties it had already opposed and thus jettisoned the idea of arms control on a worldwide scale. It also used the September 11 attacks to legitimate an increased military budget and series of military interventions, to test and build new nuclear weapons, to threaten countries like Iraq and Iran with military attacks, and to abandon multilateralism for an unilateralist “America First” approach to foreign affairs. In June 2002, the Bush administration proclaimed a dangerous “first strike” policy, saying that henceforth it would engage in “preemptive strikes,” abandoning the containment policy and diplomatic strategy for dealing with crises and adversaries in the post–Second World War era.

Consequently, the Bush administration claimed repeatedly that “World War III” had started and that the Cold War was being succeeded by a dangerous and long-term period of Terror War. In the following studies, I am using the term “Terror War” to describe the Bush administration’s “war against terrorism” and its use of aggressive military force and terror as the privileged vehicles of constructing a U.S. hegemony in the current world (dis)order. The Bush administration has expanded its combat against Islamic terrorism into a policy of Terror War by which they have declared the right of the U.S. to strike any enemy state or organization presumed to harbor or support terrorism, or to eliminate “weapons of mass destruction” that could be used against the U.S. The right wing of the Bush administration seeks to

promote Terror War as the defining struggle of the era, coded as an apocalyptic battle between good and evil. My studies will disclose the dangers of such policies and worldviews and will depict how Bush administration Terror War played out in the Afghanistan war and subsequent military adventures, as well as domestically.

THE FAILURE TO DETECT AND STOP THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS

The likely result of the Bush administration's Terror War is that, in a global world, the United States will become ever more isolated and will continue to be the major source of international anger and terrorist attacks. Not only is the Bush administration's foreign policy dangerous and reckless, but it has also demonstrated stunning incompetence on the domestic front in the so-called war against terror and was highly negligent in making the U.S. vulnerable to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the first place. In mid-May 2002, a political uproar erupted when CBS News broadcast a report on May 15 that the CIA briefed George W. Bush on August 6, 2001 (when he was vacationing at his ranch in Texas) about the bin Laden network's plans to hijack airplanes. There was immediately a firestorm of controversy, raising questions for the first time in a public debate about what the Bush administration knew about possible terrorist attacks pre-September 11 and what they had done to prevent them. Also, during May 2002, a Phoenix, Arizona, FBI memo from summer 2001 was released that warned of the dangers of Middle Eastern men going to flight school in order to gain the skills necessary to hijack planes and of the dangers of the Al Qaeda network carrying out such hijackings. Moreover, the arrest of Zacarias Moussaouri, the alleged twentieth Al Qaeda hijacker who had also been taking flying lessons and acting suspiciously, in Minnesota in late August 2001 should have raised warning signals.

Over the summer of 2001, there had been reports that there were dangers of an airplane terrorist attack on the G8 economic summit in Genoa, Italy, that George W. Bush attended. There were purportedly so many intelligence reports circulating of the dangers of imminent terrorist attacks on the U.S. that a government official Richard Clarke, the National Security Council's counter-terrorism coordinator, warned FBI, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and other crucial government agencies to be on the highest alert and not to take vacations during a six-week period over the summer. U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft was ordered to take government jets instead of commercial airlines and the FAA passed down several alerts to the commercial airlines.

It was also well-known in political circles that in 1994 the French had foiled a terrorist airplane attack on the Eiffel Tower, and in 1995 arrests were made of terrorists who allegedly planned to use an airplane to attack the CIA headquarters. Philippine police subsequently warned the United States that Ramzi Yousef, who had helped plan the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, had schemes to hijack and

blow up a dozen U.S. airliners and was contemplating taking over and crashing a plane into the CIA headquarters himself. Thus, in the light of all of this information, it is scandalous that the Bush administration did not take stronger antiterrorist actions. Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) stated: “There was a lot of information. . . . I believe, and others believe, that if it had been acted on properly, we may have had a different situation on September 11.”

Furthermore, there had been a whole series of U.S. government reports on the dangers of terrorism and need for a coordinated response. A 1996 report by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, headed by then-Vice President Al Gore, developed a report on the dangers of airplane hijacking that was never acted on. A 1999 National Intelligence Council report on Terrorism specifically warned that bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network might undertake suicide plane hijackings against U.S. targets; the report noted that members of the Al Qaeda network had threatened to do this before and that the U.S. should be alert to such strikes. Perhaps most significantly, blue-ribbon commission reports by former U.S. Senators Gary Hart and Howard Rudman and by the Bremer National Commission highlighted the dangers of a domestic terrorist attack against the U.S. and the need to develop appropriate protective measures. The Hart-Rudman report recommended consolidating U.S. intelligence on terrorism and organizing federal responses to prevent and fight domestic terrorist attacks on the U.S.⁵

Despite all this, the Bush administration failed to act on warnings of imminent terrorist attacks and the need to provide systematic government responses to coordinate information and attempt to prevent and aggressively fight terrorism. Moreover, it halted a series of attempts to fight the bin Laden network that had been undertaken by the Clinton administration. Just after the September 11 attacks, a wave of revelations came out, which were generally ignored in the U.S. media, concerning how high-ranking officials in the Bush administration had neglected threats of terrorist attacks by the bin Laden network and even curtailed efforts to shut down the terrorist organization that had been initiated by the Clinton administration.

A controversial book published in France in mid-November 2001 and translated into English in 2002, *Bin Laden, la verite interdite (Forbidden Truth)* by Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie, claimed that under the influence of oil companies, the Bush administration initially blocked ongoing U.S. government investigations of 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. In protest against curtailment of the efforts to shut down Al Qaeda, Brisard and Guillaume contend that the Bush administration had been a major supporter of the Taliban until the September 11 events and had blocked investigations of 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 President 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.”⁶ Furthermore, Greg Palast had published an FBI memo that confirmed that the FBI was given orders to lay off the bin Laden family during the early months of George W. Bush’s rule.⁷

The U.S. media completely ignored these and other reports concerning how the Bush administration had shut down or undermined operations against the bin Laden network that were initiated by the Clinton administration. An explosive article by Michael Hirsch and Michael Isikoff, “What Went Wrong?” published in the May 28, 2002, *Newsweek*, however, contained disturbing revelations of how the Bush administration had missed signals of an impending attack and systematically weakened U.S. defenses against terrorism and the bin Laden network. According to the *Newsweek* story, the Clinton administration’s National Security Advisor Sandy Berger had become “‘totally preoccupied’ with fears of a domestic terror attack and tried to warn Bush’s new National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice of the dangers of a bin Laden attack.” But although Rice ordered a security review, “The effort was marginalized and scarcely mentioned in ensuing months as the administration committed itself to other priorities, like National Missile Defense (NMD) and Iraq.”

Moreover, *Newsweek* reported that U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft was eager to set a new right-wing law-and-order agenda and was not focused on the dangers of terrorism, while other Bush administration high officials also had their ideological agendas to pursue at the expense of protecting the country against terrorist attacks. Ashcroft reportedly shut down wiretaps of Al Qaeda-related suspects connected to the 1998 bombing of African embassies and cut \$58 million from an FBI request for an increase in its antiterrorism budget (while at the same time switching from commercial to government jets for his own personal flight). On September 10, when Ashcroft sent a request for budget increases to the White House, it covered sixty-eight programs, none of them related to counter-terrorism—nor was counter-terrorism in a memorandum he sent to his heads of departments stating his seven priorities. According to *Newsweek*, in a meeting with FBI Chief Louis Freeh, Ashcroft rebuffed Freeh’s warnings to take terrorism seriously and turned down an FBI request for hundreds of additional agents to be assigned to tracking terrorists.⁸ In the *Newsweek* summary:

It wasn’t that Ashcroft and others were unconcerned about these problems, or about terrorism. But the Bushies had an ideological agenda of their own. At the Treasury Department, Secretary Paul O’Neill’s team wanted to roll back almost all forms of government intervention, including laws against money laundering and tax havens of the kind used by terror groups. At the Pentagon, Donald Rumsfeld wanted to revamp the military and push his pet project, NMD [National Missile Defense]. Rumsfeld vetoed a request to divert \$800 million from missile defense into counterterrorism. The Pentagon chief also seemed uninterested in a tactic for observing bin Laden left over from the Clinton administration: the CIA’s Predator surveillance plane. Upon leaving office, the Clintonites left open the possibility of sending the Predator back up armed with Hellfire missiles, which were tested in February 2001. But through the spring and summer of

2001, when valuable intelligence could have been gathered, the Bush administration never launched even an unarmed Predator. Hill sources say DOD [Department of Defense] didn't want the CIA treading on its turf.

A *Time* magazine cover story later in the summer by Michael Elliot, "The Secret History," provides more detail concerning how the Clinton administration had a program to attack Al Qaeda in November 2001 when the contested election battle in Florida was raging. The Clinton administration was not able to implement the plan, however, because, "With less than a month left in office, they did not think it appropriate to launch a major initiative against Osama bin Laden." Clinton administration officials claim that Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was fully informed of this plan and that Clinton National Security Advisor Sandy Berger stressed the need for a major initiative against bin Laden and Al Qaeda, but nothing was done. Moreover, the head of antiterrorist operations in the Clinton administration, Richard Clarke, who stayed on for the Bush administration, had himself drawn up the plan and urged its implementation when the Bush team took office. According to Elliot:

Clarke's proposals called for the "breakup" of Al Qaeda cells and the arrest of their personnel. The financial support for its terrorist activities would be systematically attacked, its assets frozen, its funding from fake charities stopped. Nations where Al Qaeda was causing trouble—Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Yemen—would be given aid to fight the terrorists. Most important, Clarke wanted to see a dramatic increase in covert action in Afghanistan to "eliminate the sanctuary" where Al Qaeda had its terrorist training camps and bin Laden was being protected by the radical Islamic Taliban regime. . . . In the words of a senior Bush administration official, the proposals amounted to "everything we've done since 9/11."

Unfortunately, fighting terrorism was not a priority in the Bush administration that was hell-bent on pushing through its right-wing and pro-corporate agenda, and so the plan for attacks on Al Qaeda went through the usual layers of bureaucracy, finally reaching Bush and his inner circle in early September, too late to prevent the September 11 attacks. As these revelations unfolded in summer 2002, Democrats and others called for blue-ribbon commissions to study intelligence and policy failures that made possible the September 11 terrorist attacks. Republicans, led by Vice President Dick Cheney, predictably attacked the patriotism of anyone who ascribed blame to the U.S. government concerning the September 11 attacks. Moreover, according to Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, Cheney had repeatedly urged him not to hold hearings on U.S. policies or failures that led to the September 11 attacks. Bush administration spokespeople also attacked California Senator Dianne Feinstein, who retorted in a memo:

I was deeply concerned as to whether our house was in order to prevent a terrorist attack. My work on the Intelligence Committee and as chair of the Technology and

Terrorism Subcommittee had given me a sense of foreboding for some time. I had no specific data leading to a possible attack.

In fact, I was so concerned that I contacted Vice President Cheney's office that same month [July 2001] to urge that he restructure our counter-terrorism and homeland defense programs to ensure better accountability and prevent important intelligence information from slipping through the cracks.

Despite repeated efforts by myself and staff, the White House did not address my request. I followed this up last September 2001 before the attacks and was told by "Scooter" Libby [Cheney's assistant] that it might be another six months before he would be able to review the material. I told him I did not believe we had six months to wait.⁹

This is highly shocking and calls attention to the key responsibility of Vice President Dick Cheney in failing to produce an adequate response to the dangers of terrorism. A year previous, in May 2001, the Bush administration announced that "Vice President Dick Cheney is point man for [the Bush] administration . . . on three major issues: energy, global warming, and domestic terrorism." On a May 19, 2002, interview with *Meet the Press*, Cheney acknowledged that he had been appointed head of a Bush administration task force on terrorism before September 11 and claimed that he had some meetings on the topic. Yet Cheney and others in the Bush administration seemed to disregard several major reports that cited the dangers of terrorist attacks, including congressional reports by former Senators Gary Hart and Howard Rudman in early 2001 that had called for a centralization of information on terrorism, but it appeared that the Bush administration failed to act on these recommendations. Obviously, Cheney concentrated on energy issues to the detriment of paying attention to terrorism and should thus be held in part responsible for Bush administration ignoring of pre-September 11 terrorist threats.¹⁰

Crucially, plans to use airplanes as vehicles of terrorist attack should have been familiar to the intelligence agencies and to Cheney and the Bush administration. Furthermore, there were many other reports disseminated from foreign and domestic intelligence services that the U.S. had reason to fear terrorist attacks from the bin Laden network provided just before the September 11 terror attacks.¹¹ Thus, there should have been attempts to coordinate intelligence between the various agencies, warnings to the airlines industry regarding potential hijacking, and security alerts to the public to be on the lookout for terrorist attacks.

Consequently, serious questions should be raised to the Bush administration, and to the head of their antiterrorism task force Dick Cheney, concerning what they knew and did not know and what they did and did not do in response to the reports from domestic and foreign intelligence concerning the likelihood of Al Qaeda airplane hijackings and terrorist attacks on the U.S. As head of the Bush administration's task force on terrorism, Dick Cheney should be held especially accountable, but so far the media and Democrats have not raised this issue and Cheney himself is aggressively attacking anyone who raises such issues as "unpatriotic." Obviously, there was no apparent coordination of information on terrorist threats in the Bush

administration and if Cheney was head of the task force that was supposed to deal with terrorism, it is disgraceful that he did not establish a group to centralize information, focus more on the dangers of terrorism, and do more to prevent the September 11 attacks.

It therefore appears that top officials of the Bush administration did little or nothing to protect the U.S. against domestic terror attacks. When confronted with reports that Bush had been advised of impending terrorist threats and had not acted on them, Bush was highly indignant, attacking those who criticized him for “second guessing” and engaging in “partisan politics.” He shrilly retorted that had he known exactly what was to happen, he would have prevented it. This was not, of course, the issue. Rather, at stake was the failure of the Bush administration to take seriously the threats of terrorism and to develop an antiterror policy. In fact, Bush was on an unprecedentedly long one-month summer vacation at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, when he was briefed on the dangers of looming Al Qaeda attacks, and no one could expect the highly unqualified president-select to “connect the dots” and see the need to organize the country against domestic terrorist attacks. But his administration as a whole is responsible for neglecting a wide series of reports and warnings and for engaging in a series of actions that made the attacks more likely.

Yet various pundits and critics blame different factions of the U.S. government for failing to prevent the September 11 attacks, with some going after the FBI, others the CIA, and others either the Clinton or Bush administration—or a combination thereof.¹² Republicans and right-wingers from the start blamed the Clinton administration (see chapter 2), while serious questions have been raised concerning Bush administration policy failures that made possible the September 11 terror attacks. I maintain that the collective failure is that of both the Bush administration as a whole and the national security apparatus, in particular the FBI and CIA. The Bush administration is responsible for failing to organize an antiterrorist task force to coordinate information and action, cutting back on efforts that the Clinton administration had made in this direction, ignoring government reports that highlighted the need to organize the government to better deal with terrorism, and also failing to respond to a large number of specific warnings about forthcoming Al Qaeda attacks from a wealth of sources.

Of course, the breakdown of specific intelligence agencies is also in question, as well as the issue of coordinating information between the CIA, FBI, and other agencies. Responding to what now appears as the greatest U.S. intelligence fiasco in history, Congress began hearings into FBI malfunctioning in May 2002 after revelations of the failure of the agency to respond to the Phoenix, Arizona, FBI memos concerning potential Al Qaeda terrorists taking flight lessons and the arrest in Minnesota of a potential hijacker, Zacarias Moussaouri, who had alleged Al Qaeda connections. The result of investigating these intelligence malfunctions was scandalous revelations of FBI bureaucratic inertia and failure to respond to local intelligence reports, to coordinate information with the CIA and Bush administration, and in general to provide adequate analysis and actions. Serious debates over

the FBI, CIA, and other agencies' intelligence lapses were being aired in the media in summer 2002 and it appeared that the Bush administration was content to let them take the heat for the failures that had helped facilitate the September 11 terror attacks.

One shocking revelation disclosed that Coleen Rowley, an FBI operative in its Minnesota office, sent a 13-page letter to the congressional committee that is investigating the government's lack of preparedness for the September 11 attacks. Rowley's memo documented frustration with the FBI bureaucracy's inability to respond to serious concerns about an imminent terrorist attack and to get the agency to investigate potential Al Qaeda terrorists more seriously. Published in the May 21, 2002, issue of *Time* magazine, the memo provides a sharp critique of FBI bureaucratic inertia and incompetence.

Indeed, it is appalling to read media reports or congressional testimony of FBI and CIA bureaucratic inability to properly interpret intelligence reports from the field concerning dangers of a pending Al Qaeda terrorist attack; the lack of information sharing between the FBI, CIA, and other intelligence agencies; and the Bush administration's disinterest in addressing these problems pre-September 11.¹³ It is clear that the FBI, CIA, and the rest of the U.S. government are mired in bureaucracy and that the national security apparatus needs to be completely reorganized. Obviously, there should be blue-ribbon investigations of exactly what went wrong and why. But it is the responsibility of the sitting political administration to protect the country and, in the case of September 11, the Bush administration failed in multiple ways.

Yet Congress and the media are also to blame for not focusing more intently on problems of terrorism over the previous decade. During the 1980s, terrorism emerged as a major problem and there were frequently news reports, specials, documentaries, and media discussion of the problem. Yet in the 1990s, the corporate media became increasingly tabloidized, focusing on the O. J. Simpson trials, the Clinton sex scandals, and the other journalistic obsessions of the moment.¹⁴ As noted, major reports on dangers of terrorism were released without media scrutiny. The Hart-Rudman report, "Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change," warning of dangers of a terrorist attack on the U.S., had been released in January 2001 and was ignored by much of the mainstream media as well as by Congress and the Bush administration.¹⁵ Instead, there was an obsessive focus on tabloid stories pre-September 11 in the mainstream media, such as the disappearance of intern Chandra Levy and her affair with Congressman Gary Condit.

Not surprisingly, many elaborate conspiracy theories emerged alleging U.S. government complicity in the September 11 terror attacks, since there were many unexplained strange elements of the attacks on the New York World Trade Center and Pentagon—and because the Bush administration and military establishment were the main beneficiaries of the terror attacks. Additionally, the shocking history of the Bush family to engage in daring and major conspiracies may have contributed to the widespread circulation of allegations concerning U.S. government involvement in

the September 11 terror attacks. There are, in fact, three major possibilities to explain the Bush administration's responsibility or complicity in the September 11 terror attacks: 1) The Bush administration was completely incompetent and too focused on pushing through its right-wing agenda to detect the obvious signs of impending Al Qaeda terror attacks that I have just outlined; 2) key members of the Bush administration may have known that attacks were indeed coming but welcomed them as a chance to push through its stalled right-wing and militarist agenda; or 3) the Bush administration, or rogue sectors of the U.S. government, were actively involved in the conspiracy.¹⁶ As of now, it is impossible to confidently affirm the precise responsibility of the Bush administration for the September 11 attacks, but obviously this is a matter of grave concern and should be thoroughly investigated.

The Bush administration's surprise call on June 6, 2002, for a new cabinet-level Homeland Defense Agency, however, was seen by critics as an attempt to deflect attention from investigations of Bush administration and intelligence failures. As I discuss later in the book, there have been widespread fears that the Bush-Cheney gang would increase bureaucracy and even provide the apparatus for a Gestapo-type police state. Indeed, the USA Patriot Act pushed through following September 11 already was erecting the powerful trappings of a police state. It included allowing the government the right to eavesdrop on all electronic and wireless communication, to arrest individuals without specific charges and hold them indefinitely, to monitor conversations between lawyer and client, and to carry out secret military trials of suspected terrorists (see chapter 4).

Moreover, domestically since September 11, the Bush administration's actions against terrorists in the U.S. have been strikingly inept. Although terrorist cells have been broken up all over the world, so far U.S. government agencies have arrested few, if any, major members of the Al Qaeda network post-September 11. Nor have they caught the perpetrators of the anthrax attacks, although evidence exists that members of the national security state itself may have produced the high-grade military anthrax used in the attacks on the media and government.¹⁷ The Bush administration has repeatedly made warnings of imminent terror attacks, keeping the country jittery in order to "justify" their unjustifiable foreign and domestic policies, but they have done little to make the country safer and have instead exploited the crisis to push through their hard-right agenda.

In addition, the Bush administration's assault on civil liberties has weakened constitutional democracy and the rule of law in the United States. On August 15, 2002, Human Rights Watch released a report that claimed: "The U.S. government's investigation of the September 11 attacks has been marred by arbitrary detentions, due process violations, and secret arrests." Human Rights Watch discovered that over 1,200 noncitizens were secretly arrested and incarcerated and that "the U.S. government has held some detainees for prolonged periods without charges; impeded their access to counsel; subjected them to coercive interrogations; and overridden judicial orders to release them on bond during immigration proceedings. In some cases, the

government has incarcerated detainees for months under restrictive conditions, including solitary confinement. Some detainees were physically and verbally abused because of their national origin or religion. The vast majority are from Middle Eastern, South Asian, and North African countries. The report describes cases in which random encounters with law enforcement or neighbors' suspicions based on no more than national origin and religion led to interrogation about possible links to terrorism."¹⁸ Yet not only has the Bush administration dangerously undermined the U.S. constitutional order, but their economic policies have produced endemic economic crisis, scandal, and corruption.

BUSHONOMICS: ECONOMIC CRISIS, SCANDAL, AND CORRUPTION

In one of the most stunning economic reversals in U.S. history, the Bush administration gave away record budget surpluses in taxes to the rich and returned to the dangerous levels of budget deficits brought about by the Reagan and first Bush administrations. During the Reagan presidency, the national deficit was doubled to \$2 trillion dollars while in the four years of the first Bush administration, the deficit doubled again to an almost inconceivable record \$4 trillion debt, flipping the U.S. from the position of the first major creditor nation to the number-one debtor nation. George W. Bush is well on the way to matching his father's disastrous economic performance as he piles up skyrocketing deficits, gives away profuse tax cuts to the rich, and provides corporate favors to his allies in the business and military-industrial complex.¹⁹

Although both George W. Bush and Dick Cheney have been largely immune from personal criticism for their responsibilities concerning the September 11 terror attacks, beginning in July 2002 their business records were sharply scrutinized and discussed in a media blitz of investigative and critical reporting. During July, the stock market underwent one of its major declines in recent history, thereby wiping out the savings of millions. Moreover, the Bush administration announced that the national deficit for the next year would be over \$165 billion, corporate scandals continued to multiply, and it was becoming clear that the Bush administration was completely mismanaging the economy. ABC News reported on July 15 that since March 2001, the stock market had lost an unparalleled \$7.7 trillion dollars and the news was full of stories of working- and middle-class families who had lost much of their life savings and who had their retirement funds devastated. Heartwrenching tales multiplied through the media of many average families who saw their dreams of a better future shattered under Bush Junior's tenure.

Further, there was a perhaps unprecedented contemporary media focus upon the corruption of corporate capitalism in the light of the Enron, Arthur Andersen, WorldCom, and related corporate scandals. Moreover, burgeoning reports indicated that Bush and Cheney were allegedly guilty of the same sort of corporate corruption

that was daily being vilified in the press. Investor confidence was shaken by reports of foreign investor disgust with U.S. corporate management and growing anger at Bush administration policies, leading to escalating amounts of foreign investment taken out of the U.S. economy.²⁰ As the economic situations of many worsened, growing attention was focused upon the Bush administration's responsibility for people's economic woes and upon Bush and Cheney's participation in corporate corruption and fraud.

A July 2, 2002, op-ed piece in the *New York Times* by Paul Krugman, "Everyone Is Outraged," criticized Bush administration officials for being guilty of the same crimes that they were admonishing. A July 7 follow-up piece by Krugman, "The Insider Game," raised the question concerning the longtime allegations that Bush had engaged in insider trading with Harken Energy stocks when he was on the company's board of directors.²¹ The country was outraged when it was revealed that Enron executives had unloaded their stock when they discerned that the company's financial mess was going to lead to a collapse of the stock's worth; as further corporate scandals unfolded, there was an uproar that other executives had unloaded their stocks in insider trading before their companies' woes were announced to the public.

There had long been allegations that George W. Bush had used insider information of declining profits to unload his Harken Energy stocks in 1991 and there had been an inconclusive Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) investigation. Bush's accounts of this event over the years were always contradictory and unconvincing, and amidst the focus on insider trading scandals in July 2002 new material was released that indicated that Bush had received accounts of Harken's declining profit situation just before he sold his stocks. This constituted insider trading and appeared as the very type of unethical corporate behavior that Bush's own rhetoric claimed to denounce. As a result, major media outlets began looking into the story and new twists and nuances emerged almost daily, keeping the story in media focus.²²

In addition, the revelations of Cheney's checkered career as CEO of Halliburton were much more current and even more shocking. During his last year as CEO before becoming Vice President, Cheney was paid \$36 million by the Halliburton Corporation in salary, stock options, and bonuses, providing another striking example of CEO overcompensation and excessive corporate greed. There were allegations that Halliburton had engaged in the same sort of profit frauds that Enron and others had been using, with reports that Halliburton had set up a fake company within the corporation so that assets sold from one branch to another could be accounted as profits to cover over losses.

Moreover, a video of Cheney endorsing the same Arthur Andersen accounting company that had been involved in so many corporate frauds showed that Cheney was deeply complicit in the most corrupt and failed sectors of corporate capital. Stories circulated concerning illegal sales by Halliburton under Cheney's leadership to Iraq and Libya, states that had been on terrorist lists prohibiting direct U.S. corporate involvement. Moreover, Halliburton's stock had fallen sharply since Cheney's

tenure and many analysts ascribed the failure of the company to Cheney's merger with Dresser Industries as CEO, a company long connected with the Bush family. Adding to his headaches, Cheney and Halliburton were sued by the conservative group Judicial Watch, a nemesis of Bill Clinton, which filed a lawsuit alleging account fraud that led to shareholder losses.²³

While the Bush administration had proudly touted Bush and Cheney's supposed business success and the virtues of having corporate CEOs running the country, these alleged assets turned into liabilities as the country focused on the scandals involving major corporations and found that Bush and Cheney had similar shady business records. There are two sides to the economic and political scandals that permeate the Bush administration: ideological and practical. The ideology of market neoliberalism, which attacks all regulation and believes in an unregulated market as the royal road to freedom and prosperity, helped deregulate the economy and block the sort of meaningful regulation that would have at least mitigated the corporate scandals that erupted during the Bush era. The other aspect of Bush administration corruption revealed by the scandals is the obvious tendency of the Bush-Cheney clique to abuse power to enrich their contributors and associates, accompanied by an atmosphere of permissiveness and greed. The result was growing revelations concerning how key players in the Bush administration and their closest corporate allies had enriched themselves through shady business and political practices, using the state to gain wealth and power in often audacious crony capitalism scams with attendant risks of criminal prosecution.

Many were coming to perceive the Bush administration as one of the most corrupt political cabals in U.S. history and George W. Bush and Dick Cheney were emerging as poster boys for greed, sleaze, and corruption. Bush's entire business career was predicted on exploiting family friends and connections for his personal gain, and in using those who wanted to buy influence from various Bush administrations to invest in his usually failed business ventures. Bush's first profitable venture in Harken Energy involved getting questionable loans from the company to buy stock, and then unloading it when he learned that profits would be down and the future of the company was in question. Likewise, Cheney was finally being accurately vilified as the type of corporate CEO who had engaged in exactly the forms of unethical business practices being attacked in the press, and as a man who had enriched himself at the cost of the shareholders and corporation.

Moreover, Bush and Cheney had long used the institutions of government to enrich themselves and their corporate allies and contributors. As governor of Texas, Bush gave Enron and other favored corporations every tax break, state contract, handout, and regulatory largess that they requested and was doing the same in Washington both before and after September 11. Cheney's Halliburton firm had received over \$2.3 billion in government contracts during his tenure as CEO and was awarded billions in key contracts while Cheney was vice president, despite many examples of Halliburton subsidiaries overcharging the government and the obvious impropriety of a former CEO using his influence to enrich his former company.

Indeed, Halliburton's stock was in such serious crisis, because in part of Cheney's poor management, that the company would probably collapse without its pipeline of lucrative government contracts. Furthermore, while Cheney was CEO, Halliburton escaped paying taxes for five of the six years in which Cheney headed the company through setting up offshore subsidiaries to launder profits in order to avoid paying taxes in the United States.²⁴

The Bush administration's economic policy can be accurately described as a pro-corporate one that lets the oil and energy companies write oil and energy policy; allows Wall Street and big banks to formulate banking and investment laws; permits the credit card companies who had contributed to Bush's campaign to write credit laws; and provides other major contributors to Bush campaigns with the laws, regulations, tax breaks, or other federal giveaways that they requested (Kellner 2001). In sum, the Bush-Cheney gang has primarily represented permissibility and a hard-right deregulatory market ideology, promoting a wheeling and dealing crony capitalism. They have used government to enrich themselves and their corporate allies and have engaged in practices that were destroying investor confidence and greatly harming the U.S. and global economy. As part and parcel of the corruption involving corporate America and its political sector now coming to light, both Bush and Cheney have long engaged in unsavory and failed business and political practices. So far, the consequences of business-as-usual politics have been the freefall of the U.S. economy and the creation of escalating antipathy toward the United States throughout the globe.

As the reports of Bush and Cheney's corruption multiplied in July and August 2002, the Bush administration continued to leak rumors concerning an impending war against Iraq and speculation mounted that the Bush administration would wage war in Iraq to distract attention from its mounting scandals and the worsening economic situation. It appeared likely that the Bush administration would attack Iraq to boost its sagging ratings and to distract attention from its growing scandals and the increasingly critical press coverage, especially of Bush and Cheney, who were emerging as symbols of the corporate corruption and deregulatory and permissive politics that had caused current escalating U.S. and global economic and political woes. The fruits of the theft of election 2000 were ever more poisonous, and whether U.S. democracy would survive was at stake.

THE BUSH REICH

The consequences of the Bush administration's failed Terror War policies and domestic policy outrages are frightening. The Bush Reich seems to be erecting an Orwellian totalitarian state apparatus and plunging the world into ongoing war that could generate a military and police state both domestically and abroad. In his prophetic novel *1984*, George Orwell envisaged a grim condition of total warfare in which his fictional state Oceania ruled its fearful and intimidated citizens through

war, police state terror, surveillance, and the suppression of civil liberties. This constant warfare kept Oceania's citizens in a perpetual situation of mobilization and submission. Furthermore, the Orwellian state controlled language, thought, and behavior through domination of the media, and was thereby able to change the very meaning of language ("war is peace") and to constantly rewrite history itself.²⁵

Orwell's futuristic novel was, of course, an attack on the Soviet Union and therefore a favorite of conservatives over the years, but it uncannily describes the horrors and dangers of the regime of George W. Bush. Orwell's totalitarian state had a two-way television screen that monitored its citizens' behavior and a system of spies and informers that would report on politically incorrect thought and activity. Bush's police state has its USA Patriot Act that enables the state to monitor the communications of e-mail, wireless, telephones, and other media, while allowing government to arrest citizens without warrants, to hold them indefinitely, to monitor their conversations, and to submit them to military tribunals, all of which would be governed by the dictates of the supreme leader (in this case, a dangerously demagogic figurehead ruled by right-wing extremists).

The Bush administration also proposed a Terrorist Information and Prevention System (TIPS) program, which would turn citizens into spies who would report suspicious activities to the government and encourages truck drivers, mail carriers, meter readers, and others to "report what they see in public areas and along transportation routes," thus turning workers into informants. In addition, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft has proposed concentration camps in the United States for citizens that he considers "enemy combatants."²⁶ Sign me up, because I'm an enemy of Bush-style Orwellian fascism and it is clear that the United States needs a regime change if its democracy is to be preserved.

With their Orwellian-sounding Office of Homeland Security, the short-lived Office of Strategic Influence, shadow government, and the USA Patriot Act, the Bush administration has in place the institutions and apparatus of a totalitarian government. Since Election 2000, the Bush clique has practiced a form of Orwellian "Bushspeak" that endlessly repeats the Big Lie of the moment. Bush and his propaganda ministry engage in daily propagandistic spin to push its policies and slime their opponents while showing little regard for the canons of truth and rights that conservatives have traditionally defended.²⁷

To keep the public in a state of fear, Bush and his administration have repeatedly evoked the specter of renewed terrorist attacks and promised an all-out war against an "axis of evil." This threatening "axis," to be redefined periodically by the Bush administration, allegedly possesses "weapons of mass destruction" that could be used against the U.S. Almost without exception, the mainstream media have been a propaganda conduit for the Bush administration's Terror War and have helped generate fear and even mass hysteria. But the mainstream corporate media have largely failed to advance an understanding of the serious threats to the U.S. and to the global economy and polity, and have failed to debate the range of possible responses to the September 11 attacks, their respective merits, and their possible consequences.

In a speech to West Point cadets on June 1, 2002, George W. Bush proclaimed a new “doctrine” that the U.S. would strike first against enemies. It was soon apparent that this was a major shift in U.S. military policy, replacing the Cold War doctrine of containment and deterrence with a new policy of preemptive strikes—one that could be tried out in Iraq. U.S. allies were extremely upset with this shift in U.S. policy toward an aggressive U.S. unilateralism. In an article, “Bush to Formalize a Defense Policy of Hitting First,” David E. Sanger wrote in the *New York Times* (June 17, 2002), “The process of including America’s allies has only just begun, and administration officials concede that it will be difficult at best. Leaders in Berlin, Paris and Beijing, in particular, have often warned against unilateralism. But Mr. Bush’s new policy could amount to ultimate unilateralism, because it reserves the right to determine what constitutes a threat to American security and to act even if that threat is not judged imminent.”²⁸

After a summer of debate on the prospects of the U.S. going to war against Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction, on August 26 U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney applied the new preemptive strike and unilateralist doctrine to Iraq, arguing: “What we must not do in the face of a mortal threat is to give in to wishful thinking or willful blindness. . . . Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network or murderous dictator or the two working together constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risks of action.” Cheney was responding to many former generals and high-level members of the first Bush administration who had reservations about the sort of unilateralist U.S. attack against Iraq that hawks in the Bush administration were urging.²⁹

Bush and others in his circle regularly described Terror War as World War Three, Rumsfeld said that it could last as long as the Cold War, and Cheney, speaking like a true militarist, said it could go on for a “long, long time, perhaps indefinitely.” Such an Orwellian nightmare could plunge the world into a new millennium of escalating war with unintended consequences and embroil the U.S. in endless wars, normalizing war as conflict resolution and creating countless new enemies for the would-be American Hegemon. Indeed, as Chalmers Johnson writes in *Blowback* (2000), empire has hidden costs. Becoming a hegemon breeds resentment and hostility, and when the empire carries out aggression it elicits anger and creates enemies, intensifying the dangers of perpetual war.

On September 20, 2002, it was apparent that the hawks’ position in the Bush administration had triumphed, at least on the level of official military doctrine, when the Bush administration released a document signaling some of the most important and far-ranging shifts in U.S. foreign and military policy since the end of the Cold War. Titled, “The National Security Strategy of the United States,” the 33-page report outlined a new doctrine of U.S. military supremacy, providing justifications for the U.S. to wage unilateral and preemptive strikes in the name of “counterproliferation.” This clumsy Orwellian concept was offered as a replacement for the concept of nonproliferation and would legitimate unilateral destruction of a country’s presumed weapons of mass destruction. The document, in effect,

renounced the global security, multilateralism, and rule by international law that to some degree had informed U.S. thinking since World War Two and that appeared to be an emerging consensus among Western nations during the era of globalization.

The Bush administration's language of "preemptive strikes," "regime change," and "anticipatory self-defense" is purely Orwellian, presenting euphemisms for raw military aggression. Critics assailed the new "Strike first, ask questions later" policy, the belligerent unilateralism, and the dangerous legitimization of preemptive strikes.³⁰ Israel, Pakistan, Russia, China, and lesser powers had already used the so-called Bush doctrine and war against terrorism to legitimate attacks on domestic and external foes, and there were looming dangers that it could legitimate a proliferation of war and make the world more unstable and violent. As William Galston states:

A global strategy based on the new Bush doctrine of preemption means the end of the system of international institutions, laws and norms that we have worked to build for more than half a century. What is at stake is nothing less than a fundamental shift in America's place in the world. Rather than continuing to serve as first among equals in the postwar international system, the United States would act as a law unto itself, creating new rules of international engagement without the consent of other nations. In my judgment, this new stance would ill serve the long-term interests of the United States.³¹

The Bush doctrine of preemptive strikes could indeed unleash a series of wars that would plunge the world into the sort of nightmare militarism and totalitarianism as sketched out in George Orwell's *1984*. The Bush policy is highly barbaric, taking the global community to a social Darwinist battleground where decades of international law and military prudence will be put aside in perhaps the most dangerous foreign policy doctrine in U.S. history. It portends a militarist future and an era of perpetual war in which a new militarism could generate a cycle of unending violence and retribution, of the sort evident in the Israel and Palestine conflict.

Around the time that the Bush administration was pushing its new strategic doctrine and seeking to apply it in a war against Iraq, a 2000 report circulated titled "Rebuilding American Defense: Strategies, Forces and Resources for A New American Century." Drawn up by the neoconservative think tank Project for a New American Century (PNAC) for a group that now comprises the right-wing of the Bush administration, including Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz, the document spelled out a plan for U.S. world hegemony grounded in U.S. military dominance of the world and control of the Persian Gulf region with its oil supplies.³² Its upfront goals were a "Pax Americana" and U.S. domination of the world during the new millennium. The document shows that core members of the Bush administration had longed envisaged taking military control of the Gulf region, with the PNAC text stating: "The United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein."

The PNAC document argues for “maintaining global U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of any great power rival, while shaping the international security order in accordance with American principles and interests.” The vision is long-range, urging U.S. domination of the Gulf “as far into the future as possible.” It is also highly militarist, calling for the U.S. to “fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars” as a “core mission.” American armed forces would serve as “the cavalry on the new American frontier,” with U.S. military power blocking the emergence of other countries challenging U.S. domination. It would enlist key allies such as Britain as “the most effective and efficient means of exercising American global leadership,” and would place the U.S., and not the UN, as leader of military interventions and peacekeeping missions. It envisions taking on Iran after Iraq, spotlights China for “regime change,” calls for the creation of “U.S. Space Forces” to dominate outer space, positions the U.S. to totally control cyberspace and prevent “enemies” from “using the Internet against the U.S.”

The Bush administration Terror War thus raises the possibility that Orwell’s *1984* might provide the template for the new millennium, as the world is plunged into endless wars, as freedom and democracy are being snuffed out in the name of Bush-defined “freedom,” as language loses meaning, and as history is constantly revised (just as with Bush and his scribes, who constantly rewrote his own personal history). There is thus the danger that Orwell’s dark grim dystopia may replace the (ideological) utopia of the “information society,” the “new economy,” and a prosperous and democratic globalization that had been the dominant ideology and vision of the past decade. Questions arise: Will the Bush administration’s Terror War lead the world to apocalypse and ruin through constant war and the erection of totalitarian police states over the façade of fragile democracy? Or can more multilateral and global solutions be found to the dangers of terrorism that will strengthen democracy and increase the chances for peace and security?

There is indeed a danger that Terror War will be a force of historical regression and the motor of destruction of the global economy, liberal polity, and democracy itself, all to be replaced by an aggressive militarism and totalitarian police state. It could well be that Orwell will be the prophet of a coming New Barbarism with endless war, state repression, and enforced control of thought and discourse, and that George W. Bush and his minions are the architects of an Orwellian future.

It could also be the case, however, that the Taliban, bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the Bush administration represent obsolete and reactionary forces that will be swept away by the inexorable forces of globalization and liberal democracy. The opposing sides in the current Terror War between the Bush administration reactionaries and Al Qaeda could be perceived as representing complementary poles of a reactionary right-wing conservatism and militarism confronted by an atavistic and premodern version of Islam and nihilistic terrorism.³³ In this scenario, both poles can be perceived as disruptive and regressive forces in a global world that need to be overcome to create genuine historical progress. If this is the case, Terror War would be a

momentary interlude in which two obsolete historical forces battle it out, ultimately to be replaced by more sane and democratic globalizing forces.

This is, of course, an optimistic scenario and probably, for the foreseeable future, progressive forces will be locked into intense battles against the opposing forces of Islamic terrorism and right-wing militarism. Yet if democracy and the human species are to survive, global movements against militarism and for social justice, ecology, and peace must emerge to combat and replace the atavistic forces of the present. As a new millennium unfolds, the human race has regressed into a New Barbarism unforeseeable prior to September 11 (see chapter 8). If civilization is to survive, individuals must organize to fight for a better future, an argument I lay out in the conclusion to this book.

Consequently, I argue that the Bush administration's militarism is not the way to fight international terrorism, but is rather the road to an Orwellian future in which democracy and freedom will be in dire peril and the future of the human species will be in question. These are frightening times and it is essential that all citizens become informed about the fateful conflicts of the present, gain clear understanding of what is at stake, and realize that they must oppose international terrorism, Bushian militarism, and an Orwellian police state.

September 11, the subsequent Terror War, the Enron scandals, other often Bush-Cheney related corporate scandals that emerged during these events, and the ongoing misadventures of the Bush administration constitute what I am calling "the New Barbarism." It was scandalous that civilized countries tolerated the Taliban and allowed the bin Laden–Al Qaeda network to develop, while the Bush Terror War unleashed new forces of barbarism now evident in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world. The term "New Barbarism" denotes frightening regression to an era of highly uncivilized and violent behavior. Although one would hope that the new millennium would signal a chance for progress and historical optimism, instead the human species is moving into a situation in which the universal values of the Enlightenment, the institutions of democracy, the global economy, and the earth and human species itself are faced with challenges of survival.

As a response to the September 11 terror attacks, the Bush administration has answered with an intensified militarism that threatens to generate an era of Terror War, a new arms race, accelerated military violence, U.S. support of authoritarian regimes, an assault on human rights, constant threats to democracy, and destabilizing of the world economy. The New Barbarism also includes Bush administration practices of providing political favors to its largest corporate and other supporters, unleashing unrestrained Wild West capitalism as exemplified in the Enron scandals, and a form of capitalist cronyism whereby Bush administration family and friends are provided with government favors while social welfare programs, environmental legislation, and protections of rights and freedoms are curtailed.

The corporate media, especially television, are part and parcel of the New Barbarism, spewing forth almost unopposed propaganda for the Bush administration and fanning war fever and terrorist hysteria, while cutting back on vigorous political

debate and varied sources of information as it produces waves of ideologically conservative talk shows and mindless entertainment. I have been closely tracking the media and the crisis of democracy for over a decade now (see Kellner 1990, 1992, 1995, and 2001) and the current crisis marks the low point of U.S. media performance. The U.S. corporate media at first fanned the flames of war and hysteria (see chapter 2), and then became a conduit for Bush administration and Pentagon propaganda during the subsequent Terror War rather than a forum of reasoned debate, serious discussion, exposure of the dangers and failures of Bush administration responses to terrorism, and exploration of saner alternatives.

In view of the enormity of the events of September 11 and their frightening aftermath and consequences, it is now appropriate to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and what lessons we can learn as we seek to apply such insights to the crisis that we now find ourselves in. It's a time for honing our wits, not losing our wits. A time for intelligence, not kneejerk reaction, a time for thought and not for hysteria. It's a time for reflection, figuring out what went wrong, and taking informed and intelligent action that will get at the source of our problems. It's also a time for stocktaking, taking account individually and collectively of our views of the world, everyday behavior, and democratic institutions. A situation of crisis provides an opportunity for positive change and reconstruction as well as for barbaric regression. Thus, now is the time for reflection on such things as democracy; globalization; and the flaws, limitations, and fallacies in our individual thought and action, as well as problems with U.S. institutions and leadership.

Momentous historical events, like the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent Terror War, test social theories and provide a challenge to give a convincing account of the event and its consequences. They also provide cultural studies an opportunity to trace how political and ideological discourses, propaganda, and mythologies play themselves out in media discourse and representations. Major historical events and media spectacles also provide an opportunity to examine how the broadcast media and other dominant media of communication perform or fail to perform their democratic role of providing accurate information and discussion.

In the following analysis, I will first try to make sense of the 9/11 events, theorizing what happened, how and why it happened, and what novelties and shifts in the current sociopolitical situation emerged out of the terror attacks on the United States (see chapter 1). Drawing upon key contextual accounts of earlier U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and the Middle East to provide historical background for the terrorist attacks, I attempt to help explain why the U.S. was subject to such violent assaults and what specific policies and forces in the recent past supported, armed, and trained the terrorist groups. I suggest how certain dominant social theories were put in question during the momentous and world-shaking events of fall 2001. In chapter 2, I examine how highly problematic discourses circulated through the media, and how the media on the whole performed disastrously and dangerously, whipping up war hysteria while failing to provide a coherent account of what

happened, why it happened, and what would count as responsible and intelligent U.S. responses to the terrorist attacks.

Subsequent chapters describe U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan; the ways that dominant corporate media in the U.S. legitimated military action; and the critical discourses and accounts left out of the U.S. corporate media, especially television (chapters 3–10). These chapters unfold the narrative of the vicissitudes of the Afghanistan Terror War and will systematically compare the accounts of this spectacle presented by the Bush administration, the Pentagon, and U.S. corporate broadcast media with those presented by more critical media accounts from U.S., British, and other sources. A concluding chapter sketches out the need for a global social movement against terrorism and militarism and for peace, democracy, social justice, and responsible environmentalism.

Quite possibly, we will never know exactly what happened in the Afghanistan war. I published one of the first books on the Gulf War (Kellner 1992), largely based on Internet sources, the newspapers of record, government press conferences, and other material available on the Internet. I followed closely subsequent memoirs of military participants in the war, journalists providing first-person accounts, and other studies. But no definitive history of the Gulf War has yet emerged, and we still do not know all of the shadowy details of relations between George H. W. Bush and Saddam Hussein, why Iraq invaded Kuwait, what knowledge the United States did or did not have of Iraqi plans, how the United States orchestrated the Gulf War, or what actually happened. Yet it is always possible to expose the fallacies and holes in official accounts, to expose lies and misinformation, and to provide contextualization and interpretations of major historical events like the Gulf War, the September 11 terror attacks, and the Afghanistan war.

In any case, I draw upon the best sources available to me in order to provide an account of what happened in the September 11 terror attacks and the succeeding Terror War. I have closely chronicled the actions of the Reagan and Bush administrations that provide many of the same personnel in Bush Junior's administration. In this study, I draw on daily readings of several major newspapers; regular viewing of the British and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; ABC and other U.S. television networks; and articles collected at www.bushwatch.com, www.buzzflash.com, Phil Agre's *Red Rock Eater*, and a variety of Internet sources as well as popular and scholarly texts that contextualize and interpret the September 11 terror attacks and subsequent Terror War.

I argue that a combination of critical social theory and cultural studies can help illuminate the 9/11 events, their causes, effects, and importance in shaping the contemporary moment. Continuing my analysis of the vicissitudes of media and politics in the United States over the past decades, I provide a direct follow-up to my book *Grand Theft 2000* (Kellner 2001), which tells the story of how the Bush team stole the election in 2000 with the support of major corporations and the complicity of the corporate media. The problematic in this book is also closely related to my book, *Media Spectacle* (Kellner 2003), which analyzes how contemporary politics and cul-

ture are organized into media events in which primary conflicts of the era are played out, as in the Gulf War of 1991, the O. J. Simpson trial of the mid-1990s, or the Clinton sex and impeachment scandals of the late 1990s.

Certainly, the terror spectacle of September 11 is one of the major media and political events of our day, and interpreting the affair and its aftermath provides crucial insight into the dynamics and conflicts of the present era. The subsequent Terror War appears to be the major ongoing spectacle of the new millennium that the Bush administration is using to promote its agenda and to build up the U.S. military as a hegemonic force, generating the “new world order” that Bush Senior had wanted to create at the end of the Gulf War. As envisaged by the second Bush administration, Terror War is projected as the defining feature of the new millennium for the foreseeable future.

It is time, however, to critically engage what actually happened in the Bush administration and Pentagon’s Terror War in Afghanistan and to seriously debate future options and policies. As I bring this text to a close in December 2002, it appears that the Afghanistan war is winding down. Accordingly, I try to present an overview of this event and a critique of Bush administration and Pentagon policy. The extent to which there is intelligent debate on Terror War and how to engage terrorism will determine the quality of the future and whether what I call the New Barbarism is the defining feature of the millennium or a passing phase in a troubled age. This story is embedded in the broader story of the consequences of the Bush gang’s theft of the election in 2000 and the consequences of having a Bush-Cheney presidency, a fateful event whose baleful effects are becoming all too obvious and that will accordingly be a major theme of this book.