Understanding September 11

TEXTES DE RÉFÉRENCE

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The morning of September 11 was clear and bright in New York, the sky especially blue and the breeze light. The flames that shot from the gaping holes in the twin towers were oddly beautiful. The air shimmered with what I suppose were fragments of shattered glass. Occasionally a bit of debris fell from a high floor, dark against the generally bright background. Only after I had stared for three or four minutes did mind accept what my eyes were really seeing: falling bodies, human beings leaping to one certain death because another seemed worse. And eventually the towers fell and the bright day turned darker than midnight, with ash billowing around and blocking the sun.

To be across the street from the cinematic horror was to be an eyewitness, perhaps, but not to grasp the whole picture. My memories are still startlingly clear, but they are fragments. They do not go to the center of the events of September 11, though they were my connection to them. Standing alone they do not give the events meaning. Some of the images I saw on TV are as indelible as those formed while I was close enough for the smoke to sting my eyes. My understanding of what happened depends on far more than what I saw that day. The sense of having *seen* it is still powerful, though. Indeed, the visual images are basic to the very idea

that there was a singular "it" to be apprehended, that the complex chains of events could be contained into such a specific package. I can try critically to distinguish what I saw firsthand from what I saw only on television (though I fear the operation is inevitably incomplete). It is still harder to separate what I know because. I saw if from what I know because someone or another provided words to give shape to that knowledge. It was a terrorist attack. It was war. It was a moment when everything changed. It was simple human tragedy.

Though there were sirens and screams, my aural memories are oddly of quiet. There were no sounds commensurate with the visual shock; there were gasps from horrified onlookers; the principal victims seemed silent. And New York was quiet for days, lower Manhattan because traffic was restricted and the whole city because no one wanted to speak out loud of what had happened and no one could speak of anything else. Yet the dust was everywhere, and everyone knew it was more than gypsum and steel. And one could choke with a sixth sense that was not premonition of something outside but connection to one's very viscera, a rising sickness, or tears.

Ten minutes into the chain of events, standing in the street just north of the World Financial Center and looking up, I heard from passersby that the damage came from a plane and not a bomb or a gas explosion. Five minutes later I learned that the crash was not an accident—because a second plane hit, certainly, but I was on the other side of the building and didn't see the crash itself; I heard the explanation from people who shouted as they ran away. And then I heard

a radio report. And nothing I saw of felt after that was free from the influence of the media and commentary and discussion.

Interpreting September 11

Through varying removes of media and interpretation, the events of September 11 became part of the common memory of people around the world. They were more important and more immediate to some and more distant to others. They were framed in very different ways and connected to other memories of different sorts. Before George Bush ever called this an act of war, World War II veterans in a "senior" residence near the scene were saying "not again". And of course it wasn't precisely *that* again. Indeed, trying to take hold of the events through the language of war rather than crime was fateful decision—or impulse—and one that shaped the U.S. response and continues to reverberate, encouraging a search for military victories, for example, and discouraging reliance on international criminal law.

During the days, weeks, and months after September 11 the work of interpretation was carried on disproportionately by government officials and by the press, though also by everyone who stopped to think about what had happened and what it meant. Interpretation was the project of newspaper "op ed" columns, official pronouncements, and coffee-shop discussions. Each led into angry quarrels. Was looking for meaning in global inequality or Middle East politics to dignify the terrorists? Was praying for peace fail-

ing in patriotism? Was focusing on causes and effects obscuring the tragedies of the victims and their families?

The press and the conversations also led to a rough consensus in the United States: The *country* had been attacked, not just symbols of its global power. The attack dramatized a threat we had been complacently ignoring and demanded new vigilance from us. We had been "innocent" and now we needed to be "realistic." The world was a dangerous place.

This was an American consensus, of course, and other collective understandings of what had happened and was likely to happen next formed elsewhere. European allies scrambled to discern where they fit in—to U.S. military plans that were described as "unilateral multilateralism," and to a U.S.—dominated "West" that included them, but seemed to subordinate them symbolically, militarily, and economically. Sympathy for the U.S. was widespread. The U.S. had to act, a broad consensus suggested, but there was anxiety both in America and around the world lest the response be an overreaction, a dangerous escalation.

The events affected other countries directly through the loss of nationals working in New York and through exacerbated economic recession, as well as indirectly through new lines of global conflict. In Latin America, events helped shift the balance of power among different approaches to civil conflicts; the Colombian government was not alone in emphasizing that its rebels should be called "terrorists." There was a consensus that Americans failed to recognize the extent to which others had lived through similar horrors before, with perpetrators sometimes supported by the U.S. but there was also an expectation that Americans would for-

get this—forget even that the date September 11 was the anniversary of the 1973 overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile. And despite this, there was widespread sympathy for the U.S. and rejection of what was seen as the reactionary antimodernism of Islamist terrorists. In Russia the new circumstances presented an opportunity to solidify alliance, renew a sense of importance to world affairs, and reframe the war against Chechen rebels as part of the global war against terrorism. In South Asia, even before the actual fighting in Afghanistan and its repercussions in Pakistan and India, the September 11 events were woven into regional histories of struggles over Islam. In much of Asia — not least in China — there was a complex mix of recognition that terror was always terrible and yet a certain satisfaction that the United States got a taste of what others had endured and a bit of a comeuppance.

None of these views simply encapsulated the truth. Nor was there a global consensus, but rather varying degrees of regional and local similarity of opinion. And nowhere, in fact, was the consensus simply spontaneous. Everywhere, there were arguments about what the events meant, and everywhere there were pressures to stop those arguments and adopt views backed by governments, or the press, or religious leaders, or public opinion. In the United States, the rough consensus of press and coffee shops was consolidated by political leaders who condemned peace marches, university presidents who tried to stop faculty members from making public criticism of U.S. policies, and a broad willingness to portray any effort to question the standard interpretation as somehow sympathetic to terrorism.

At the same time, though, in other parts of the world, consensus demanded that Osama bin Laden be considered a hero—or that the U.S. contention that he was behind the terrorist attack be dismissed as unfounded, or the possibility entertained that Israel's Mossad had staged the whole thing. The point is not that one consensus was right and another wrong, but rather that the production of conventional wisdom was everywhere shaped by crowd pressures and media simplifications and political manipulations. In some places it was based more on empirical evidence, and in some places there was greater respect for those who questioned that evidence. Some versions proved more responsive to correction by new information than others. But in no case was the consensus primarily the result of critical inquiry, reflection, and debate. Nowhere was it easy to question either the empirical claims or the categories through which they were presented. In the U.S., for example, it was hard to question the idea that the attacks were acts of "war," even to argue that this label dignified a criminal network with a kind of respect it did not deserve, implicitly treating it as the sort of international actor that can declare war. It was controversial to wonder aloud whether speaking of terrorists as individuals and networks distracted attention from governments who sometimes used violence to terrify civilians for political purposes.

The attacks are not simply a set of discrete and idiosyncratic events. They are part of complex patterns at several levels—from the very local suffering of families and efforts to rebuild lower Manhattan to the very global projects of peace and prosperity. Both the pain of individuals and the

course of history are in some sense infinite; no scale can be calibrated to weigh one against the other. And yet they are interconnected.

It is precisely because the pain of individuals can be so sharp, and because it extends through the networks of family and friendship, and because each of us can identify at some level with victims, that terrorism is a possibility. Civilians—ordinary people engaged in ordinary life projects—are made to suffer to make a point, to weaken a government, to express a grievance. Civilians in a liberal sense are also inhabitants of a city, and the city itself suffers. The ruptured relationships were part of its social fabric, the disrupted commerce its sustenance, the destroyed buildings and damaged streets its scars. The city has a reality of its own, just as the family does, not altogether contained by the nation. Those killed on September 11—the immediate, physical victims of the tragedy—came from dozens of countries. New York is part of the United States and yet connected to the world in ways that are not all about being American. And 9/11 has become one of those ways, just as the finance industry, migration and tourism, and global media are others.

Of course, the attackers struck not only New York, but also the U.S. department of Defense at its famous home base, the Pentagon, outside Washington, D.C. And they struck using airplanes and thus killing people who had no other immediate connections to New York or Washington, and attacking and changing a transportation system that transcended specific localities. Inadvertently, they struck a field in rural Pennsylvania; they struck the earth in literal

and metaphorical senses. By including the Pentagon among their targets, they connected all the other targets to U.S. military might and global domination. In some ways, the U.S. military response to 9/11 stressed that very connection. But even if the attacked and the U.S. government agreed to stress this connection—to frame the events as war—this frame could never contain the events and their diverse implications.

The 9/11 attacks were also part of the causal sequence that brought devastation to Afghan villages, increased violence in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and resulted in an individual, but not an isolated, loss to the family of Daniel Pearl, a reporter kidnapped and killed by terrorists in Pakistan. The experience of violence is not necessarily unifying, but much violence is nonetheless connected. People's experience has a local history and local effects that may be more powerful than the international connections (though that does not mean these are never made).

Some of the implications of 9/11 involved not so much material change as shifting perspectives. Thus the events came to crystallize issues and clashes that have existed for years: terrorist tactics, for example, and tensions between established states and groups without states to represent them. The events refocused attention and encouraged us to see things differently, to pay central attention to what earlier looked like peripheral concerns. Amid enthusiasm for the spread of information technology, a few observers had recognized the potential for cyberterrorism, and indeed a few relatively minor cases had occurred. But after September 11 the issue moved to the forefront of attention—along with

the more straightforward way in which the Internet and improved communications technology could aid the communication of terrorists just as much as anybody else. The fact that police were able to trace Mohammed Atta and others to specific cybercafes, and unearth copies of what they must have thought were private and even long-since-erased communications, gave pause not just to would-be terrorists but to all who use the Internet to send messages they think are private. That security agencies in the U.S. and around the world now propose to increase their routine monitoring of electronic communications makes certain questions more pressing: How should the tension between civil liberties and effective law enforcement, especially antiterrorist policing, be manages? It is a question that arises especially in the use of special military tribunals instead of civilian courts, in large-scale use of detention without public announcement or other aspects of due process, and in debates over racial or ethnic profiling. In Peter Meyers's terms, the struggle to defend politics from terrorism is not only a matter of overcoming material dangers but also of protecting the possibility of the free and engaged speech without which there can be no democratic politics.

Likewise, the 9/11 attacks focused attention on the vulnerabilities of various sorts of infrastructure and the weaknesses of government preparedness for terrorist attacks. This was most acute in the U.S., not surprisingly, but versions of these concerns were nearly worldwide. The use of civilian aircraft as the mechanisms in terrorist violence called forth new security measures in air travel. But it also and rightly called forth attempts to think through the ways in

which all sorts of complex systems might be vulnerable. If an older sort of thinking about what is now called "homeland security" had stressed bridges linking major segments of the highway system, thinkers now added questions about water supplies, mail delivery, energy production, and the power grid. The very infrastructure on which modern economic activity and social integration depend had been improved dramatically, and not least by information technology, yet with the very improvements and the growing interconnection came new vulnerabilities. In the United States, civil defense had long been neglected in the complacent assumption that the real threats lay in more distant military "theaters." Military strategist had begun to raise questions about new threats to "homeland security" years earlier, but these only commanded attention throughout the bureaucratic hierarchy—let alone from the public—after 9/11. Questions about preparedness reached well beyond military planning, thought, as the anthrax scare that followed 9/11 called attention to the public health system. Parts of the system, like the Centers for Disease Control, operated at a high level even while other parts, like local-level primary care including vaccinations, were problematic (not least because based on high-cost private providers in a country where a fifth of the population lacked health insurance).

Ironically, while the talk of technology focused on vulnerability in the U.S., a widespread response in the Middle East, even among people who condemned the attacks, was a certain pleasant surprise that for once technology had been mastered by Arabs and not by their enemies. Yet, at the same

time, the U.S. intelligence and defense leadership indicated that they would attempt to defend against threats by adding to their technological capabilities. Few seemed to appreciate that one of the prime ironies of 9/11 had been way which advanced technology had been turned against its makers.

The 9/11 events raised questions about how well the finance industry could respond after being hit so directly—and for the most part the answer is in. It responded extremely well. The questions of whether the finance industry would continue to be comparably centered in New York is not yet so clearly answered, though, and firms are still wrestling with their own questions about how to prepare for possible future disruptions, whether and how to decentralize, how much to invest in redundancy of computer systems, and what kinds of training employees need for emergencies. Charities were challenged by 9/11 and have played a major part in helping victims, from the families of lost firefighters to workers laid off because their employers were closed or destroyed. Rock stars staged benefit concerts; millions of people gave donations small and large; long-established philanthropic foundations made major grants; voluntary organizations mobilized citizens created support systems. If the main religious story in the wake of 9/11 focused on the beliefs of perpetrators and whether these were representative of some broader pattern in Islam, the back pages of newspapers carried another less commonly remarked: the centrality of religious organizations to providing assistance after the disaster. Where, one might ask, would such assistance come from if American society were secular as some of its critics assert?

At the same time, though, systems of charity and voluntary organization were under stress. The performance of some charitable organizations, like the American Red Cross, seemed confused and problematic and led to management up-heavals. Numerous new organizations were created to handle new donations, and provisions for public oversight were revealed to be marginal. Worries surfaced that there would be high levels of support for some victims and their survivors while others would fall through the cracks—huge sums were raised for lost policemen, for example, but lost security guards were initially ineligible, no matter that many were among the first to respond and equally heroic.

More generally, practical action raised ethical questions: Should victims' families be compensated in proportion to victims' highly unequal salaries, for example, or should the government and charities treat lost lives as equally valuable? The list of questions could go on and on: How should plans for redeveloping the site of the tragedy take account of the horror; what provisions should be made for mourning and commemoration; and how should these relate to aesthetic, financial, and political concerns? How should one balance the huge amount of money spent to help the victims of tragedy in New York with the lesser sums made available to equally innocent victims of tragedies in less rich countries? How should one balance the very of attention to 3,000 dead in the World Trade Center attacks to the comparable number dying daily of AIDS?

These questions, through specific to 9/11, reveal ongoing themes. Many of the events that followed, indeed the at-

tacks themselves, are in ways episodes in other, longer-term stories. In some cases, they come to symbolize a trend; in others they mark a turning point. Perhaps the most important of the latter cases is the whole complex cluster of phenomena grouped together as "globalization." Globalization communicates not only increasing international flows of people, ideas, and goods, but also the increasing interdependence of well-being, governance, and power.

There is another burden carried by the term "globalization." To many people around the world, it has seemed not a neutral process of internationalization, but the imposition of an "American" or "Western" model. It has been true that the rich countries have often become so through global investment and trade, seemingly at the expense of the poor. This is part of the complaint. But so is the idea that Western cultural ideas—and sometimes ideologies, like perhaps neoliberalism itself—ride on the back of economic and technological and other forces of globalization to which they are not necessary. In the background of 9/11 is the complaint that it should not be necessary to accept secularism, mass merchandising, pornography, or new gender roles just to be global or modern. There are those that say everyone must take the whole package. And there are those who want to reject all of it—some. Qaeda leaders may have been among these. But many more people, all around the world like to pick and choose.

Globalization certainly does not explain 9/11, through it is an important context for understanding the events and their repercussions. The events and the response to them raise questions about economic and political inequalities,

about migration and freedom of movement, and about the role of the media. They mark a sharp counterpoint to the celebratory discussions of globalization that dominated during the 1990s; they are in the foreground of a gloomier discourse about its dangers.

But this is not just a matter of shifting discussions about globalization; material realities have shifted in important ways as well. September 11 shone a spotlight on some changes, but also played a part in producing or furthering many. Consider, for example, the prominence—sudden to Europeans and Americans—of the Arabic news service Al Jazeera. This has a longer history, including notably the decision of the BBC to disband its Arabic broadcast service in the late 1990s. That was itself partly a story of globalization, including both Britain's reduced geopolitical presence and the spread of neoliberal ideology that called for reducing state expenditure. Staff released from the BBC (but carrying certain parts of the BBC model with them) formed the core of the new service, which received financial support and a base from the Emir of Qatar. Relying especially on broadcast media, the new service reached both the literate and the illiterate, through it also supplemented its broadcasts with an effective website. Its well-trained and often incisive interviewers surprised many of their international subjects (including, in the wake of the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld). But, even to many Arabs, it first became famous during the post-9/11 war on terrorism. It emerged that no other news service really operated effectively in Afghanistan. If CNN or ABC wanted to show local footage, buying it from Al Jazeera was usually

the best approach. And at the same time, Al Jazeera was broadcasting the story throughout the Arabic world—and in Arabic, not simply reaching the English-speaking elites who might tune in to CNN (itself a symbol of globalization, but a monolingual channel in a polyglot world). The initial U.S. government response was to treat Al Jazeera as though it were somehow part of the problem, a threat because it seemed to tell other sides of the story and especially to provide Osama bin Laden with a media outlet (through the U.S. security services were glad to have the Al Jazeera tape to analyze, and U.S. networks were eager to broadcast extracts from it). After a few weeks, as the U.S. administration saw more need to strengthen alliances in the Arab world and possibly even to try to appeal to Arab public opinion, this position changed. Al Jazeera then looked like useful tool, and Rumsfeld and others were happy to be interviewed (even if likely a bit ambivalent about some of the results). What 9/11 did, in brief, was to reveal the gulf between the English-language version of media globalization and the demand for information in other languages, and also to strengthen the position of Al Jazeera as a new and important international media network.

Similarly, an important dimension of the 9/11 attacks was the place of international migration, especially of a European sojourn in the background of individual terrorists and European connections in the Qaeda network. Osama bin Laden had briefly studied at Oxford, and several others in Germany; cells were uncovered in Spain and France—and indeed in Malaysia and Singapore. International migration has been part and parcel of globalization for generations,

and its acceleration in the late twentieth century had certainly been noted. Likewise, the growth of a Muslim minority in several European countries has gained both public and academic attention. But the two issues come together in important ways in relation to 9/11. In the first place, the events highlight the fact that migration is not a simple movement from one place to another but often a (dis)location into a diasporic flow in which the meanings of both "home" and "away" are changed. The place of European experience in the formation of many apparent terrorists upsets easy accounts of the West vs. the rest, the modern vs. the traditional, the advanced vs. the backward, and even the rich vs. the poor. The terrorists often came from local elites in majority Muslim (and mostly Arab) countries. Whether the attempt of many to claim the Umma Islam as a transnational home reflected an alternative vision of modernity or a rejection of modernity, it revealed dissatisfaction with the actual conditions of majority Muslim nation-states—not least Saudi Arabia. Some had apparently embarked on careers they expected Western education to advance, and many had become devout in the context of their European experience, not in advance of it. Yet all were joined in a communication circuit that drew sustenance from resentment of Israeli occupation of Arab lands in the Middle East and helped to mobilize volunteers against Soviet-backed rule in Afghanistan. Relatively few were recruited directly from "home" without some apparently triggering experience of "away." And so migration is revealed to be not merely a matter of closed vs. open doors, access to economic opportunity, or even the struggle to maintain native culture in new settings.

At the same time, the response to 9/11is likely to close some doors, shift access to economic opportunity, and put new pressures on those who want to maintain at least aspects of the cultures into which they were born and make them available to their children born in distant lands. Certainly one of the important results of 9/11 is a tightening of U.S. immigration policy—and also its integration into a new security regime. As often in its history, the U.S. has seen a tide of nativism—with children and grandchildren of immigrants visible in the vanguard. Yet the contrary is also prominent—self-conscious efforts to reach across ethnic and religious divisions, to renew appreciation of diversity, at least within the bounds of patriotism. In international as well as domestic policy the response to 9/11 is frequently nationalistic, reinscribing the importance of national identity and solidarity in the face of unsettling globalization. Yet this is precisely not the "clash of civilizations" predicted by Samuel Huntington and others who expected transnational alliances of Judeo-Christian West against Muslims and other versions of East (including the lands of Orthodox Christianity and both Confucian and non-Confucian Asia). Ironically or not, it may have looked like that more to Osama bin Laden than to most Western observers. The Bush administration's first impulses seemed to lean toward such a view, yet quickly a contrary wisdom gained the upper hand and the president importantly visited a mosque and began to retune his speeches to try to make clear that the U.S. did not regard Muslims in general as its enemies.

Nonetheless, after 9/11 it became clear that American self-understanding was not easily meshed with the views of

many groups around the world, perhaps most notably Muslims. Where Americans saw openness—including in trade — others saw dominance. Where Americans saw aid, others saw influence. Where Americans saw a "reluctant sheriff" others saw self-appointed police who made the law to suit their own purposes. There is no easy parceling of the truth in these clashing perspectives. They reflect differences in vantage points, in experience, in analytic frameworks, in values, in evidence considered. What is clear is that they are important and, whatever their truth, are factors to be considered in world affairs. And it is clear also that America's rapid military success in Afghanistan has not ended the battle for public opinion. As late as February 2002, the Gallup poll found that 61 percent of Muslims in mine countries doubted that Arabs were responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Osama bin Laden may have lost face for seeming to hide, but in victory, the public significance of an image of American strength remains at best ambivalent. Is this just vengeance, necessary restoration of order, righteous advocacy of democracy, or the lashing out of a bully after briefly being bested? One of the things Americans find hardest to consider is that strength and dominance are resented, simply as such, and that good intentions do little if anything to temper this.

The point goes even to the dramatically superior military technology the Americans displayed in Afghanistan. The pinpoint bombings were impressive. But while to the American media this was a story mainly about a "clean" war and minimizing of civilian casualties, to much of the world it was a story about the radical asymmetry of power. Ameri-

cans were willing to inflict but not suffer casualties. And the very sense that the U.S. will not place the lives of American soldiers at risk, and that Americans enter wars only when their computers and airplanes give them a sense of distance, may make America into Goliath in all conflicts and offer the kid with the slingshot and rock some sense of justification in striking first. Indeed, part of the poignancy in the images of 9/11 comes from the marvels of modern technology—the technology in which America has excelled and reveled — being turned into weapons against those who usually wield the technology, those with the economic and military power to benefit disproportionately from such technology.

There is no end to competing narratives. There is no moment when we can say that September 11 meant one and only one thing and must mean the same thing to everyone (nor will it necessarily means the same thing to any one of us all the time). It will necessarily mean different things to those who lost loved ones and those who think of it as a strategic problem, for those who witnessed devastation first hand and those for whom it is an abstraction. It will mean different things to those in the Middle East and those in the Midwest. It is important to see, though, that the conflicting narratives do not line up into just two or three sides, certainly not into just ours and theirs. It is easy for Americans to forget that there are arguments, among Muslims, different theologies and views of the relationship between religious and public life, different histories, different mixings of Islamic and nationalist identities, different projects of modernization and of the preservation of tradition. There is no more a singular Muslim view of September 11 or of whether

modernity is clearly a good thing than there is a singular Christian view or a singular secular view. Yet there is a worrying division between the dominant partial consensuses in the West and those in the Middle East. The recurrence of rhetorical flourishes recalling the Crusades is only evidence of the power of half-unconscious historical memories, renewed by continuing geopolitical division.

Indeed, from the point of view of the Middle East, the September 11 attacks are not so much an issue in themselves as one important moment in a longer series of conflicts. This itself can be framed in terms of Islam generally or Arabs more specifically or Palestinians still more specifically—and in terms of Israel, or the United States, or the West as a whole. The September 11 attacks not only reflected roots in this context, among others, but also have influenced the course of further tragic struggles in the Middle East. Sympathies and analyses have both shifted. Israeli actions to "root out the terrorist infrastructure" in the occupied Palestinian territories sounded to many Americans like an extension of President Bush's own war on terrorism. For Palestinians to have even a fraction of the arms the occupying army had seemed evidence of "Arab terrorism." Suicide bombings that may have seemed legitimate tactics of struggle to some were mere terrorist acts to others—and the September 11 attacks could be understood as simply suicide bombings with unusually large complex "bombs."

Yet the Bush administration tried to play down the increasing violence in Palestine in order to build a coalition for an attack on Iraq—a project that the administration thought flowed directly from the post-September 11 war on

terrorism. It had its own account of what kinds of action the September 11 tragedies legitimated. At the same time, the very deepening of the conflict over Palestine reduced the efficacy of September 11 as the anchor to a legitimating narrative for "war against terrorism."

Still, there are a host of other divisions in the world. The 9/11 tragedies may shape future conflicts for from Palestine or from renewed terrorism by Islamists against the West. Among the most worrying flashpoints is Kashmir and the struggle over a beautiful mountain region that has become the most potent symbol for the unresolved tensions that grew out of the mixture of Islamic and British conquests of South Asia. The embeds 9/11 as a moment in different history, one that includes the extraordinary civilization of Mughal India, and the civilizations that preceded the Mughal Empire in India. It is a history that included British acts of terrorism and British achievements that remain among the triumphs of the West, a history into which Jews and Catholics also wandered but in which the dominant religious conflicts (and syncretisms) are not Christian and Muslim but Hindu and Muslim and Sunni and Shi'a within Islam. It is a history that should remind us that civilizations are not hermetically sealed but interrelated. And that such kinship has never stopped bloodshed.

September11 brought Afghanistan to the forefront of American attention and toppled the Taliban, militant Islamist students who came to power after conflicts with the former USSR and aid from Americans, who then imposed a crude vision of Islamic puritanism on their country, and sheltered and ultimately lost control to their foreign allies,

Al Qaeda. September 11 transformed the strategic calculations for Pakistan's rulers and made General Musharaff into a president whose American counterpart wanted him as a friend. This worried Indian rulers who conceivably would prefer the advantage that American enmity to Pakistan offered them over the possibilities of regional peace. It fanned the flames of tensions over Kashmir because it made some groups think they had better seize the moment before being undercut and others think they had a new chance to win once and for all.

The implications of September 11 are not limited to the world's "hotspots." In Europe, questions of how to respond brought Germany's Green Party a parliamentary defeat that could yet prove fatal, for reasons ancillary to the environmentalism that brought it to power. It refused to back its own coalition government partners, the Social Democrats, in taking up arms internationally for the first time since the defeat of the Third Reich. September 11 was intertwined, in other words, with the complex histories of Nazism and pacifism as well. Britain's Tony Blair played his special American relationship to a triumphant crescendo, eagerly appearing as America's European partner (and neatly also using American alliance to keep distance from Europe). Even while it introduced its new currency, the European Union revealed its difficulties forging a common foreign policy. Europeans grumbled at America's disdain for allies' opinions, and at the Bush administration's bellicose rhetoric culminating in its denunciation of an alleged "axis of evil" joining Iraq to Iran and North Korea. Yet European governments, unable to forge their own collective military stance,

experienced the meaning of American hegemony as they faced the choice of jumping on the American bandwagon or sitting on the sidelines.

One might have thought that September 11 strikingly revealed the need for strong multilateral institutions. What better argument could be offered for the value of multinational law enforcement and the creation of an international Criminal Court than the dramatic violence of terrorist actions that lacked the backing of any recognized nation-state and benefited from a variety of criminal activities from forged passports to illegal financial transfers? Yet, the American administration—already hostile to such multilateral institutions for fear that they might try American criminals and diminish national sovereignt—was steadfastly opposed. With minimal gestures to forging an alliance, it chose its own, mainly military, response. Despite the Bush administration's call for a collective struggle of all the world against terrorism, ironically enough, the actual building of multilateral institutions to carry out such a struggle—along with the rest of law enforcement—seems further away than before.

In fact, there are even debates over how much damage terrorism can do. Obviously it can do a lot. But is the real lesson of September 11 perhaps how quickly markets bounced back, how effective the human and technological systems were that sustained trading and communications? Cantor Fitzgerald, a firm integral to the global bond market, lost two-thirds of its employees in the World Trade Center attacks. Perhaps as important as the human story of its recovery and the care of owners and living employees for lost

colleaghes and their families is the fact that the firm was able to get its bond trading back to full strength within a week. Clearly the global economy was shaken, but it was not brought to its knees. Of course, this means only that it work—swithin certain terms of reference—not that it works as well as it might or that it works for good in all respects. It doesn't settle disputes over the proclaimed neutrality of the market vs. the dominance of an American (mostly free market) model, over economic productivity vs. environmental damage, or over growth vs. inequality.

During all this, newspaper readers discovered that there were more Muslims in India than in Saudi Arabia; that there were perhaps more Muslims than Jews in America (though the number has been debated); and that Muslims were the largest minority in many European countries. But this was also a discovery that any simple account of the secularization of the world was misleading, and that religion matters, in both radical and moderate forms. As Robert Keohane makes clear in this volume, one of the important weaknesses of international relations theory—and it is true of much political and social theory—is its unexamined secularism and failure to appreciate the continuing importance of religion in the world. Fundamentalists, puritans, and extremists of various sorts dominate our concerns for security, but as in lower Manhattan, so too in other parts of the world are religious convictions deployed for peace and care for the needy.

This is one of the challenges to democracies in the wake of 9/11. They must discern effective ways to embrace diversity but also to achieve solidarity in the face of both internal and external pressures. Focus just on America for a mo-

ment: A sad teenage boy in Florida flew an airplane into a tall building imitation of Al Qaeda, though surely he understood little of what that meant. It is still unclear whether anthrax was spread by a more informed sympathizer or simply someone criminally deranged. But it is certain that America faces a range of internal threats, including ones who, like Timonthy McVeigh, claim to speak as Christians and patriots while they cause mass destruction. Democracy depends not merely on tolerance, and not merely on legal procedures, though both are important. It depends also on the virtues of its citizens, on informed public life, and on respect for these conditions of both freedom and self-rule. It is crucial to ask whether the actions taken to protect America in the wake of 9/11 actually protect its democracy, and likewise whether they make democracy more likely elsewhere.

Few doubt that September 11, 2001 was an important day. Their reasons, however, are both varied and contested. It was an attack on America. It was a reminder to America. It brought death to thousands of innocent people and sorrow to their families. It avenged death and suffering elsewhere. It brought economic shocks. It challenged economic hegemony. It produced a new sense of insecurity. It opened American eyes to the insecurity of the world. It renewed American unity and resolve. It called forth American vengeance. And it was not only an American story.

The editorial and "op ed" pages of newspaper touch on all of these issues but usually do not clarify the information, theoretical perspectives, and intellectual commitments that inform different conclusions. How can they, when columnists are limited to 600 words? As a result, there is a need for

well formulated and clearly presented analyses that reveal rather than hide their intellectual underpinnings. This book is an attempt to meet this need, and to help in the intellectual task—as basic to science as to democracy—of revising conventional wisdom by bringing forward new evidence, filling in the context that makes facts meaningful, asking questions about received categories of understanding, and clarifying the theoretical assumptions and arguments that support different conclusions.

The work that led to this book started within days of September 11. It was clear that many people recognized a need to move beyond the easy simplifications of the attacks themselves, their perpetrators, and the U.S. response, to explore the wide range of global and local affairs that provided the context to them. There was a sudden desire for more information—about political Islam, about Afghanistan, about the different ways in which the United States might be vulnerable to further terrorist acts, and about how the attacks and "war on terrorism" would affect the economy, migration, civil rights, and a range of other concerns. Some U.S. newspaper and magazines (and others around the world) did begin to provide this information, and indeed one the by-products of the events was an impressive public education about important issues. There was a shortage, however, of analytic writing, and especially writing that would draw effectively on the knowledge social scientists had developed before by research on related issues. Our first step was to create a website and invite distinguished social scientists from U.S. and around the world to write short essays; many of the chapters in this book are developed out of these es-

says, revising and expanding early hurried efforts. Even in the present version, they are rushed into print rather faster than the usual academic process—which would devote a few more years to working out details. This seems important because public discussion needs the deepened sense of context, critical analysis of categories, and reexamination of assumptions they provide.

As is evident throughout these pages, social scientists have no unified view of the 9/11 attacks or responses to them. Anthropologists, economists, historians, political scientists, and sociologists emphasize different aspects; specialists on Islam and on information technology rightly raise different issues. Nor do all of these together offer a complete and final analysis. The course of events is still unfolding; as we write, it is not clear whether the U.S. will attacks Iraq or whether there will be some new major strike against America or Americans. It is not clear whether the 9/11 events will be part of a story of new war in Israel and Palestine or of new peace.

Not only is history open-ended; there is no limit to the range different analytic questions that could be posed. We think the chapters in this book point to most of the major ones. We also hope that the way we have organized them helps the reader to organized her own thoughts. Below we offer some introductions to the sections of the book. The categories we have employed—Islam Radicalism, Globalization, New War/New World Order?, Terrorism and Democratic Virtues, and Competing Narratives—are not intended as containers for analysis or boundaries of understanding. It is precisely testimony to the significance of the

9/11 events that their repercussions ripple outward in many directions. Information demonstrates its risible untidiness, to paraphrase Adrienne Rich. In this volume, we have done our best to commission and arrange essays in a way that they speak to each other. In so doing, we run the risk of reifying divisions between the subject headings within which they fall. But the reader will note, we hope, that contributors to the volume range widely in their concerns, and that essays speak across the categories we have constructed as well within them.