

**Email Network communications for
PCS discussion
September 25, 2001**

From ct135@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 06:50:18 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: New York Disasters

After the terrible loss of life downtown a little less than a day ago, New York is picking up the pieces of its existence. The city's inhabitants seem to have responded with a lot of anxiety, not much panic, and a remarkable display of solidarity; by all reports, for example, blood donor stations had more volunteers than they could handle. (My daughter Sarah and her family, who live about two kilometers north of the World Trade Center's burning rubble, went through a difficult day, but suffered no damage.) So far, we have no news of casualties from among the New York amsoc crowd.

None of us will avoid asking the classic moral questions: who dunnit, and what (choose one: ideas, urges, or incentives) did they have in mind? From the perspective of contentious politics -- these attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center surely qualify as contentious politics -- even more difficult and important questions press upon us: how, with what sort of coordination?

I imagine that American intelligence services are at this very moment searching for cockpit voice recorders, listening to air traffic control tapes, and reviewing recent traces of travel within and into the United States as well as whatever monitored communications they have, with just such questions before them. I also imagine that intelligence services across the world are collaborating. We amsocers will not match their information-gathering capacities, but we might at least share some ideas about causes and effects of international terrorism.

We can also help place the New York and Washington events in world perspective. Even if the highest estimates of casualties now being bruited turn out to be correct, the scale of killing will remain small in comparison with the last half-century's violent deaths in Rwanda, Cambodia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Guatemala,

Yugoslavia, and the Caucasus. That does not make New York's or Washington's losses trivial, but it does accent the difference between terrorism and civil war.

In yesterday's events, the degree of coordination and effectiveness displayed resembles wartime covert action far more than ordinary peacetime terror -- despite the previous attacks on the World Trade Center, American embassies, and Oklahoma City. Assuming that some connected set of people coordinated their action, they managed to seize at least four passenger-filled aircraft almost simultaneously shortly after takeoff from three of the country's biggest and most heavily policed airports, and to get three of the four craft flown into self-destruction on precise targets. (I can't help speculating that the people involved tried to seize more than four planes, but failed in the other attempts; we'll see.)

All this bespeaks substantial financing, planning, coordination, and organizational support -- although not necessarily a single, centralized, enduring Organization. Those of us who study contentious politics should resist the temptation to concentrate on ideas of repression and retaliation, which demagogues will surely broadcast. We may be able to make a small contribution to explaining how such high levels of coordination emerge among damage-doers, and therefore how to reduce threats of violence to civilians in the United States and, especially, elsewhere.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science, Columbia University
514 Fayerweather Hall, Mail Code 2552, New York 10027-7001, USA
telephone 212 854 2345, fax 212 854 2963, electronic ct135@columbia.edu

From jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 10:23:21 -0700 (PDT)
From: Jack Goldstone <jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu>
To: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>, amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: New York Disasters

Dear Colleagues,

Out on the West Coast, we all watched in horror the events of yesterday. I am grateful to Chuck for letting us know that, so far, all our amsoc colleagues seem to have been spared. However, I fear that no one was spared the fear and anxiety, and I worry that some of our colleagues may have friends or relatives who suffered casualties, or came very close to doing so (my mother flew on the United Flight from Newark to SF the night before the attack, and one of our friends here has a brother who works in the World Trade Center. But he decided to take a long breakfast since his office computer was being repaired, and he figured he could come in an hour or so late to work. He approached the WTC just as the first plane hit, and turned right around).

I hope that all of you have such happy escapes to tell of, and not more pressing tragedies. For any of you that did suffer losses, my sincerest condolences and sadness for you. I can only hope that the tragedies of this week will strengthen our resolve to defend democracy, and not retreat from it.

In response to Chuck's note, I agree that there is something that we contentious politics folks can do, and that is to help our nation keep this week's events in perspective. The media has indulged in a typical frenzy of panic and doom-saying, pronouncing that this event will tip our country's (and perhaps the world's) economy into recession, and that our lives and freedoms will never be the same.

Come on, folks -- the terrorists destroyed one military and three civilian buildings. However murderous and horrible these events are, they should not bring the United States to its knees, or cripple our economy. That is, unless we over-react by unduly magnifying these events.

It is certainly true that the U.S. should not think of itself as an invincible power, able to ignore and abandon international agreements at a whim, and to ignore its role in the world. If these events have the effect of reminding the U.S. that we cannot escape from global involvements, that may be salutary.

Yet as Chuck points out, we need to remind people that far greater killings

and disasters have struck, and that the strength and resilience of our economy and people should be able to bounce-back from a particular disaster, no matter how horrifying. As Chuck and others of you have shown, the history of democracy is intertwined with that of contentious politics; democracy and freedom have to be won and defended in conflict with forces that oppose it, and democracy has been able to withstand far more powerful opponents and greater losses of life and material.

My warmest wishes and deepest concerns with all of you in NYC,

Jack G.

From Osa@gwm.sc.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 15:59:19 -0400
From: Maryjane Osa <Osa@gwm.sc.edu>
To: amsoc@columbia.edu, ct135@columbia.edu
Subject: Re: New York Disasters

There is a helpful interview with Michele Zanini in today's Salon.com. She is a contributor to the edited volume, COUNTERING THE NEW TERRORISM. The forthcoming book is NETWORKS AND NETWARS.

Maryjane

Maryjane Osa
Assistant Professor
Department of Government & Int'l Studies
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
U.S.A.
tel & fax: (803)777-6507
email (alias): mj.osa@sc.edu

From ct135@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 16:26:34 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: [Fwd: BOUNCE amsoc@columbia.edu: Non-member submission from
["Jeffrey Broadbent" <broad001@tc.umn.edu>]]

>From Jeff Broadbent.

Chuck and Amsoc colleagues,
Thanks for opening up this dialogue. We are all still in a state of shock at the magnitude and horror of this event. It is still too early and too little is known for an informed discussion. But I would like to make two tentative comments in response to yours.

While it is surely important to understand the organization which committed these acts, it is more important to understand the "structural" conditions underlying them. We do not know the perpetrators yet, but certainly one high probability is that the acts have something to do with the Middle East cauldron of conflict. The TV showed pictures of Palestinians celebrating in the streets and waving the V sign for victory. The politicians are already talking about the "evil" that committed this act and how the US must retaliate. But to begin to "stop terrorism," the US public and leaders need to understand the roots of the conflict and address those.

As the old movement slogan goes, "if you want peace, work for justice." If the attack was perpetrated by Islamic militants, we need to understand what they are upset about. While this involves "motives," their motives to some degree reflect "structural" conditions -- most prominently the miserable, dispossessed condition of the Palestinian people and the reasons for that situation. The Palestinians see the US as the main backer of Israel, and hence as the co-perpetrator of their miserable condition. Their anger at the US has spread throughout the Arab world, inspiring radicals to take radical responses. Clearly, if this line of logic is correct, the most effective long term US response to these attacks would not be military, but would be to engage with the Israel-Palestinian conflict in a dialogue with an impartial eye to bringing fairness and justice. This would be the only

way to ameliorate the objective conditions that inspire the anger. And hence, the only way to have any hope of reducing the impetus to this kind of attack.

Also, I wanted to note that, as you say, the absolute numbers killed as a result of this attack will be small compared to the genocides and civil wars of the last century. However, the qualitative impact will be much greater than those numbers imply. The attacks have in a sense "decapitated" the world capitalist economy, probably killing thousands of the most talented financial wizards of Wall Street. Moreover, the attacks destroyed the symbolic core of the world capitalist system. And also damaged the core of the world military system. America is no longer "secure" from the battles of the "old world." The organizational and symbolic destruction could have profound implications for American and world policy. The incredible vulnerability of an intricately organized, highly technological society has been revealed to the whole world. Now, any suicidal group can commandeer a plane and slam it into a sky scraper. As has been shown in the Israeli-Palestinian "Second Intifada," even a highly militarized society cannot fully defend against suicide bombers armed with primitive bombs. Just as telecommunications has strengthened the political power of marginalized groups, so too will this new "resource" of attack, using airliners as bombs, probably strengthen the global voice of the "Third World," but will also decrease the openness and freedoms of a reactive US.

Jeff

-----Original Message-----

From: owner-amsoc@columbia.edu [mailto:owner-amsoc@columbia.edu]On Behalf Of Charles Tilly
Sent: Wednesday, September 12, 2001 5:50 AM
To: amsoc
Subject: New York Disasters

After the terrible loss of life downtown a little less than a day ago, New York is picking up the pieces of its existence. The city's inhabitants seem to have responded with a lot of anxiety, not much panic, and a remarkable display of solidarity; by all reports, for example, blood donor stations had more volunteers than they could handle. (My daughter Sarah and her family, who live about two kilometers north of the World Trade Center's burning rubble, went through a difficult day, but suffered no damage.) So far, we have no news of casualties from among the New York amsoc crowd.

None of us will avoid asking the classic moral questions: who dunnit, and what (choose one: ideas, urges, or incentives) did they have in mind? From the perspective of contentious politics -- these attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center surely qualify as contentious politics -- even more difficult and important questions press upon us: how, with what sort of coordination?

I imagine that American intelligence services are at this very moment searching for cockpit voice recorders, listening to air traffic control tapes, and reviewing recent traces of travel within and into the United States as well as whatever monitored communications they have, with just such questions before them. I also imagine that intelligence services across the world are collaborating. We amsocers will not match their information-gathering capacities, but we might at least share some ideas about causes and effects of international terrorism.

We can also help place the New York and Washington events in world perspective. Even if the highest estimates of casualties now being bruited turn out to be correct, the scale of killing will remain small in comparison with the last half-century's violent deaths in Rwanda, Cambodia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Guatemala, Yugoslavia, and the Caucasus. That does not make New York's or Washington's losses trivial, but it does accent the difference between terrorism and civil war.

In yesterday's events, the degree of coordination and effectiveness displayed resembles wartime covert action far more than ordinary peacetime terror -- despite the previous attacks on the World Trade Center, American embassies, and Oklahoma City. Assuming that some connected set of people coordinated their action, they managed to seize at least four passenger-filled aircraft almost simultaneously shortly after takeoff from three of the country's biggest and most heavily policed airports, and to get three of the four craft flown into self-destruction on precise targets. (I can't help speculating that the people involved tried to seize more than four planes, but failed in the other attempts; we'll see.)

All this bespeaks substantial financing, planning, coordination, and organizational support -- although not necessarily a single, centralized, enduring Organization. Those of us who study contentious politics should resist the temptation to concentrate on ideas of repression and retaliation, which demagogues will surely broadcast. We may be able to make a small contribution to explaining how such high levels of coordination emerge among damage-doers, and therefore how to reduce threats of violence to civilians in the United States and, especially, elsewhere.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science, Columbia University
514 Fayerweather Hall, Mail Code 2552, New York 10027-7001, USA
telephone 212 854 2345, fax 212 854 2963, electronic ct135@columbia.edu

From pi17@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 01:02:48 -0400

From: Paul Ingram <pi17@columbia.edu>

To: amsoc@columbia.edu

Subject: response to Broadbent

I write to contest the two primary components of Broadbent's' argument:

1) that injustice felt by Palestinians was a significant cause of Tuesday's terrorism; and 2) that the U.S. could reduce the feeling of injustice, and the motivation towards terror, by being more fair in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To the first point, recognize that the chief suspect in the recent terrorism is only a very recent convert to the Palestinian cause, and

has perpetrated terroristic attacks on the U.S. previously, with justifications unrelated to the Palestinians. The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, for example, came at a high point in the peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis. The current attack, long in preparation as it must have been, could have been conceived before the second intifada began last September, at a time when it seemed that the Palestinians and Israelis were moving towards a negotiated agreement. Although Israel is currently most salient, there are numerous complaints about American action that Islamic groups have in the past found sufficient justifications to aim terroristic attacks on our country. The Gulf War is an obvious example.

The second point has more significant implications for U.S. foreign policy. Has the U.S. been unfair in a way that has caused the Palestinians misery, and prompted them and others to terror? Both the justice to misery and misery to terror assertions can be contended. Start with the idea that the Palestinians and their supporters commit terror because they suffer at the hands of the Israelis. The most fervent sources of Israel-stimulated terror, organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, claim explicitly that they are not motivated by Palestinian misery, but by a basic opposition to the existence of Israel. Their terroristic activities actually increased in response to the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Putting aside those extremist organizations, the more wide-spread second Intifada came in response to an offer from Israel at Camp David that would seem to hold great promise for reducing Palestinian suffering -- in essence, it was a concession to all Palestinian demands except what is called the "right of return." The right of return would allow millions of Palestinians to return to Israel proper. Israelis view the idea, which would make Jews a minority in Israel, as a euphemism for the destruction of Israel. The roots of their anxiety can be seen by considering the experience of Jewish minorities in Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Iran during the twentieth century.

Beyond the organizations, there is public opinion evidence that suggests that Palestinian support for terror would not be quickly resolved by an improvement in their economic and political situation. Currently, 80-90% of Palestinians claim to support terroristic attacks on Israeli civilians. That number has been lower in the last seven years, but it has never been less than 50%, even when hopes for peace were at their highest.

As for the relationship between U.S. fairness and Palestinian suffering,

the Clinton administration was not viewed, even by the Palestinians, as being one-sided in their approach to the peace efforts. Indeed, when Netanyahu was the Israeli PM, it often seemed that the U.S. over-supported the Palestinians in negotiations. And as to the source of Palestinian suffering, it would be reckless to downplay the contribution of the Palestinian leadership itself. The PA is a clear example of a predatory state, and its diversion of developmental monies to private coffers over the past decade is notorious. Equally significant, it has done little to support and develop the institutional framework that facilitates economic interaction (my own research has shown that the provision of such institutions by the State of Israel, and before the state, by the Histadrut, was critical to the development of the Jewish economy).

None of this is an argument in favor of any particular response by the U.S. to Tuesday's terror. Certainly, it is not an argument that Palestinians deserve to be targeted by the U.S. And it is absolutely not an argument against any action by the U.S. that would help to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the benefit of both peoples. Instead, I hope to deflate the argument that Israel, as the target of Islamic ire, is indirectly responsible for Tuesday's terror.

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 08:38:07 -0700
From: Chris Tilly <Chris_Tilly@uml.edu>
To: chris_tilly@uml.edu
Subject: A Palestinian reaction to the terrorist attacks

Friends--

(Apologies to those who already received this message.) Kevin Murray, the Executive Director of Grassroots International (where I serve on the board) forwarded this statement from Eyad el Sarraj, Director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Project, which Grassroots funds. Probably many of you saw news clips of a small group of Palestinians in the West Bank celebrating following the US bombings. I believe this is a more typical Palestinian reaction, as it has been the reaction of a delegation of Cubans who are visiting us right now, of Lebanese who have been emailing a Lebanese-American friend, and of many others who have no great love for the US government and its policies--it is a human reaction of horror and of sympathy. I hope that this tragedy will help to expand our own capacity to understand and sympathize with the suffering of others, and to feel revulsion at all attacks on civilians.

Chris Tilly

>To: "GRI Board (E-mail)" <gri-board@igc.topica.com>

>From: Kevin Murray <kmurray@grassrootsonline.org>

>Subject: Eyad El Sarraj

>Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 10:27:43 -0400

>

>Greetings. I'm sure that, like me, each of you was still in a state of

>shock when you awoke today.

>

>I've been thinking about a statement that Grassroots International must

>write today. Among the notes about the tragedy that I received today was

>this one from Eyad el Sarraj, Executive Director of the Gaza Community

>Mental Health Program. For its simplicity and clarity, I found it helpful

>to my own thinking about this disaster.

>

>Take care,

>Kevin

>

>-----

>

>Horror in the U.S.

>

>The world today is not the same as it was.

>

>The incredible and horrific terrorist attacks on American targets in New

>York and Washington DC have shocked the world and alarmed people every

>where.

>

>We Condemn the killing of innocent people in America and elsewhere. Attacks

>on civilians, threats against life and murder are crimes against humanity.

>

>We, secure in our belief in the sanctity of life are abhorred by such acts

>of violence.

>

>Arabs and Palestinians who continue to suffer the complex tragedy since

>their uprooting, and the Israeli state sponsored violence against them

>should only stand firm against terror even with the knowledge of the long

>standing support for Israel by successive American governments. We

>absolutely reject the logic that horror and murder is the only way to change

>policies.

>

>The anger due to American policies in the world and in our region should not

>blind us to see that those who were killed and wounded in these horrific

>carnages are our brothers and sisters in humanity. Their murder can never

>be justified.

>

>For them and their families we extend our respect, and sympathy.

>

>

>Dr. Eyad El Sarraj

>

>

Grassroots International
www.grassrootsonline.org

Chris Tilly, University Professor
Department of Regional Economic and Social Development
University of Massachusetts at Lowell
Lowell, MA 01854
USA
Phone 978-934-2796, fax 810-963-5975
Web <http://www.uml.edu/Dept/RESO>
Chris_Tilly@uml.edu

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 10:26:00 -0500
From: Bill Kessler <billk@c21affiliated.com>
To: Bill D. aaKessler <BillK@c21affiliated.com>
Subject: America: The Good Neighbor

Bill Kessler
800.238.4646
www.C21Affiliated.Com

Editorial broadcast from Toronto by Gordon Sinclair, a Canadian television commentator. What follows is the full text of his trenchant remarks as printed in the Congressional Record:

"This Canadian thinks it is time to speak up for the Americans as the most generous and possibly the least appreciated people on all the earth. Germany, Japan and, to a lesser extent, Britain and Italy were lifted out of the debris of war by the Americans who poured in billions of dollars and forgave other billions in debts. None of these countries is today paying even the interest on its remaining debts to the United States. When France was in danger of collapsing in 1956, it was the Americans who propped it up, and their reward was to be insulted and swindled on the streets of

Paris. I was there. I saw it. When earthquakes hit distant cities, it is the United States that hurries in to help. This spring, 59 American communities were flattened by tornadoes. Nobody helped. The Marshall Plan and the Truman Policy pumped billions of dollars into discouraged countries. Now newspapers in those countries are writing about the decadent, warmongering Americans. I'd like to see just one of those countries that is gloating over the erosion of the United States dollar build its own airplane. Does any other country in the world have a plane to equal the Boeing Jumbo Jet, the Lockheed Tri-Star, or the Douglas DC10? If so, why don't they fly them? Why do all the International lines except Russia fly American Planes? Why does no other land on earth even consider putting a man or woman on the moon? You talk about Japanese technocracy, and you get radios. You talk about German technocracy, and you get automobiles. You talk about American technocracy, and you find men on the moon - not once, but several times - and safely home again. You talk about scandals, and the Americans put theirs right in the store window for everybody to look at. Even their draft-dodgers are not pursued and hounded. They are here on our streets, and most of them, unless they are breaking Canadian laws, are getting American dollars from ma and pa at home to spend here. When the railways of France, Germany and India were breaking down through age, it was the Americans who rebuilt them. When the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central went broke, nobody loaned them an old caboose. Both are still broke. I can name you 5000 times when the Americans raced to the help of other people in trouble. Can you name me even one time when someone else raced to the Americans in trouble? I don't think there was outside help even during the San Francisco earthquake. Our neighbors have faced it alone, and I'm one Canadian who is damned tired of hearing them get kicked around. They will come out of this thing with their flag high. And when they do, they are entitled to thumb their nose at the lands that are gloating over their present troubles. I hope Canada is not one of those."

Stand proud, America!

From jschwedler@gvpt.umd.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 16:12:33 -0400
From: Jillian Schwedler <jschwedler@gvpt.umd.edu>
To: amsoc@columbia.edu
Subject: Palestinians, recent events, and U.S. activities

hi everyone,

i'm distressed that our discussion of the recent events have morphed into a discussion/defense of

different positions in the arab/israeli conflict. i particularly liked chuck's first message calling for us to understand the "why" question as a first step toward preventing it from happening again.

from the starting point of images of palestinians cheering, let me add a few thoughts:

1) the images of palestinians cheering the destruction of the WTC must be understood in the context of an oppressed people cheering a blow to a power that is seen as an oppressor. regardless of where you stand on the arab-israeli conflict, it is undeniable that the united states has stood by israel, supporting it to the tune of \$3-5 bil annually, and thus some palestinians see the united states as part of an historic enemy. although the analogy is not perfect, think of all the black americans who cheered when OJ was found innocent. it was not that MOST black americans felt that way, nor was it that even those cheering wanted to see a murderer freed. rather, it was a celebration that for those on the bottom wrung of structural and institutionalized inequalities, score one for the little guy. as for palestinians, for even the few who were cheering, it is not that they are glad to see americans die, but that they are glad to see a power that has often stood unaccountable for! numerous atrocities finally humbled.

2) this raises the very important question of why anyone could possibly hate america, bastion of all that is good and just. there are 2 issues:

first, the united states has a very poor record of supporting democratic movements, and a strong record of supporting authoritarian regimes that get in line with U.S. interests (the shah's iran comes to mind as a particularly egregious example, and one that explains why anti-US sentiment was so strong during the iranian revolution). this is not a new argument, nor one that needs to be rehearsed here. the point here is that to many in the world, american does not stand for freedom and liberty, but oppression and domination.

second, over the past few decades the united states has committed numerous atrocities, directly or indirectly costing thousands if not millions of civilian lives. we need not even look at vietnam, east timor, or iraq, we can look to the last time the united states tried to strike at OBL (osama bin laden, as we islamacists like to call him), 1998 in sudan. after bombing the F*#@# out of a pharmaceutical plant (one that used to provide vaccines to an impoverished part of africa), the united states a) admitted it made a mistake and had no evidence the plant had any links to OBL; b) quietly paid off the owner of the company; and c) repeatedly blocked a UN investigation into the bombing that sought to see if the US was justified in its actions. several human rights groups did smaller-scale investigations, and together they estimated that tens of thousands of sudanese civilians died in the raid--more than died or will die as a result of Tuesday's events. no investigation, no accountability. is it any wonder that someone from the region might cheer if the US is attacked?

4) OBL only jumped on the palestine wagon recently, and has NOT been a supporter of hamas or any other islamist group there--despite what pundits are speculating. if OBL was indeed behind

tuesdays events--and we don't know for sure that he was--the acts of terrorism must be understood as symbolic acts against the US and against global capitalism, and NOT as a result of the failure of the arab-israeli peace process.

here's hoping everyone you know is safe. i knew 7 people in the buildings, and all but one got out safely...we are devastated. let us loudly condemn this horrible act against humanity, then find the strength to understand its origins and work toward changing whatever needs to be changed to prevent it from happening again.

jillian

Jillian Schwedler
Assistant Professor
Department of Government and Politics
University of Maryland
3114 L Tydings Hall
College Park, MD 20742

tel: (301) 405-4115
fax: (301) 314-9690
JSchwedler@gvpt.umd.edu
JSchwedler@aol.com
<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/schwedler/>

"to be nobody-but-myself--in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everbody else--means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting."

- e.e. cummings, 1958

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 18:53:05 EDT
From: BarnesWAB@aol.com

Subject: Fwd: Terrorism debate

I don't really know if forwarding works, so I'm also pasting in below.

I'm forwarding the following very impressive letter to everyone I know.
See also "The Cost of an Afghan 'Victory' " by Dilip Hiro from the February 15, 1999 issue of The Nation, at www.thenation.com. Seems to me

that at this moment, nothing is more important than preventing the Republicans and the militarists from defining this issue.

BB

Subj: Re: Terrorism debate
Date: 9/13/01 2:10:28 PM Pacific Daylight Time
From: shoffman@thecity.sfsu.edu (Susan Hoffman)
To: BarnesWAB@aol.com,

I received this letter from an Afghan(-American) friend of mine today and wanted others to have a chance to read it.

Dear Friends,

Yesterday I heard a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ronn Owens, on KGO Talk Radio allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with this atrocity, but "we're at war, we have to accept collateral damage," and he asked, "What else can we do? What is your suggestion?" Minutes later I heard a TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done." And I thought about these issues especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and even though I've lived here for 35 years I've never lost track of what's been going on over there. So I want to share a few thoughts with anyone who will listen.

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York. I fervently wish to see those monsters punished.

But the Taliban and Ben Laden are not Afghanistan. They're not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who captured Afghanistan in 1997 and have been holding the country in bondage ever since. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a master plan. When you think Taliban, think Nazis. When you think Bin Laden, think Hitler. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan" think "the Jews in the concentration camps." It's not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this atrocity. They were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would love for someone to eliminate the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

I guarantee it.

Some say, if that's the case, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban themselves? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, damaged, and incapacitated. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan--a country with no economy, no food. Millions of Afghans are widows of the approximately two million men killed during the war with the Soviets. And the Taliban has been executing these women for being women and have buried some of their

opponents alive in mass graves. The soil of Afghanistan is littered with land mines and almost all the farms have been destroyed . The Afghan people have tried to overthrow the Taliban. They haven't been able to. We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble with that scheme is, it's already been done. The Soviets took care of it . Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? There is no infrastructure. Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Someone already did all that.

New bombs would only land in the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely. In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They'd slip away and hide. (They hae already, I hear.) Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would be making common cause with the Taliban--by raping once again the people they've been raping all this time

So what else can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get Bin Laden is to go in there with ground troops. I think that when people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done" many of them are thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. They are thinking about overcoming moral qualms about killing innocent people. But it's the belly to die not kill that's actually on the table. Americans will die in a land war to get Bin Laden. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout. It's much bigger than that, folks. To get any troops to Afghanistan, we'd have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I'm going. The invasion approach is a flirtation with global war between Islam and the West.

And that is Bin Laden's program. That's exactly what he wants and why he did this thing. Read his speeches and statements. It's all right there.

AT the moment, of course, "Islam" as such does not exist. There are Muslims and there are Muslim countries, but no such political entity as Islam. Bin Laden believes that if he can get a war started, he can constitute this entity and he'd be running it. He really believes Islam would beat the west. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, he's got a billion soldiers. If the West wreaks a holocaust in Muslim lands, that's a billion people with nothing left to lose, even better from Bin Laden's point of view. He's probably wrong about winning, in the end the west would probably

overcome--whatever that would mean in such a war; but the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours. Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden yes, but anyone else?

I don't have a solution. But I do believe that suffering and poverty are the soil in which terrorism grows. Bin Laden and his cohorts want to bait us into creating more such soil, so they and their kind can flourish. We can't let him do that. That's my humble opinion.

Tamim Ansary

From ct135@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001

Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001 08:03:16 -0400

From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>

To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>

Subject: Predictions

Let me take advantage of this bullhorn to broadcast some predictions concerning what we will eventually learn about and from the suicide crashes a little less than four days ago.

Students of human affairs can hope to make two different kinds of predictions: unconditional predictions based on statistical regularities, and if-then predictions based on causal regularities. In the first category, demographers compare favorably to weather forecasters when it comes to anticipating, over large populations, how many children will be born tomorrow, how many people will be injured in automobile accidents, and so on -- just so long as they remember which day of the week and year tomorrow is, making appropriate adjustments for weekly and seasonal cycles.

The second category brings us instantly onto controversial territory; at issue is not just the validity of any particular causal connection but a set of assumptions concerning the nature of social processes, causality, and knowledge of both social processes and causality.

I write out predictions in the two categories not because I know the answers better than anyone else, but for precisely the opposite reason. Most of learn more from discovering that we were wrong, then inquiring into how and why we went wrong, than from being right. I am hoping a) to encourage amsoc colleagues to lay out their own contrary predictions, b) to identify errors in my own knowledge and reasoning, c) thereby to identify errors in the public discussion of what to do about terrorists and d) perhaps to stimulate more creative and constructive thinking

about alternatives to dividing up the world into Us and Them as a preliminary to dropping bombs on Them.

UNCONDITIONAL PREDICTIONS:

It will turn out that:

1. More than four suicide crews set off to seize airliners on Tuesday, but only four succeeded in taking over their targets.
2. Participants in the effort were never, ever in their lives all in the same place in the same time.
3. All were connected indirectly by networks of personal acquaintance, but not all had ever met each other, or knowingly joined a single conspiracy.
4. Because of network logic, all were therefore connected to Osama bin Laden and a number of other organizers or sponsors of attacks on western targets.
5. But no single organization or single leader coordinated Tuesday's action.
6. Some participants in seizure of aircraft only learned what they were supposed to do shortly before action began, and had little or no information about other planned seizures of aircraft.
7. Instead of emerging from a single well coordinated plot, these actions result in part from competition among clusters of committed activists to prove their greater devotion and efficacy to the (vaguely defined) cause of bringing down the enemy (likewise vaguely defined).

CONTINGENT PREDICTIONS:

8. Bombing the presumed headquarters of terrorist leaders will a) shift the balance of power within networks of activists and b) increase incentives of unbombed activists to prove their mettle.
9. If the US, NATO, or the great powers insist that all countries choose sides (thus reconstituting a new sort of Cold War), backing that insistence with military and financial threats will increase incentives of excluded powers to align themselves with dissidents inside countries that have joined the US side, and of dissidents to accept aid from the

excluded.

10. Most such alliances will form further alliances with merchants handling illegally traded drugs, arms, diamonds, lumber, oil, sexual services, and rubber.

11. In Russia, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, the Caucasus, Turkey, Sudan, Nigeria, Serbia, Algeria, and a number of other religiously divided countries, outside support for dissident Muslim forces will increase, with increasing connection among Islamic oppositions across countries.

12. Bombing the presumed originator(s) of Tuesday's attacks and forcing other countries to choose sides will therefore aggravate the very conditions American leaders will declare they are preventing.

13. If so, democracy (defined as relatively broad and equal citizenship, binding consultation of citizens, and protection from arbitrary actions by governmental agents) will decline across the world.

Am I sure these dire predictions are correct? Of course not. I write them out both to place myself on record and to encourage counter-predictions from better informed colleagues.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science, Columbia University
514 Fayerweather Hall, Mail Code 2552, New York 10027-7001, USA
telephone 212 854 2345, fax 212 854 2963, electronic ct135@columbia.edu

From dhn2@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001 11:34:51 -0400 (EDT)
From: Daniel Hugh Nexon <dhn2@columbia.edu>
To: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
Cc: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: Predictions

On Sat, 15 Sep 2001, Charles Tilly wrote:

- > 7. Instead of emerging from a single well coordinated plot, these
- > actions result in part from competition among clusters of committed
- > activists to prove their greater devotion and efficacy to the (vaguely
- > defined) cause of bringing down the enemy (likewise vaguely defined).

Given arguments 1-6, I think 7 is far less probable. The simultaneity of action among individuals who, in general, were not directly linked suggests the existence of a "well coordinated plot." Whether that well coordinated plot emerged from the central or a more peripheral points in the terrorist network, which is what I think you might be arguing, is a different matter.

Interestingly enough, I heard an interview on NPR the other day that contradicts the image of the Bin Laden's network put forth in the widely read Salon article. According to the experts being interviewed, the network is--or, at least, has become--more centralized and less amorphous. Apparently, this information has emerged subsequent to the arrests made surrounding the "Millennial Plot."

> CONTINGENT PREDICTIONS:

- >
- > 8. Bombing the presumed headquarters of terrorist leaders will a) shift
- > the balance of power within networks of activists and b) increase
- > incentives of unbombed activists to prove their mettle.
- >
- > 9. If the US, NATO, or the great powers insist that all countries choose
- > sides (thus reconstituting a new sort of Cold War), backing that
- > insistence with military and financial threats will increase incentives
- > of excluded powers to align themselves with dissidents inside countries
- > that have joined the US side, and of dissidents to accept aid from the
- > excluded.

This is a crucial issue, and it depends on what the US means by "take sides." It seems, so far, that US officials are trying to construe

"support" to mean 'within the limits of their capabilities and political contexts.' If this is the case, it may be much easier to "side" with the US and thus avoid the dichotomization of world political relations implied by Bush et al.'s statements.

One of my concerns, if this becomes a 'new Cold War' (or hot war) is that we will return to our old ways of supporting incredibly oppressive regimes if they fulfill imperial bargains... in this case, a commitment to the US anti-terrorism campaign. Given the nature of the terrorist problem, that will certainly exacerbate the threat from terrorism.

> 11. In Russia, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, the Caucasus, Turkey, Sudan,
> Nigeria, Serbia, Algeria, and a number of other religiously divided
> countries, outside support for dissident Muslim forces will increase,
> with increasing connection among Islamic oppositions across countries.

Which might, conversely, make it easier to 'wage war' against them.

There now seem to be indications this administration is interested in more than _bombing_ Afghanistan... any thoughts?

Regards, Dan | Columbia Political Science | www.columbia.edu/~dhn2
"Everyone who has had a referee get the argument of his or her paper directly backward has wondered about calling it 'peer' review."
-- Arthur L. Stinchcombe.

From jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001 21:01:06 -0700 (PDT)
From: Jack Goldstone <jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu>
To: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
Cc: : ;
Subject: Re: Predictions

Dear Chuck,

Thanks for an interesting challenge. Two areas in which I differ from your views:

(1) " But no single organization or single leader coordinated Tuesday's action."

I heartily disagree with this. The degree of planning and coordination to have two planes hit the world trade tower within minutes of each other, much

less have two other simultaneous skyjackings, for a total of four actions, each by a cell of 4-5 actors, each with at least one trained pilot -- such things do not happen by chance or competition among separate groups. Someone gave the signal to act precisely on this day, on those flights, against these targets; someone who had funded and planned for an event like this long in advance.

Moreover, despite the amorphous character of these terrorist cells and networks, ALL of the major attacks on U.S. facilities in the last five years -- the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, the attack on the U.S. embassies abroad, and the attack on the destroyer Cole -- all appear to have been planned and executed by the same "team" coordinated by Osama Bin Laden. While there is much terrorism, acts of this degree of sophistication and impact are quite rare. We should be very careful not to equate the actions of a Palestinian liberation fighter strapping a bomb to himself and detonating it in a crowded marketplace with the actions of a group of several dozen who have planned and trained for years to execute a complex, multi-faceted plan of destruction.

(2) "Bombing the presumed originator(s) of Tuesday's attacks and forcing other countries to choose sides will therefore aggravate the very conditions American leaders will declare they are preventing."

Chuck seems to be concerned that cold-war type actions by the U.S. could bring to pass something like Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." I never put much stock in that idea, and I don't think responding vigorously to these attacks will make it real. I say this for the following reasons:

A. First, "bombing the perpetrators" is not likely to be effective in any event. If the U.S. is to act, it will have to take measures to force the Taliban out of power and install a pro-Western or at least non anti-Western Afghan nationalist regime. The Taliban is, if my Afghan friends are correct, something like the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia -- a brutal, ideological absolutist and merciless regime, hated and feared by its own people. Just as Vietnam did not reap any horrendous pan-Indochinese opposition for acting against the Khmer Rouge, I doubt the U.S. or any other partners it has will suffer for acting against the Taliban.

B. Recall that the Taliban has already thumbed its nose at the world on two recent and public counts -- international aid was used to build a soccer stadium, that is now used as an execution field; and the destruction of world artistic treasures. I believe these attacks are the last straw. It was one thing for Bin Laden and his network to attack overseas or military outposts of the U.S., such as the African embassies or warships. But to use

civilian aircraft to attack office towers crosses a line -- if this is allowed to stand, and anyone connected with this to go unaffected, what are the possibilities: A British Airways jet piloted into Big Ben? Air France into the Eiffel Tower?

Air Egypt into the Sphinx, the Pyramids, or the Aswan Dam? In short, no country in the world that operates commercial airlines can afford to accept the possibility that if it antagonizes terrorists (and recall that the government of Egypt, for one, is already fighting against such groups), its civil aviation will be used against it as a weapon of mass destruction.

C. There are precedents for Islamic governments acting against Islamic terrorists who have gone so far that they threaten the stability and aims of those governments. Twice, the PLO was expelled by Islamic governments (from Jordan and by Syria from Lebanon) because they were drawing too much counter-terrorist activity into those nations. If the costs of continuing to support the Taliban or terrorists becomes too high, then many countries will join "our" side, or at least become neutral or supportive of counter-Taliban measures. The Saudis have already announced that they will stabilize oil prices as needed. Pakistan has agreed to allow U.S. to fly over its territory to take counter-measures. I think this momentum is not likely to reverse.

(3) My own prediction. A "war on terrorism" as such is hyperbole. Terrorism will continue, and cannot be stamped out by war. Syria and Saudi Arabia will continue to allow funds to sponsor incidents of terrorism that advance their interests. However, the PARTICULAR terrorist network that has been funding operations requiring millions of dollars, years of training and planning, and mass coordination among dozens of individuals to attack US targets over the past ten years, and its sponsors among the Taliban, can be targeted, and probably eliminated. Indeed, precisely to protect their ability to continue to sponsor limited terrorism, countries such as Saudi Arabia and Syria are likely to join this attack on this particular organization, which has now become a danger to them and to all.

(4) If it is true that what Bin Laden is counting on, or hoping for, is a confrontation with the U.S. that will lead to a war of Islamic nations vs. the West, he will find himself sorely mistaken, and probably deserted. It is simply not in the interest of any major Islamic or Arab country -- not Iran, not Iraq, not Pakistan, not Syria, certainly not Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or Indonesia -- to get drawn into a major military confrontation with the U.S. Without any "counter" superpower to support them, Arab countries have no ability or interest in confronting the world's only true superpower. The lessons of the Iraqi war, and perhaps Serbia, is that the U.S./NATO can destroy targets at will. This may be irrelevant for Afghanistan, where

there are no targets of significance; but it is certainly not true for any other Islamic or Arab countries. The aggression of Iraq against Kuwait found no defenders in the Islamic or Arab world; I don't believe this act of terrorism will either.

(5) Finally, much is bandied about regarding the difficulty of combat in Afghanistan, and how they beat the Russians. The Russians are a third-rate military that still cannot subdue Chechnya, a much smaller and closer target. Moreover, the Afghans had enormous logistical, weapons, and financial support from the U.S. and Pakistan (we, in fact, contributed to training and arming Bin Laden's supporters). A war against the Taliban, undertaken by a U.S./Allied coalition, with the Taliban cut off by a mutual sealing of borders by Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian powers, is a far different matter.

So I have rather different predictions than Chuck. I think these terrorist actions threatened "business as usual" for most Arab and Islamic states as well as the West, and therefore all these nations will find common cause in eliminating this particular terrorist organization. If that requires pulling down the Taliban as rulers of Afghanistan, then I believe the coalition will find a way to do so.

All the best,
Jack G.

Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001 14:36:05 -0400
From: Antonina Gentile <vze22wrxs@verizon.net>
Reply-To: Antonina Gentile <antonina.gentile@verizon.net>
To: Daniel Hugh Nexon <dhn2@columbia.edu>, Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: Predictions

Dear Daniel and Chuck

Just an off-the-cuff comparative historical note on the issue of 'insistence'/coercion that I think support totally Chuck's last predictions: Powell yesterday made clear that there would be repercussions for countries that would not join in - if you ain't with us, you're agin us. During the international 'alliance' building phase for the Gulf War in 1990, there was a tremendous amount of arm twisting and black mail in the region and beyond, using IMF loans, contracts for Kuwait's reconstruction (in the case of European countries that were more equivocal) and so forth. Alliance building by the Bush (Snr) administration entailed a mix of threat and non-coercive

incentives to states and multinational capital around the world. The effect was the reinforcement of repressive regimes and the sowing of seeds for future rebellion and terrorist cells which linked up transnationally by the very processes that Chuck describes in predictions 8 and 9. For instance, when the crucial UN resolution was voted on (only Yemen and Cuba against, China and others abstained), an international broadcaster (BBC from memory) caught the US ambassador to the UN unawares as he walked out and past the Yemeni: 'That will be the most expensive no vote you ever cast.' The next day Saudi Arabia expelled 100,000 Yemeni guest-workers and crucial funds to Yemen were cut off. In the next years the cycle of kidnapping Westerners in the Yemen began (as did the bombings by dissidents in Saudi Arabia to attack the newly established US bases there).

Also of interest, while researching a story in Syria in 1994, I came across the following: In Aleppo I found a group of foreign employees of Sieman's working on installing a new telecommunications system for the country. Significantly, they were former telecommunications operatives of British and other intelligence agencies. The contract was a US reward for Syria's stance in the Gulf War - German capital got the contract, Kuwait paid the bill, Syria got its telecommunications updated in its bid for modernisation and regime maintenance after the loss of Soviet money, and Bush got his political split in the Arab world. The first place that Syria had the system installed in was Hama, the town that Hafez El Asad besieged and slaughtered 10s of thousands of people in around 1981. Hama had started mass rebellion against the regime, in its later phase largely Islamist because most of the left was either dead or in refuge in Europe. My guess is that Hama was chosen for reasons of both pacification and to allow for more effective government surveillance. When I visited Hama, I found a part of Syria that was even more terrified of government agents than the rest of the country (unbeknowns to the people in a hotel I stayed at, I overheard and understood a fair bit of a meeting that took place in a lobby near my room, windows open due to the summer heat. A group of people [Islamists] met to discuss who or what I might be. The suggestions included an Arab American, an Arab Israeli, an Israeli spy, or a spy of the Syrian regime. It was when I heard the last that I put my running shoes on, cash in one pocket, passport in the other and checked the window to see how far down I might have to jump in the middle of the night if I heard footsteps at my door. I eventually rested half easy when they concluded that I was a Arab Israeli traveller.)

Regarding your question, Daniel, 'There now seem to be indications this administration is interested in more than bombing Afghanistan... any thoughts?' I am also interested in this. The news a few hours ago that Israel has just launched major attacks on Gaza makes me wonder whether a series of spots in the region will be targeted, but by different alliance

actors - I wouldn't call it proxy, though, because, for instance, for Sharon this is an opportunity to escalate for his own purposes. India also has an opportunity to settle scores and boost military and economic ties with the west.

Chuck, re your prediction about a decrease of democracy: soon after Tuesday, Berlusconi brazenly announced that from now on people are going to have to become used to sacrificing certain civil rights if terrorism is to be eradicated.

Antonina Gentile

From flint@igc.org Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 09:45:21 -0500
From: Adam Flint <flint@igc.org>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: Predictions

Greetings

We are all aware of the U.S. backing of the Mujahadeen (spelling?), and for the repressive actions of Taliban against its own people, but I feel very ill-prepared none-the-less to discuss the probable reactions within Afghanistan to any of the predictions on this list without more good information and analysis.

I for one would like to know a great deal more about the recent (at least 1945 onward) history of afghaninstan and the role of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. I Particularly would like to know what has been happening on the ground between the contending forces since 1990. There were rockets launched from from the north that struck Kabul on Wednesday, which is surely not a complete coincidence. What is the composition of the groups fighting Taliban inside Afghanistan?

Is anyone on this list a specialist in Afghanistan or can anyone recommend sources that would help?

Regards,

Adam

--

Adam Flint

Doctoral Candidate
Department of Sociology
State University of New York
Binghamton, NY 13902
tel 607-777-2349
fax 607-777-4197
flint@igc.org

Dear Chuck,

Thanks for an interesting challenge. Two areas in which I differ from your views:

(1) " But no single organization or single leader coordinated Tuesday's action."

I heartily disagree with this. The degree of planning and coordination to have two planes hit the world trade tower within minutes of each other, much less have two other simultaneous skyjackings, for a total of four actions, each by a cell of 4-5 actors, each with at least one trained pilot -- such things do not happen by chance or competition among separate groups. Someone gave the signal to act precisely on this day, on those flights, against these targets; someone who had funded and planned for an event like this long in advance.

Moreover, despite the amorphous character of these terrorist cells and networks, ALL of the major attacks on U.S. facilities in the last five years -- the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, the attack on the U.S. embassies abroad, and the attack on the destroyer Cole -- all appear to have been planned and executed by the same "team" coordinated by Osama Bin Laden. While there is much terrorism, acts of this degree of sophistication and impact are quite rare. We should be very careful not to equate the actions of a Palestinian liberation fighter strapping a bomb to himself and detonating it in a crowded marketplace with the actions of a groups of several dozen who have planned and trained for years to execute a complex, multi-faceted plan of destruction.

(2) "Bombing the presumed originator(s) of Tuesday's attacks and forcing other countries to choose sides will therefore aggravate the very conditions American leaders will declare they are preventing."

Chuck seems to be concerned that cold-war type actions by the U.S. could bring to pass something like Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations." I

never put much stock in that idea, and I don't think responding vigorously to these attacks will make it real. I say this for the following reasons:

A. First, "bombing the perpetrators" is not likely to be effective in any event. If the U.S. is to act, it will have to take measures to force the Taliban out of power and install a pro-Western or at least non anti-Western Afghan nationalist regime. The Taliban is, if my Afghan friends are correct, something like the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia -- a brutal, ideological absolutist and merciless regime, hated and feared by its own people. Just as Vietnam did not reap any horrendous pan-Indochinese opposition for acting against the Khmer Rouge, I doubt the U.S. or any other partners it has will suffer for acting against the Taliban.

B. Recall that the Taliban has already thumbed its nose at the world on two recent and public counts -- international aid was used to build a soccer stadium, that is now used as an execution field; and the destruction of world artistic treasures. I believe these attacks are the last straw. It was one thing for Bin Laden and his network to attack overseas or military outposts of the U.S., such as the African embassies or warships. But to use civilian aircraft to attack office towers crosses a line -- if this is allowed to stand, and anyone connected with this to go unaffected, what are the possibilities: A British Airways jet piloted into Big Ben? Air France into the Eiffel Tower? Air Egypt into the Sphinx, the Pyramids, or the Aswan Dam? In short, no country in the world that operates commercial airlines can afford to accept the possibility that if it antagonizes terrorists (and recall that the government of Egypt, for one, is already fighting against such groups), its civil aviation will be used against it as a weapon of mass destruction.

C. There are precedents for Islamic governments acting against Islamic terrorists who have gone so far that they threaten the stability and aims of those governments. Twice, the PLO was expelled by Islamic governments (from Jordan and by Syria from Lebanon) because they were drawing too much counter-terrorist activity into those nations. If the costs of continuing to support the Taliban or terrorists becomes too high, then many countries will join "our" side, or at least become neutral or supportive of counter-Taliban measures. The Saudis have already announced that they will stabilize oil prices as needed. Pakistan has agreed to allow U.S. to fly over its territory to take counter-measures. I think this momentum is not likely to reverse.

(3) My own prediction. A "war on terrorism" as such is hyperbole. Terrorism will continue, and cannot be stamped out by war. Syria and Saudi Arabia will continue to allow funds to sponsor incidents of terrorism that advance their interests. However, the PARTICULAR terrorist network that has been funding operations requiring millions of dollars, years of

training and planning, and mass coordination among dozens of individuals to attack US targets over the past ten years, and its sponsors among the Taliban, can be targeted, and probably eliminated. Indeed, precisely to protect their ability to continue to sponsor limited terrorism, countries such as Saudi Arabia and Syria are likely to join this attack on this particular organization, which has now become a danger to them and to all.

(4) If it is true that what Bin Laden is counting on, or hoping for, is a confrontation with the U.S. that will lead to a war of Islamic nations vs. the West, he will find himself sorely mistaken, and probably deserted. It is simply not in the interest of any major Islamic or Arab country -- not Iran, not Iraq, not Pakistan, not Syria, certainly not Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or Indonesia -- to get drawn into a major military confrontation with the U.S. Without any "counter" superpower to support them, Arab countries have no ability or interest in confronting the world's only true superpower. The lessons of the Iraqi war, and perhaps Serbia, is that the U.S./NATO can destroy targets at will. This may be irrelevant for Afghanistan, where there are no targets of significance; but it is certainly not true for any other Islamic or Arab countries. The aggression of Iraq against Kuwait found no defenders in the Islamic or Arab world; I don't believe this act of terrorism will either.

(5) Finally, much is bandied about regarding the difficulty of combat in Afghanistan, and how they beat the Russians. The Russians are a third-rate military that still cannot subdue Chechnya, a much smaller and closer target. Moreover, the Afghans had enormous logistical, weapons, and financial support from the U.S. and Pakistan (we, in fact, contributed to training and arming Bin Laden's supporters). A war against the Taliban, undertaken by a U.S./Allied coalition, with the Taliban cut off by a mutual sealing of borders by Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian powers, is a far different matter.

So I have rather different predictions than Chuck. I think these terrorist actions threatened "business as usual" for most Arab and Islamic states as well as the West, and therefore all these nations will find common cause in eliminating this particular terrorist organization. If that requires pulling down the Taliban as rulers of Afghanistan, then I believe the coalition will find a way to do so.

All the best,
Jack G.

From sikutler@facstaff.wisc.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 16:08:30 -0500
From: Stanley Kutler <sikutler@facstaff.wisc.edu>
To: sikutler@facstaff.wisc.edu
Subject: op-ed

Greatness requires strength, know-how

By STANLEY I. KUTLER

Last Updated: Sept. 15, 2001

Pearl Harbor!

An act of war!

These were the slogans of choice this past week.

Pearl Harbor conjures memories of World War II and the response of the greatest generation ever. And as that generation is about to pass, we have accelerated our praise and acclamation.

In December 1941, we confronted the armed might of Germany and Japan, then among the world's leading powers.

What occurred on Sept. 11 has limited use as an analogy. Yes, American soil has been attacked and American citizens killed in still unknown numbers. But we are not facing the massed resources of a hostile state, with clearly defined boundaries and resources to attack.

What is similar is our sense of insecurity. Sixty years ago, bold, imaginative and determined leadership inspired a massive response of American might and will.

Leadership is more than words or threats. Franklin D. Roosevelt - who said "we have nothing to fear but fear itself" - offered noble, inspired words, but his deeds and actions combated the Great Depression.

Portraying Dec. 7, 1941, as a day of infamy was not enough to turn back the Axis. FDR understood that leadership required him to urge and prod courageous acts to mass that public will. He adeptly used the enormous military talent, mobilized the productive and

military might of the nation, worked closely with other political leaders and, from the home front, he called for and received a prodigious effort.

The 12 million Americans who served in the military during World War II offer only a part of that greatest generation. The other 130 million Americans contributed mightily and in diverse ways. Most striking was the pervasive and willing sense of sacrifice.

Military personnel, of course, offered the supreme sacrifice, while other men and women sacrificed several years of their lives.

But civilians, too, "fought." We learned how to deal with food rationing, including that for meat, canned goods and sugar. Gasoline was rationed, primarily to conserve on rubber tires. The war solved the Depression, and America gained full employment. Yet families that had done without some necessities and certainly their luxuries now found their ability to spend their new-found "prosperity" severely limited.

The war effort involved everyone, including school children who lugged ten pounds of paper, or a sack full of crushed tin cans, or spent half their allowance on war stamps. We confidently believed the government was doing everything humanly possible to win the war. In today's climate of hostility to the very notion of government, such beliefs are rare, indeed. And analogies are always tricky.

Certainly, the United States now is under threat, not from the military might of a hostile foreign power, but from the sophisticated operations, abetted by modern communications, of isolated groups of terrorist cells. Their power far outstrips their numbers.

What did it take to commandeer an airliner and fly into the World Trade Center or the Pentagon? Make no mistake: The threats are serious, but capturing or killing Osama bin Laden will not end such threats. Martyrs are followed and imitated.

Our responses must go beyond missiles or bayonets. For openers, we can tell the Afghan Taliban that we find their regime unacceptable and that we now will revoke the \$43 million that President Bush granted them in May because they promised not to grow poppies for opium. That is extortion.

A government that treats women as sub-humans, tortures dissenters and forces non-Muslims to wear identity badges and harbors bin Laden, a man we have directly connected to other previous acts of terror, is not one for us to support.

We might also ask Yasser Arafat to again tell his people that such acts of terror are wrong, but this time tell them in Arabic so they can understand him.

The president and Congress must create a safer travel environment, which means imposing new concepts for security. Bush promises that "we will spend what it takes," but we must be prepared to spend money and sacrifice our cherished conveniences. We should restore the Sky Marshal program, which by all accounts, effectively worked a quarter century ago before we allowed it to lapse, either for cost reasons or simple overconfidence.

Will our road warriors, who "must" make a certain number of calls every day, willingly submit to airport arrival, three hours before departure for security purposes? What about surrendering that convenient e-ticket? Curbside luggage check-in? Airline check-in at hotels? Surrendering the "right" to carry a pocket knife?

Trifling matters, to be sure, but necessary for security. If we implement them, for how long will we commit? Is such convenience an essential ingredient for the American way of life, which we repeatedly promise to maintain? We must totally revamp our airport security system. Should an airline, run by someone opposed to all government regulation, determine our safety and security needs, subject to no governmental supervision? Absolutely not; we know the bottom line will rule every time.

The president has said we will spend whatever is necessary. Pre-emption and prevention are now the major priorities. It is time to de-privatize and replace for-profit companies who now run safety and security programs. We must train and pay for professional people to operate airport security. This is no minimum wage job. It requires trained, competent personnel who can question travelers with something other than a programmed list of three standard questions.

Will it cost more to travel? Of course. Will airlines be less crowded? Let us hope so. But all of that is relatively simple.

Our most effective weapons remain our intelligence and

counter-intelligence capabilities. In recent years, we have confronted a variety of failures in the institutions responsible for these weapons, including the FBI, the CIA and those responsible for the security of our borders. It is neither unpatriotic nor subversive to point to their failures.

The Cold War is over, and we won with the kind of efforts and institutions we employed. Those challenges and battles are history. We must, as Lincoln said, have the courage to "think anew."

In the end, we must have the leadership and political courage to implement new ideas, new directions. Our present political climate is paralyzing. We are dismayed by the failure of our institutions, but do we have the resourcefulness to challenge the shibboleths of entrenched institutions and their outmoded ways?

Political courage is an all-too rare commodity in these days of polls, focus groups and self-serving interest groups. The president has pledged that the focus of his administration will be to combat terrorism. Fine.

But leadership involves more than seeking revenge and retaliation. Such action largely is symbolic. We need effective leadership to prevent and thwart future attacks. We cannot recall the past; the attacks of Sept. 11 will linger long in the nation's consciousness.

The challenges we confront are colossal. What our leaders do will be measured in the long term. Raining missiles on Kabul or its environs promises little. Remember President Clinton's futile missile attacks on a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan and the dusty hills of Afghanistan? Sometimes actions have no consequences.

If we wish to honor that greatest generation ever, then we must remember and emulate their will, their resolve and their imagination.

Stanley I. Kutler is a history professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the author of "The Wars of Watergate" and editor of "Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes".

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on
Sept. 16, 2001.

Stanley Kutler
sikutler@facstaff.wisc.edu
Tel. (608) 831-4112
4112 Keewatin Trail
Verona, WI 53593

From jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 20:25:10 -0700 (PDT)
From: Jack Goldstone <jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu>
To: Antonina Gentile <antonina.gentile@verizon.net>
Cc: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: Re: Predictions

Dear Antonina and colleagues,

Thank you for the corrections. You are certainly right that I made several errors in my haste. I tried to always specifically say "Arab and Islamic governments," to denote all those governments that are either Arab OR Islamic, since I of course recognize that not all Arab governments are Islamic, and not all Islamic governments are Arabic. However, I can see that I got sloppy. Specifically, when I got to the end of my message, I made a major blooper in referring to Syria and Jordan as "Islamic governments," which they are definitely NOT. My apologies to those of you who know better; poor work on my part!

Rather, I still think that -- as you point out in Syria and Jordan -- when governments in the Middle East find their interests threatened by Islamic extremists, they will not hesitate to turn on them.

Best,
Jack G.

From ct135@columbia.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001 08:35:09 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: Predictions, Reflections, and Commentaries

A surprising number of commentators on my two statements of last week (not all on amsoc; with my permission, people have been forwarding the statements and circulating them on other lists) took me to be advocating inaction by the United States. As I thought I had said clearly, I wasn't

advocating anything.

In my often-stated view, any political-moral program includes three kinds of assertions that are ripe for social scientific scrutiny: 1) statements of fact, 2) statements of possibility, and 3) explanations. When confronted with momentous political and moral choices, social scientists have a professional opportunity and obligation to distinguish between their preferences for certain actions and outcomes, on one side, and these three sorts of assertions, on the other.

Are our actual positions on one side and the other empirically interdependent? Are mine? Of course they are. That makes the challenge of distinguishing, and discovering that preferred actions or outcomes are impossible or counter-productive, crucial for social scientists.

The challenge I laid down last week was for kindred spirits to set out their own unconditional and contingent predictions concerning what we will eventually learn about last Tuesday's attacks and international responses to them. So far the main objections anyone has voiced to me concern the degree of coordination among Tuesday's attackers.

That is an important objection if correct. It does, indeed, affect my contingent predictions; if one person or tightly knit organization planned and executed the whole operation, one can more easily imagine searching out that small number of persons and neutralizing them by one means or another. Even in that case, we would want to consider the likely consequences of that neutralization. Personally, I would be very surprised if bombing the Taliban reduced the frequency or deadliness of terrorist attacks across the world. Whether I am right or wrong is not important for the present discussion; what matters is that policy choices not only seek good ends but rest on the best available statements of fact, of possibility, and of cause-effect relations.

Before I do, indeed, move into advocacy, let me re-issue the challenge: how about stating counter-predictions based on different premises? That will not only advance the policy debate, but also give us a clearer idea what resources systematic social science has, and does not have, to offer.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science, Columbia University
514 Fayerweather Hall, Mail Code 2552, New York 10027-7001, USA
telephone 212 854 2345, fax 212 854 2963, electronic ct135@columbia.edu

Subject: New York Disasters
Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 06:50:18 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
Organization: Columbia University
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>

After the terrible loss of life downtown a little less than a day ago, New York is picking up the pieces of its existence. The city's inhabitants seem to have responded with a lot of anxiety, not much panic, and a remarkable display of solidarity; by all reports, for example, blood donor stations had more volunteers than they could handle. (My daughter Sarah and her family, who live about two kilometers north of the World Trade Center's burning rubble, went through a difficult day, but suffered no damage.) So far, we have no news of casualties from among the New York amsoc crowd.

None of us will avoid asking the classic moral questions: who dunnit, and what (choose one: ideas, urges, or incentives) did they have in mind? From the perspective of contentious politics -- these attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center surely qualify as contentious politics -- even more difficult and important questions press upon us: how, with what sort of coordination?

I imagine that American intelligence services are at this very moment searching for cockpit voice recorders, listening to air traffic control tapes, and reviewing recent traces of travel within and into the United States as well as whatever monitored communications they have, with just such questions before them. I also imagine that intelligence services across the world are collaborating. We amsocers will not match their information-gathering capacities, but we might at least share some ideas about causes and effects of international terrorism.

We can also help place the New York and Washington events in world perspective. Even if the highest estimates of casualties now being bruited turn out to be correct, the scale of killing will remain small in comparison with the last half-century's violent deaths in Rwanda, Cambodia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, Guatemala,

Yugoslavia, and the Caucasus. That does not make New York's or Washington's losses trivial, but it does accent the difference between terrorism and civil war.

In yesterday's events, the degree of coordination and effectiveness displayed resembles wartime covert action far more than ordinary peacetime terror -- despite the previous attacks on the World Trade Center, American embassies, and Oklahoma City. Assuming that some connected set of people coordinated their action, they managed to seize at least four passenger-filled aircraft almost simultaneously shortly after takeoff from three of the country's biggest and most heavily policed airports, and to get three of the four craft flown into self-destruction on precise targets. (I can't help speculating that the people involved tried to seize more than four planes, but failed in the other attempts; we'll see.)

All this bespeaks substantial financing, planning, coordination, and organizational support -- although not necessarily a single, centralized, enduring Organization. Those of us who study contentious politics should resist the temptation to concentrate on ideas of repression and retaliation, which demagogues will surely broadcast. We may be able to make a small contribution to explaining how such high levels of coordination emerge among damage-doers, and therefore how to reduce threats of violence to civilians in the United States and, especially, elsewhere.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

Joseph L. Battenwieser Professor of Social Science, Columbia University
514 Fayerweather Hall, Mail Code 2552, New York 10027-7001, USA

From jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001 08:56:29 -0700

From: Jack Goldstone <jagoldstone@ucdavis.edu>

To: amsoc@columbia.edu

Subject: More on events

Dear Friends,

With so much debate in the media paralleling the debate started by Chuck, I thought I'd share some views on where this debate seems to be going. I claim no special insights, and am of course swayed by my own biases. But I welcome any critical replies:

THE NEW DEBATE

Two schools of thought seem to be forming in regard to our reaction to the WTC attacks.

One school (what you hear from our President when he talks about this) holds that there is a huge network of "evil-doers" out there, all bent on "terrorism." This is a big and pervasive threat, that will not end with killing Bin Laden or any other single person. Instead, what we have to do is revamp our whole society and approach to defense to declare "war" on all terrorists.

These people argue that the WTC attack was just the first of what will be more events, some with biological or stolen nuclear weapons; and that we may have to reduce our civil liberties, give the government sweeping powers to investigate and detain U.S. citizens, and so on to deal with this threat.

The other school (what you hear from Colin Powell) hold that there are terrorists, and then there is the gang who went too far by using civilian aircraft as weapons against civilian targets. In this view, the people who strap bombs on themselves and walk into crowded markets in Israel -- however much they share in viewpoint or aims with the Bin Laden gang -- are of a different order of magnitude from the kind of well-financed, highly-organized, long-planned terrorism that we see in the Bin Laden group. Bin Laden and his group has pursued a series of intricate, sophisticated, attacks on the U.S. -- the 1993 WTC attempt, the attack on U.S. embassies in Africa; the attack on the destroyer USS Cole in Yemen, and now this -- that have been steadily expanding in magnitude and complexity, and which have no parallel in other acts of terrorists or terrorist groups. These people have systematically invested millions of dollars in training, planning, and pursuing coordinated attacks on U.S. targets for years. In this school's view, it is this particular organization, plus the Taliban who has sheltered it, that is responsible for all the really significant attacks on U.S. targets in the last decade, and if they can be eliminated, those attacks will stop.

This school has no illusions that we can stop "terrorism" per se; madmen with bombs will continue to be local threats. However, this school believes that we can stop the kind of activity that involves dozens of men, years of planning, and millions of dollars of support to carry out.

My belief is pretty strong that the second school has it right. I say this from the historical pattern:

the Bin Laden group has always developed a meticulous plan of action, chosen a major target, carried out its attacks with fair success (excepting only

the 1993 WTC carbomb attempt, which was a VERY near miss), and then retreated to plan its next major mission. This was the pattern with the Embassy bombings, the Cole attack, and now this. So just as those prior events were discretely planned and executed, rather than part of a wave of terrorism, I don't think there will be more attacks planned by this group. That's not to say that copycats may not want to show how big and important they are by trying to emulate them; so all the security we're doing now seems both justified, and able to stop exactly the kind of poorly-prepared nut who would try to copy what Bin Laden's trained experts pulled off. I agree that the current security measures would probably not stop another such expertly planned and executed attack; but I don't anticipate more of them right away. If past practices hold, the Bin Laden gang will change their target and approach to catch us off guard, rather than repeat the same pattern.

So I think the most reasonable and effective strategy will be to try to isolate and eliminate the Bin Laden gang, and those governments that provide it the most effective sanctuary. I don't doubt that other groups will try to move into Bin Laden's place, or that Iraq or other renegade states will still funnel money to anti-US terrorists. But the degree of skill, coordination, and audacity shown in these attacks over the last decade strikes me as exceptional, and not easy to duplicate.

I do not believe that bombing Afghanistan is therefore an answer to anything; that will likely only incur anger among Muslim states and not disable the terrorists. What is needed is for an allied force to target, isolate, and capture or destroy as much of Bin Laden's network as possible, including ideally getting the leader himself (although making it impossible for him to access funds or move freely would be almost as good). Freezing all of the Taliban's assets abroad until such time as Bin Laden is turned over is thus fairly potent. If the Taliban wants a war, then it will take ground troops as well as air to destroy their hold on Afghanistan. Although that, to my mind, is a worthwhile humanitarian goal in its own right, similar to getting the Khmer Rouge out of power in Cambodia, or kicking Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

I think that Colin Powell has this all down, and I hope his views will prevail. If so, I'm confident we'll make progress and I hope, within a matter of months, eliminate the worst threats to the US.

In general, from my study of contentious politics, I'm persuaded that violence -- whether by states or opponents -- is only effective if it is NOT perceived as arbitrary or excessive. If it is so perceived, it backfires by delegitimizing the perpetrator and increasing opposition. So in judging the

consequences of actions by terrorists or opponents, I would try to stick with this rule.

FOR THE TERRORISTS:

Attacks on embassies, navy ships, and other exposed clearly government or military targets are neither arbitrary nor excessive. However, the WTC attack was both. It killed Pakistani, Dutch, British, and many other citizens, including many Muslims; and it put in peril all civilian aviation everywhere in the world. If major US airlines start to bust due to fear of flying, what about French or British, or even Pakistani or Saudi flights into New York or Washington DC? I think this attack went way too far, and will delegitimize the terrorists behind it even in the eyes of many who previously sympathized or at least tolerated their attacks.

FOR THE ALLIES:

Attacks that clearly target the terrorists or their supporters are likely to be seen as justified and reasonable; that is conflict and war. HOWEVER, attacks that mainly kill Afghan or other civilians, or that collectively punish Muslim or Arab governments or populations, are likely to be seen as arbitrary and excessive and thus be counterproductive.

Perhaps too optimistically, I believe that this terrorist attack, and a measured and careful response, will give the Allies the upper hand. However, this could be lost if the Allies embark on excessive and loosely targeted attacks, and the Taliban/terrorists respond with attacks focused on military targets. This would turn things around again.

As Chuck wisely says, we can't predict the future; we only guess at the future, and hope to learn from it.

All the best,
Jack G.

From insidenytimes@nytimes.com Tue Sep 18 15:44:13 2001
Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001 13:33:59 -0500
From: Inside NYTimes.com <insidenytimes@nytimes.com>
To: marwell@ssc.wisc.edu
Subject: Attack on America -- Complete Coverage From NYTimes.com

Inside NYTimes.com
Tuesday, September 17, 2001

Dear Member,

As I was preparing to go to my office in New York at about 8:45 a.m. last Tuesday, my son Michael, who lives about a mile from the World Trade Center, called to alert me to the first of the suicide attacks. From that moment, none of us at NYTimes.com has had time to think about much else than this story. We have republished all the reportage produced by The New York Times newspaper, and kept our readers up to date on breaking developments the rest of the time. We have benefited from a special Continuous News Desk at the newspaper, which gets us stories as they happen.

In addition, we have provided readers with information about where to go for help and assistance, and put some truly outstanding video and photo slideshows on our Website. Included in the videos is an exclusive look at the crash of the second jet into the second tower. Our continuous coverage is available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/national/dayofterror/?rd=hcmcp?p=03uP903uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

But of most interest to me is the extraordinary outpouring of messages from around the world expressing indignation, sympathy and offers of help. Included in this grouping of messages are some very telling descriptions from people who were in and around the Trade Center when the disasters struck. To read a selection, visit:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/17/national/17WEB-LETT.html?rd=hcmcp?p=03uP803uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

If you would like to communicate your thoughts on this week's episode write to: shareyourthoughts@nytimes.com
Some comments will be posted on the Website.

The resource navigator, cited above, is a comprehensive guide to essential information and services. It includes emergency and victim information, relief efforts, transportation updates, closings and cancellations, affected businesses and a host of other resources. For this guide, visit:

<http://www.nytimes.com/resources?rd=hcmcp?p=03uP703uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

Additionally, the site now features "Remains of the Day," a special issue of the New York Times Magazine, made up of words written and images captured in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack. This collective group of essays grapples with the question of what will be the effect on America. The printed counterpart will not be available until Sept. 23. To read the special issue, visit:

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/index.html?rd=hcmcp?p=03uPZ03uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

The New York Times Company has begun a special campaign to raise money for the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center, The New York Times 9/11 Neediest Fund. Money raised by the campaign will go to the seven New York charities supported each year by the Neediest Cases Fund to help those injured in the attack or the families of those who died. The campaign will also support three foundations that aid New York City firefighters, police officers and sanitation workers: the New York City Fire Safety Foundation, the New York City Police Foundation and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Foundation. To make a donation please visit:

<http://www.charitywave.com>

In light of the recent tragedies, The New York Times has postponed its Arts & Leisure Weekend (September 14-16), the cultural celebration that was planned for the newspaper's 150th anniversary. It has not yet been determined when these events will take place, however we will inform you of the rescheduled dates. For more information visit:

<http://www.nytimes.com/ads/marketing/artsleisureweekend/?rd=hcmcp?p=03uP203uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

Sincerely,
Bernard Gwertzman
Editor, The New York Times on the Web

ABOUT THIS E-MAIL

Your received this e-mail because you elected to receive information on NYTimes.com editorial features. As a member of the BBOnline Privacy Program and the TRUSTe

privacy program, we are committed to protecting your privacy.

To unsubscribe from future mailings, visit:

<http://www.nytimes.com/unsubscribe?rd=hcmcp?p=03uP003uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT>

To change your e-mail address, please go to our help center:

http://www.nytimes.com/help?rd=hcmcp?p=03uO_03uOu4GzzF012000mDVS4DVOT

Suggestions and feedback are welcome at:
feedback@nytimes.com

Powered by Annuncio
<http://www.annuncio.com>

Second set of emails

Dear Jerry,

Here's the link to the original Washington Post article. It should go first in your compilations, with reactions to it coming later.

Apparently, over a half-dozen social-network analysts were interviewed for the article. One of them, Kathleen Carley, is quoted there on a couple of occasions. Barry Wellman is calling the current situation "the first network war."

Disconnect the Dots

Maybe We Can't Cut Off Terror's Head, but We Can Take Out Its Nodes

By Joel Garreau

Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, September 17, 2001; Page C01

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A41015-2001Sep16.html>

A rejoinder from Carter Butts:

You know, I think that we should be careful about the ethical implications of this. The ASA (and other professional scientific organizations) has a code of ethics which specifically prohibits its members from deliberately exposing their subjects to harm. Fingering individuals for assassination or imprisonment on the basis of a network analysis is clearly in violation of these policies, and -- in my opinion, at least -- is unbecoming behavior for a social scientist. Not only is the margin of error in any network analytic study frighteningly high, but the direct participation of social scientists in such efforts violates the "prime directive" of non-interference which allows us to do our work. Is anyone on this list so confident in his or her methods that he or she would use them to decide who should live and who should die? And if we come to make these decisions, can we imagine that this will not adversely affect the willingness of others to volunteer for our studies?

I am as much interested in ending terrorism as anyone else, but I think that we endanger the field when we volunteer to perform studies which will harm our subjects. Social science is the hard-won heritage of all humanity, and I would not place it at risk in the name of political

expediency.

-Carter

Response to Carter Butts from Robert Hauser:

I do not see this as an ethical problem. It's one thing to conduct research and quite another to apply knowledge obtained through research.

People are harmed or helped -- more often the latter, I hope -- all the time in consequence of actions that have been informed, at least in part, by social and behavioral research. Think of any research that affects resource allocations.

Bob

Phil Bonacich weighs in: I must say that this article raised some issues in my mind that deserve serious thought. The richest country in the world is about to invade the poorest country. By helping the government attack symptoms aren't we contributing to its unwillingness to face the problems created by our possibly biased Middle East policies? Isn't destroying terrorist networks similar to invading /Afghanistan - quick fixes that ignore underlying structural issues? Does this article contribute to the myopia?

From: Gavin Hougham <ghougham@MEDICINE.BSD.UCHICAGO.EDU

Carter,

You are a brave man... strong and sobering words.

I have the feeling, however, that the analyses/interpretations/policy decisions discussed in the article you reference and elsewhere, will not be made by "academics" per se operating under the ethical guidelines of voluntary associations like the ASA or the ASBH (Amer Soc Bioethics and Humanities). Although "academics" once upon a time, many with SNA skills leave for other pastures where their conduct is not regulated or guided by

such voluntary "codes of ethics." After all, the rudiments of SNA are not that hard to figure out (I said the rudiments); it doesn't take teams of rocket scientists.... but then again, at places like RAND, their shops are well greased to turn the latest academic toys into policy- or even military-relevant operational tools.

I am reminded of what is happening in bioethics now, where some of the private genomics and stem cell research companies are attempting to "buy" ethics cover for their research (read: r and d) by setting up "ethics advisory boards" and peopling them with known academic ethicists. At least one highly visible academic ethicist has quit his position on such a board once he realized what his role was expected to be (rubber stamp).

In SNA, academics called by the FBI, CIA or whomever to act as consultants or advisors will soon be at the crossroads of needing to balance their obligations to their home disciplines (and more broadly, the academic community) and their desire to put their skills and knowledge to some applied purpose (another never ending debate), and now the next step of having skills that may be used by others to pursue ends not of their own choosing, like assassination or state-sponsored interference in the affairs of other sovereigns. You think these are new issues? Or that people can not be bought, co opted, or self-motivated into joining "just causes?" Some will think it their duty, and they may have a case to make. Academics are often brought into other domains where the 'pursuit of knowledge' is not the sine qua non of their respective mission statements, imho. It may be new to SNA, but not to other scientists (Manhattan project?), sociologists (Coleman Report on busing?), ethicists (stem cell research?), law school professors (jury selection?), and on and on...

Respectfully,
Gavin Hougham

From: Edward Swanstrom <swanstrom.e@km.org>
Organization: GKEC
Subject: Anti-Terrorism KM Task Force

An Appeal to the KM and Related Communities

At the KM Standards meeting last week in Washington, D.C., a group of participants came together in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington to ask, "We know what we can do as individuals to help, but what can we do as KM professionals?"

The fight against terrorism is necessary, for any of us and our loved ones can be the next target, but it will be extremely difficult and costly. Monetary value cannot be assigned to the lives of countless soldiers and innocent people all over the world who will be lost. The monetary cost of funding the fight will put all nations' economies at risk.

The US Navy has a motto, "Knowledge at the tip of the spear," for they believe that wars of the future will be won not just with superior weapons but with superior knowledge. The future is now. It is time for knowledge managers worldwide to harness the power of knowledge management, to work together to develop recommendations that we will take to the United States government and other nations involved in the battle.

Knowledge management is critical. As one television analyst put it, the fight against terrorism cannot be fought with hardware and bodies, it must be fought with minds. For those of you who understand how innovation is accelerated by the success of another, this successful attack will be followed by even more daring and innovative attempts and so on. We will have to learn how to anticipate the next innovation horizon for each innovation these terrorists make. We need to learn how to innovate our ability to innovate and develop new technologies that can assist us.

For this type of war, the effectiveness of current high technology solutions is severely limited as well as the use of ground troops. The potential of knowledge management is its ability to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge while simultaneously reducing the cost of the production, diffusion, and usage of knowledge, which in turn (in this case) reduces the cost in terms of both money and lives lost. KM achieves this by modifying the environment so that the management of know-how, know-what, know-why, and know-who happens more efficiently, effectively, and at a lower cost. KM leverages the knowledge of a collective of minds, improves the quality of information and knowledge, reduces decision-making mistakes, reduces the cycle-time for transferring knowledge from one person to another, improves pattern recognition and knowledge discovery, increases the certainty and quality of decisions, and more. It also helps find the right balance between people, processes, and technology for this knowledge environment.

Going to Washington

Before the events of September 11, I was already scheduled to attend a two-day planning and strategy workshop September 25-26 in Washington,

D.C., to network with Congressional and business leaders from across the country. After giving it serious thought, and at the encouragement of my fellow knowledge managers, I have changed my personal agenda for the workshop to center on a discussion of how knowledge management can help fight terrorism. While I am in Washington, I plan to visit as many senior government officials as possible. I will bring a presentation for our proposal and a list of people who have volunteered to develop a KM strategy for the battle against terrorism. GKEC will send an announcement to the Washington Post, New York Times, and other major newspapers, listing the people who have chosen to step up to the task. The invitation to be involved will go out to more than 6,000 knowledge managers worldwide.

Should the September 25 meeting be postponed because of last week's events, I will still plan a trip to Washington. I have colleagues and contacts at the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and other pertinent government offices. With the help of my colleagues, we will leverage our social networks to the greatest extent possible. This is one area where I need your help.

Let us work together to support the fight against terrorism and demonstrate the power of KM.

Please email your support for this cause.

We will hold a discussion group at <http://www.metainnovation.com> .

With deep commitment,

Edward C. Swanstrom, Secretary-General
Global Knowledge Economics Council
<http://www.gkec.org>
Edward-swanstrom@gkec.org or edward-swanstrom[at]gkec.org

From: Alan Neustadt <aneustadt@socy.umd.edu>

The note by Gavin Hougham reminds me of a valuable lesson learned in graduate school. Regardless that some academics have the lofty ambition of "doing good" in and with research, the development of seemingly innocuous "tools" can be used by others for many varied reasons.

The real-life example I was taught concerned a biologist who was also a vocal objector and critic of the U.S. during the Vietnam conflict. His motivation for producing research on how frogs vision operates was simply an (apparently naive) love of biology and all things biological--this is what led him to research on a seemingly trivial question. Yet, his research was used by others to develop underwater tracking and targeting systems.

For an interesting book that also discussed this concern among "boutique" weapons designers, see Star warriors: a penetrating look into the lives of the young scientists behind our space age weaponry by William J. Broad.

From: Charles Kadushin <kadushin@BRANDEIS.EDU

In the early seventies, I was approached by a firm that worked for the CIA, asking me whether I could recommend any network experts, including, of course myself. I declined for my self (as one of the founding members of Democratic Socialists of America) and said that all the network experts I know were liberal or radical and that the CIA would not want them anyway, so I "named no names."

Around the same time, Richard Alba and I had developed some main-frame computer methods for handling up to 10,000 nodes. Having had the inquiry about networks from that firm, I supposed that the CIA may have made some progress in network algorithms. I asked a colleague who had extremely good CIA connections whether he could make some inquiries about work on social networks: our methods were financed by NSF and hence in the public domain, but maybe the CIA would consider contributing to science and share at least some algorithms with us.

This colleague got no where. He said that this was the first time he had ever been completely stonewalled.

So it is likely that government sources have been in the network field for years, but they are not about to tell us about it.

I have my own reasons for wanting to eliminate terrorism. I just lost a very dear friend who lived in our very small building in New York(three families). She worked on the 105th floor of the WTC for Cantor Fitzgerald. None of them on that floor survived. I am also a strong supporter of Israel, though not of the current government's policies, and have taught at

Hebrew University in Jerusalem and have experienced first hand the impact of terrorism. I have seen its terrible impact on Israel long before I experienced it in New York.

Nonetheless, I agree with Carter Butts. We should not actively, as academics and professionals, take part in the application or development of network methods directly to facilitate the hunting down of terrorists or the impairment of their networks. This violates our "contract" with the public as scientists [Note the continuing agony of many members of the "Manhattan Project"]. Further, our work is, and should remain, in the public domain. On the other hand, I would not hesitate to refer vetted counter terrorism experts to publicly available materials, though given modern search techniques, not available in the early 70's, such help should be superfluous. It would seem in any case that the Washington Post has made a good start in that direction.

As for Phil Bonacich's contribution, I feel it comes close to blaming the victim. Yes, if we don't understand the forces that lead some governments to condone and support terrorism and some people to give up their lives to it, then we can hardly effectively combat terrorism. That does not mean that we ourselves can in any way condone it nor should we justify terrorism in terms of the rationalizations of the down-trodden.

Best,

Charles Kadushin
Distinguished Scholar, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies
Brandeis University

Professor Emeritus, Sociology
Graduate Center, CUNY
212-865-4369

From: Barry Wellman <wellman@CHASS.UTORONTO.CA>
Subject: is the washington post the CIA?

Following up on Carter Butts' and Charles Kadushin's eloquent emails, the real question arises in my mind about where to draw the line. Is giving an interview to the Washington Post, undoubtedly read by the CIA, the same thing as helping the CIA? I think it is more akin to Charles' example of publishing something that someone might read and use.

Not a perfect answer, but the one I start with.

"I just send them up.

'Where they come down is somebody else's business' says Werner van Braun" (according to Tom Lehrer's great song in the 1950s).

Barry

From: "Jim \"GrimJim\" W Lai" <jwtlai@IO.COM

Releasing information to the public is a different action than aiding the CIA covertly. It's more a neutral act.

The article may be read by the CIA, but presumably terrorists would also have access to the Washington Post website and attempt to develop countermeasures. For maximal benefit to national security, such research would have been made available to the CIA/NSA et al, but not made public; not giving out the game plan would minimize the chance of countermeasures being deployed.

To quote William Gibson, "The street finds its own uses for things."

Jim Lai

From: Steven Sherman <Threehegemons@AOL.COM
Comments: To: bonacich@soc.ucla.edu

I doubt one should be plagued with guilt about aiding the CIA by offering the sorts of opinions in the Post today. All of the techniques mentioned--assassinating leaders, propping up idiots, building fake networks, disrupting, etc--were employed quite effectively by the US government in the sixties against SDS and the Black Panthers, when Social Network Analysis was in its infancy (they were used even earlier by the 19th century Russian government--some suspect they actually wound up giving impetus to the revolutionary movement in that case). Perhaps if people had included, 'offer support when people you don't necessarily like beat up on those you really don't like', the list would have been more complete. Of course, that might not seem like such a good idea anymore, since it is in good part how we got into this mess in the first place.

The role of the social scientist should be to ask some tough questions about what agendas are being set, by whom, for what purposes.... I disagree

with the notion that those of us who want to understand the larger context, and may point to structural relations that need to be changed between the US and the MidEast as a region, are somehow blaming the victims. If you want to see the results of 'fighting terrorism' by only building a sophisticated security apparatus, while resisting seriously rethinking one's more profound relations, take a look at contemporary Israel.

Social Network Analysis has much to offer about the present situation. It is something of a truism that when plenty of people are detached from the stronger networks in society, trouble ensues. This point, made over and over about US cities, also applies to global society. Of course, if one tried to offer insights of this sorts, the calls from Washington Post news reporters will soon stop coming.

respectfully
Steven Sherman
Guilford College

Reply-To: Steven Corman <steve.corman@ASU.EDU>
From: Steven Corman <steve.corman@ASU.EDU>

We should not actively, as academics and professionals, take part in the application or development of network methods directly to facilitate the hunting down of terrorists or the impairment of their networks. This violates our "contract" with the public as scientists.

With all due respect to Professor Kadushin and others on this list who share his views, I cannot let this argument go unchallenged. It is at best dangerously myopic to place parochial ideals like our supposed "contract with the public as scientists" above the nation's need for assistance in this matter. How much time will there be for scholarship once we're dying from smallpox epidemics and/or extinguishing our burning cities and/or cleaning up rubble from car bombs...and/or whatever else these people have in store for us? Science does not flourish in conditions of chaos and anarchy.

Thanks to Kathleen Carley, Frank Fukuyama, David Ronfeldt, Karen Stephenson, and all the other network researchers who are thinking about this problem. We should, as academics and professionals, follow their example rather than leaving it to

others to take care of our collective problem. If anyone needs my help, my e-mail is above.

BTW, I forwarded the Post link to a colleague of mine who was raised a Quaker, and is still a dedicated pacifist. She told me how relieved she was that this approach is being considered. She thought a sophisticated attempt to disrupt their networks is our best hope of effectively fighting terrorists without killing lots of innocent people. That might be a good way to interpret our contract with the public, too.

SC

Steven R. (Steve) Corman
Associate Professor
Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
Arizona State University
<http://www.public.asu.edu/~corman>

Reply-To: "Woodlief, Tony" <WoodlieT@KOCHIND.COM>
From: "Woodlief, Tony" <WoodlieT@KOCHIND.COM>

A couple of thoughts. First, I want to add an observation to one of Carter's points, which I quote:

Not only is the margin of error in any network analytic study frighteningly high, but the direct participation of social scientists in such efforts violates the "prime directive" of non-interference which allows us to do our work. Is anyone on this list so confident in his or her methods that he or she would use them to decide who should live and who should die?

Given that a number of people on this list use SNA to help companies make personnel decisions, I'm curious how many people squirmed when they read Carter's challenge. Are we prepared to apply the code of ethics to professors who moonlight as corporate consultants? Still, I wonder if

extensive enough contextual background work -- which I hope and pray the consultants among us use before they tamper with organizations -- can make SNA a more reliable tool for anti-terrorism efforts, given Carter's valid concerns.

Before I continue, I want to make clear that in the comments that follow I am not inviting a debate on the merits of force versus peace seminars as a means of ridding the world of terrorism. If readers oppose cooperation with government agencies due to some personal ethical or ideological position, then so be it. My argument is only with those who want to make an argument that the goals of social science are such that it is wrong for social scientists (as opposed to humans in general) to be involved in issues like national security and anti-terrorism.

With that said, I've thought a while about something else Carter wrote:

Social science is the hard-won heritage of all humanity, and I would not place it at risk in the name of political expediency.

I wonder if this hyperbole doesn't transgress the boundaries of reasoned argument, insofar as I question the premise that the social sciences have much credibility to lose. It seems to me that beyond communities of social scientists themselves, the social sciences aren't held in especially high regard. When we list the great advances of Western civilization, there aren't many 20th century professors of anthropology, sociology, political science, or economics on the list of contributors.

Certainly there are people with social science training who have contributed much to society (and equally many who have wrought horrible destruction, e.g., Mao Tse-Tung, Ho Chi Minh, etc.), but I would argue that they do so as a result of applying the tools -- begun as ideas in the minds of theorists -- to the very real, very messy, sometimes very bloody problems of humanity -- precisely the domain that some academicians eschew as beneath their purity. If social science is to have any meaningful heritage, it will be because it lends itself to the solution of real-world problems, not because it remains above the fray for fear of misuse, or of losing some sacred purity of purpose which is in reality not a public purpose at all, but merely a private pursuit of knowledge, publications, and provincial prestige.

I don't intend any of this to question Carter's concern about the misuse of SNA in a manner that harms the innocent (or more likely, the not directly guilty), which I believe is valid, given what I know of the strengths (and limitations) of SNA. But I think there is more to be gained from applying

SNA in ways the Post article mentioned than mere "political expediency." These people will kill again, and some people on this list may have the skills to help stop them. Shame on us if we refrain from helping for fear of losing our academic virginity, or because we are timid, in the seeming safety of our ivory towers, about using force against murderous thugs.

Finally, I want to respond to an assertion by Charles Kadushin:

We should not actively, as academics and professionals, take part in the application or development of network methods directly to facilitate the hunting down of terrorists or the impairment of their networks. This violates our "contract" with the public as scientists [Note the continuing agony of many members of the "Manhattan Project"].

I'm curious about the content of this contract. When we justify five-figure per student subsidies from taxpayers, we usually do so in the language of our contributions to societal well-being. I'm quite certain that most members of the U.S. public would quickly defund social scientists who refuse to lend their knowledge to the defense of their fellow citizens.

It is indeed a terrible thing to contribute to another person's death -- this I don't dispute. But let's not pretend that through our inaction we can remain innocent of bloodshed. We are guilty, in my opinion, if we withhold knowledge that can stop terrorists.

Respectfully,

Tony Woodlief
Charles Koch Charitable Foundation

From: Richard Rothenberg <rrothen@EMORY.EDU

Folks:

A quote from the NY Times, January 1, 1995, when the city of New York was wondering why the crime rate had dropped. The quote refers to the then Police Commissioner Bratten's strategies:

"...But at the core of his strategies is the view that a relatively small number of people commit most crimes, and that they are often loosely affiliated or come in contact with one another buying guns or drugs or selling stolen goods. With aggressive detective work, the theory goes, one

arrest should lead to others..."

I agree with the thoughts expressed here that law enforcement and other agencies know a good bit about all of the things that go on in SNA, and would add that they have important things to teach us about what goes on on the ground. Could I dare to say that human relationships are multiplex, and an 'academic researcher' might bear different relationships to different people.

A really minor aside to Dr. Wellman. The exact quote (and the way Lehrer sings it) is :

"Vonce the rroockets go up, who cares vere they come down.
That's not my department, says Werner von Braun."

But perhaps the more important line is the one the song opens with:

"Gather round while I tell you of Werner von Braun,
A man who's allegiance is ruled by expedience."

That isn't what we're talking about here.

Rich Rothenberg

Richard Rothenberg, MD
Professor
Department of Family and Preventive Medicine
Emory University School of Medicine
69 Butler St. SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
TEL: 404-616-5606
FAX:404-616-6847
Email: rrothen@emory.edu

From: Meindert Fennema <fennema@PSCW.UVA.NL
Organization: Universiteit van Amsterdam

Dear all,

I was, some 25 years ago, appraoched by the New Jersey State Police to give my opinion about a network program they had developed to fight organized crime. I did not respond, for the same reasons that Charles Kadushin gave.

By now I may have changed my mind because fighting international terrorism by studying their network seems more effective and less harmful for innocent Arabs that bombing the country that hosts the main suspect. Yet Kadushin's arguments are also valid.

Meindert Fennema
University of Amsterdam

From: Phil Bonacich <bonacich@SOC.UCLA.EDU>
Comments: To: Charles Kadushin <kadushin@BRANDEIS.EDU>

Dear Charles - Forgive me if I am incorrect, but you appear to believe that the only reason for trying to understand the conditions that give rise to terrorism is to better eradicate it. I would like to suggest another reason - perhaps we can come to understand the important role that we, as the world's only super power, played in generating the mess, and change. For example, we initially supported the very Afghanistan government we are now going to attack.

From: Geoffrey Williams <geoffreyfw@YAHOO.COM>

Please explain to me how this isn't blaming the victim: It is wrong to try to disrupt and destroy criminal networks that have killed thousands in cold blood, without warning, without condition, without remorse. At the same time, the RIGHT approach is for the U.S. to change its policies (or at least, look guiltily through them to understand how, by supporting the mujaheddin, we OBVIOUSLY were asking them to kill thousands of our citizens).

Geoffrey Williams

From: Barry Wellman <wellman@CHASS.UTORONTO.CA>

Folks,

I think it is time to cool the rhetoric down, or else we will wind up calling each other bad names and not thinking straight. There are a lot of good people wrestling with important issues, and we need to talk calmly and without heat.

In our grief and fear, I see four tendencies in some of the discourse on this (and other) lists:

Presentism: The belief that what happened last Tuesday was an even in itself, as compared to a belief that what has happened should be set in historical context.

Parochialism: The belief that what happened was a unique tragedy, as compared to a pointing to other mass murders of civilians in Rwanda, Baghdad, Serbia, etc.

Patriotism: The belief that "we" all agree, as compared to the understanding that this is an International Organization in which there may be people with thought and integrity who have differences of opinions.

Actionism: The belief that this is a crisis in which we all must be instantly mobilized for all things, as compared to the feeling that there may be ethical limits about what to do, and who to do it with.

I personally stand on the second "as compared" side of Presentism, Parochialism and Patriotism, and am quite undecided about Actionism.

In case any one cares (are we approaching Loyalty Oath times?), I am a citizen of the US and Canada, and my wife was in NYC and observed the attacks last week. She finally was able to drive home on Thursday (thanks be to Hertz).

Barry

From: Richard M Southwick <rmsouthw@MAILBOX.SYR.EDU>

All,

Barry's point is well taken on the rhetoric. I (and perhaps some of you) witnessed a list devoted to information system issues spiral out of

control last week. The administrators were led to close down the list for a time for fear of litigation. It was at once most unfortunate and distressing, and at the same time terribly interesting to behold from a network perspective. Very quickly even the voices of reason became destructive inputs.

As a relative newbie to social network concepts, I was led to wonder about the notion of a listserv as a social network, and perhaps about the network metaphor for social phenomena. The "state" of the (listserv) network had obviously changed, but it seems to me that so had the underlying relation(s) on which it was based. I'm sure that others have dealt with the dynamic nature of social networks and the problems this poses for research?

-- Richard Southwick

Syracuse University rmsouthw@syr.edu
School of Information Studies http://web.syr.edu/~rmsouthw
4-116 Center for Science and Technology Tel: 315.443.2911
Syracuse, NY 13244 Fax: 315.443.5806

From: Gavin Hougham <ghougham@MEDICINE.BSD.UCHICAGO.EDU>
Comments: To: Geoffrey Williams <geoffreyfw@YAHOO.COM>

Geoffrey,

Last night on PBS, Bill Moyers interviewed Robert Jay Lifton, the psychiatrist/social critic. Lifton cautioned us to avoid the simpleminded polarization of the world into black and white. Your facetious commentary below simply falls into the trap that Phil and others are warning against. Phil doesn't "blame" the US in the way you suggest, by the way I read his comment.

The world ain't so black and white.... our outrage, frustration, sadness, and sense of betrayal and violation notwithstanding. Analysis won't be as simple as you make it out to be; any solutions based on anything other than very long term strategic thinking will possibly reproduce the very environments (conditions, if you will) that have spawned the awful tragedy of last Tuesday. We all grieve together over the loss of life, and perhaps even more so, over the loss of our adolescent ontologies.

Gavin Hougham
Univ of Chicago

From: Alessandro Usai <alessandro.usai@UNI-BOCCONI.IT

I know that in moments like this emotional feelings count more than rational analysis. In Italy we are all close to our relatives, friends, colleagues, and to all the innocent people involved in this immense tragedy, like maybe never happened before.

However, let me try to bring the debate back to the search for explanations, which constitute our main objective as social scientists.

In order to have more information about the social, structural and political context in which the tragic events are embedded let me suggest you a "special" reference, a book from one of the more prominent ABC reporters, J.K. Cooley, published in 1999 and titled "Unholy wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism" (Pluto Press Ltd., London).

It's also an instructive "network story", supported by extensive and documented "data", which is not blaming anyone but it may help us better understand what's going on today and maybe learn something for tomorrow.