

Note: This is the "second set" of the AMSOC discussion set

Third set of documents for PCS on Terrorism

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001 16:09:23 -0500

From: "Shaw, Betty" <Betty.Shaw@courts.state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: FW: A provocative analysis

There is a lot to agree with but what is his proposed response? It's easy to point out why various strategies won't work. Coming up with something that will do more good than bad is a whole lot harder. Some factual premises (3 and 5) I think are wrong. There had to be some individual or group who set and communicated the time and date, selected the flights, selected the targets. Individual hijackers probably did not know all (but certainly did know some) of the other hijackers. All knew that they were part of something larger than their single hijacked plane. I think all of the hijackers knew they were part of a larger conspiracy (i.e. that more than one plane was to be hijacked) though probably did not know the details or extent of the conspiracy. I don't believe that separate groups, independently decided to hijack a plane and fly it into a major US building and all happened to pick the same date and at about the same time and happened to pick different buildings. Someone had to do the overall planning and coordinating. Maybe not Ben Laden personally, but someone knew at least one member of each plane's hijacking group. Possibly, but not likely, one of the 19 hijackers did the plotting and organizing and applied to Ben Laden for financing. I believe that the planning for this began very shortly after the failure of the first Trade Center bombing attempt. I believe that once they pick a high profile target they will keep going after it until it succeeds.

I believe there may be competition among the cells to come up with a plan to achieve that target success. Therefore it is important to know which building plane #4 was after. That building should be protected above all others.

I believe that the best way of beating terrorists in the "short run" is to convince the governments who harbor terrorists to "give them up." This strategy appears to be what Bush is doing. If it does not work then there will be pressure for some "visible military response. I agree that they would be a mistake - More to make hotheads feel like we "are doing something" not likely to be effective in reaching the goal. If we can't get the government to give them up then we have to go after the GOVERNMENT - not the country. Maybe we are back to the 1950's CIA fomenting "revolution" and/or assassination a la Guatemala or Iran. That also takes time and is not visible. It provides no solace to the hothead military response is needed types. It takes a long time and can't be public or it won't work!!! The question is "Does America have the patience to win the war against terrorism"? Not only do we have the patience but also do we have the trust that our government is acting when we can't see the action on TV or read about it in the AM papers? There is a lot of good "educating" going on now if people are watching and listening. How long the trust and "good will" will last without a "shooting war" is another question.

How do we bring the living terrorists conspirators to justice without starting another cold war type "witch hunt"? We will never catch them if we don't give up some of our "privacy" policies (money tracing via computers can only be done for banks out side of the US - when they get the trace back to the US the inquiry must stop) but if he do that how do we limit the "privacy impingement" and how do we return to present policies when the treat is less imminent?

The next best short term response is to use international intelligence and insert small special forces teams to go after specific identified cells/groups. (I predict this strategy will be used and that it will be a very, very difficult and costly one.) The Russians often sent a truck load of soldiers after 3 men and pursued them for up to a week before killing them -- when they succeeded. More often they failed either because the "terrorists" blew up the truck of soldiers or because the soldiers were never able to find the men.

Mid term we need to get moles into their operations - we don't have the "assets" to do that and it will be harder than penetrating the KGB.

Long term we are going to have to look at international policies that truly "isolate" the terrorists so that they wither and die. You will never stamp out all the cells. They must die internally (i.e. as the cold war ended when the USSR imploded from its own failed policies).

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

From: Earl Shaw [mailto:Earl.Shaw@NAU.EDU]

Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2001 2:44 PM

To: Shaw, Betty; febar@vsba.org; john.cornelius@eds.com; mfairbank@mindspring.com

Subject: Fwd: FW: A provocative analysis

As usual, Chuck has given us a wonderful boost to this discussion. My COUNTER PREDICTIONS to Chuck's predictions ARE GIVEN IN BOLD TYPE BELOW. Jeff Broadbent

UNCONDITIONAL PREDICTIONS:

It will turn out that:

5. But no single organization or single leader coordinated Tuesday's action.

THE PRECISE TIMING OF THE FOUR AIRPLANE HIJACKINGS AND THEIR COORDINATED TARGETING WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT CENTRALIZED DIRECTION. (BUT THE DIFFERENT HIJACKING "CELLS," AS CHUCK SAYS, DID NOT NEED TO KNOW EACH OTHER.)

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). ONCE AGAIN, THE PRECISE TIMING AND TARGETING BESPEAKS CENTRALIZED COORDINATION.

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.

PROBABLY OSAMA BIN LADEN, IF HE IS THE LEADER, WILL SUCCESSFULLY FLEE ANY AERIAL BOMBING. IT IS UNLIKELY, THOUGH POSSIBLE, THAT THAT TALIBAN WILL TURN HIM OVER, BECAUSE OBL IS A BIG SUPPORT FOR THE TALIBAN REGIME. THEREFORE, OBJ WILL REMAIN THE HIDDEN LEADER OF ONE BIG TERRORIST NETWORK FOR SOME TIME. NOW THAT THIS NETWORK IS ORGANIZED, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR IT TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE EVEN IF OBL IS KILLED.

THERE MAY BE OTHER GROUPS ACTING ON THEIR OWN WITH SUCH A COMPETITIVE SPIRIT, BUT THE NETWORK THAT CARRIED OUT LAST WEEK'S ATTACKS WILL STAY INTACT AND CONTINUE TO GROW UNDER CENTRALIZED COORDINATION.

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.

IT MAY ALSO INCREASE THE STRENGTH OF RADICAL ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS AND POSSIBILITY OF RADICAL ISLAMIC COUPS IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. ONE POSSIBILITY IS PAKISTAN, WHICH HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HOWEVER, VERY FEW IF ANY STATES EXCEPT THE TALIBAN (IF WE CALL IT A STATE) AND IRAQ WILL REFUSE OUTRIGHT TO SUPPORT THE US WAR AGAINST THIS KIND OF TERRORISM. IT JUST DEPENDS UPON THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT DEMANDED BY THE US. COOPERATION IS ONE THING, BASES ARE ANOTHER. IT SEEMS THAT EVEN THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS ONE OF THE FEW STATES TO RECOGNIZE THE TALIBAN AND HAS BEEN ITS MAIN SOURCE OF MILITARY AND OTHER SUPPLIES, WILL OFFER LIMITED SUPPORT. PAKISTAN HAS JUST SENT A TOP LEVEL DELEGATION TO THE TALIBAN DEMANDING OBL'S OUSTER. EVEN STATES WITH LOTS OF ISLAMIC RADICALS ARE SO DEEPLY ENGAGED IN THE WORLD TRADING SYSTEM THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO BECOME WORLD PARIAHS BY REFUSING TO OFFER SOME LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR A FIGHT AGAINST THIS DEGREE OF TERRORISM.

THUS, CONTRARY TO CHUCK'S "STATE RATIONAL CHOICE" PREDICTION, A GLOBAL NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE (A LA JOHN MEYER) WOULD SAY THAT OBL REPRESENTS THE REACTIVE FURY OF AN EMBATTLED TRADITION, CONSERVATIVE ISLAM, FIGHTING AGAINST THE SPREAD OF WESTERN SECULAR VALUES. BUT AS ITS LONG TERM STRATEGY, IF THE US AND "THE WEST" SHOWS ITS APPROVAL, RESPECT AND SUPPORT FOR THE ALTERNATIVE -- A

MODERNIZED, DEMOCRATIC ISLAM (SUCH AS SEEMS TO BE SLOWLY EVOLVING IN IRAN) -- THAT REACTIVE ISLAMIC FURY, WHILE PEAKING FOR A WHILE, SHOULD EVENTUALLY BURN ITSELF OUT AND LOSE SUPPORTERS. SOME OF THE POSSIBILITY OF CULTIVATING RESPECT FOR AND FROM ISLAMIC STATES AND SOCIETIES MAY HINGE ON THE US TAKING A MUCH MORE BALANCED POLICY TOWARD THE ISRAELI/PALESTINE CONFLICT. BUT THE PROBLEM IS MUCH DEEPER THAN THAT. IT CAN BE SEEN AS A CULTURAL CONFLICT WITH ROOTS BACK TO THE CRUSADES.

FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, MANY STATES EVEN IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES WILL NOT BE POLARIZED AGAINST "THE WEST" MUCH MORE THAN THEY ARE ALREADY, EVEN IF THE US AND ITS ALLIES CONDUCT FIERCE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE TALIBAN AND THE TERRORIST NETWORKS, BOTH IN AFGANISTAN AND AROUND THE WORLD. MOST STATES WILL AGREE WITH THE NECESSITY OF THAT ACTION, GIVEN LAST WEEK'S ATTACKS (AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONTINUED ATTACKS IF STERN ACTION IS NOT TAKEN).

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.

UNDER THE GLOBAL NORMATIVE VIEWPOINT, BOTH PROPOSITIONS 10 AND 11 WOULD BE LIKELY TO HAVE PERHAPS A SHORT TERM RISE, BUT A LONG TERM DECLINE, IF THE WEST OVER THE LONG TERM TRIES VERY HARD TO BUILD GOOD RELATIONS WITH ISLAMIC SOCIETIES ALONG WITH THE STERN REPRESSIONS OF TERRORISM.

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.

THIS ALSO SHOULD SHOW THE OPPOSITE -- PERHAPS A (HISTORICALLY) BRIEF (10-20 YEAR?) DECREASE IN FREEDOMS, BUT A CONTINUED LONG TERM RISE. SUCH ARE MY COUNTER PREDICTIONS, MADE WITHOUT GREAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA AND OF COURSE WITHOUT ANY CERTAINTY, BUT AS FOOD FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION.

Yours,

Jeff Broadbent

From jtr13@columbia.edu Fri Sep 21 14:16:58 2001
Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001 23:58:07 -0400 (EDT)
From: Joyce Robbins <jtr13@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc@columbia.edu
Subject: Re: Predictions

My 2 cents in response to Jack Goldstone's Predictions of Sept. 15:

In our attempts to make sense of the attack, let's not conflate "degree of sophistication" with "degree of impact." The impact we saw was rare indeed, but the complexity of the scheme much less so. The timing didn't have to be exact, and the target was a large one, requiring much less skill, I presume, than dropping a bomb on a precise target while flying at a high altitude and dodging missiles. As one of the unsuspecting flight instructors explained, these guys didn't bother learning how to take off and land planes, the difficult aspects of the job.

The plan succeeded on the basis of its extraordinary degree of innovation not sophistication. It stopped working within minutes of its becoming part of a recognized repertoire -- evidenced by the fact that passengers on the fourth hijacked plane learned about the first attacks through cell phone calls and then acted to block an additional building attack.

The hijackers had to a) get into the US and establish an identity, b) learn how to turn planes in midair, c) establish a date for the attack, d) pass domestic flight customs. I'm not convinced that that all is so much more difficult or qualitatively different than a West Bank Palestinian strapping explosives to himself and crossing the Green Line into Israel. Can we really conclude on the basis of the impact alone that we're facing a more highly organized form of terrorism?

Joyce

From ct135@columbia.edu Fri Sep 21 14:16:58 2001
Date: Thu, 20 Sep 2001 08:23:09 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: [Fwd: Regarding predictions and outcomes]

Another contribution to our debates. Some of the things I'm forwarding to the mailing list are obviously personal replies from people who saw one of my statements second hand. I am a) not forwarding unless the author gives permission, b) not editing out personal references, c) eliminating messages that seem irrelevant to the general discussion, for example the one that came in yesterday criticizing my English.

Chuck

--

Charles Tilly

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Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001 19:24:26 -0400
From: David Fasenfest <ae5317@wayne.edu>
To: ct135@columbia.edu
Subject: Regarding predictions and outcomes

Chuck...I am, as ever, impressed at everything you set you mind to addressing.

There is, at least from my perspective, one dimension you seem to overlook--ideology. For the most part, while I would agree with your predictions as they are laid out, there is a fault driven by an overly materialist point of origin. Your scenario seems to beg the role of ideology and the way the players define their worlds to interpret events. That would lead me to question your points 4-7 only in that there is more coordination and less blind circumstance to these events. The fact that they had to unfold over years begs the notion there was no coordinating form--dispersed to some degree perhaps but nonetheless coordinated. I do not think the bin Laden thread is more than a point of convergence rather than the head of an organization, but ideological binds and not just the desire to be seen as more determined in their opposition to the enemy will help define who is a participant and why.

As for the set of contingent predictions--well, I fear there is a cycle which will be set in motion leading us to the same anti-democratic end though I am not sure your predictions are any more accurate than several other scenarios. In fact, the threat to democracy already emerges as we hear about serious discussions of curtailed civil liberties (though no liberty has been shown to have contributed to this national security disaster) and the restoration of military tribunals with all their secrecy and summary judgements. The current events, however tragic, are being used for ideological reasons to promote ends consistent with that ideology. In this manner, the current administration representing an boundary condition of a shifting political landscape form outcomes informed more by the way they want to see the world than by the way the world is.

Ironically, I don't see a different outcome and perhaps in that I am being teleological (or at least cynical). But that is only if people do not voice an alternative frame. The first thing I thought about when I heard about the disasters was that the passengers did not have such a scenario as part of their repertoire of outcomes...and it reminded me of your repertoires of social action. Now I see you post and even this event has its own closure and completeness.

I hope this message finds you well and the events of the past days have not had a personal and direct impact on your life...best regards, D

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Date: 20 Sep 2001 08:32:55 EDT
From: Misagh Parsa <Misagh.Parsa@Dartmouth.EDU>
To: ct135@columbia.edu
Subject: Re: Chomsky

>Subject: Chomsky on the WTC Attacks and the Middle East

Interviewing Chomsky -- Radio B92, Belgrade

:: Why do you think these attacks happened?

To answer the question we must first identify the perpetrators of the crimes. It is generally assumed, plausibly, that their origin is the Middle East region, and that the attacks probably trace back to the Osama Bin Laden network, a widespread and complex organization, doubtless inspired by Bin Laden but not necessarily acting under his control. Let us assume that this is true. Then to answer your question a sensible person would try to ascertain Bin Laden's views, and the sentiments of the large reservoir of supporters he has throughout the region.

About all of this, we have a great deal of information. Bin Laden has been interviewed extensively over the years by highly reliable Middle East specialists, notably the most eminent correspondent in the region, Robert Fisk (London _Independent_), who has intimate knowledge of the entire region and direct experience over decades. A Saudi Arabian millionaire, Bin Laden became a militant Islamic leader in the war to drive the Russians out of Afghanistan. He was one of the many religious fundamentalist extremists recruited, armed, and financed by the CIA and their allies in Pakistani intelligence to cause maximal harm to the Russians -- quite possibly delaying their withdrawal, many analysts suspect -- though whether he personally happened to have direct contact with the CIA is unclear, and not particularly important. Not surprisingly, the CIA preferred the most fanatic and cruel fighters they could mobilize.

The end result was to "destroy a moderate regime and create a fanatical one, from groups recklessly financed by the Americans" (_London Times_ correspondent Simon Jenkins, also a specialist on the region). These "Afghanis" as they are called (many, like Bin Laden, not from Afghanistan) carried out terror operations across the border in Russia, but they terminated these after Russia withdrew. Their war was not against Russia, which they despise, but against the Russian occupation and Russia's crimes against Muslims.

The "Afghanis" did not terminate their activities, however. They joined Bosnian Muslim forces in the Balkan Wars; the US did not object, just as it tolerated Iranian support for them, for complex reasons that we need not pursue here, apart from noting that concern for the grim fate of the Bosnians was not prominent among them. The "Afghanis" are also fighting the Russians in Chechnya, and, quite possibly, are involved in carrying out terrorist attacks in Moscow and elsewhere in Russian territory.

Bin Laden and his "Afghanis" turned against the US in 1990 when they established permanent bases in Saudi Arabia -- from his point of view, a counterpart to the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, but far more significant because of Saudi Arabia's special status as the guardian of the holiest shrines.

Bin Laden is also bitterly opposed to the corrupt and repressive regimes of the region, which he regards as "un-Islamic," including the Saudi Arabian regime, the most extreme Islamic fundamentalist regime in the world, apart from the Taliban, and a close US ally since its origins. Bin Laden despises the US for its support of these regimes.

Like others in the region, he is also outraged by long-standing US support for Israel's brutal military occupation, now in its 35th year: Washington's decisive diplomatic, military, and economic intervention in support of the killings, the harsh and destructive siege over many years, the daily humiliation to which Palestinians are subjected, the expanding settlements designed to break the occupied territories into Bantustan-like cantons and take control of the resources, the gross violation of the Geneva Conventions, and other actions that are recognized as crimes throughout most of the world, apart from the US, which has prime responsibility for them.

And like others, he contrasts Washington's dedicated support for these crimes with the decade-long US-British assault against the civilian population of Iraq, which has devastated the society and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths while strengthening Saddam Hussein -- who was a favored friend and ally of the US and Britain right through his worst atrocities, including the gassing of the Kurds, as people of the region also remember well, even if Westerners prefer to forget the facts.

These sentiments are very widely shared. The Wall Street Journal (Sept. 14) published a survey of opinions of wealthy and privileged Muslims in the Gulf region (bankers, professionals, businessmen with close links to the U.S.). They expressed much the same views: resentment of the U.S. policies of supporting Israeli crimes and blocking the international consensus on a diplomatic settlement for many years while devastating Iraqi civilian society, supporting harsh and repressive anti-democratic regimes throughout the region, and imposing barriers against economic development by "propping up oppressive regimes."

Among the great majority of people suffering deep poverty and oppression, similar sentiments are far more bitter, and are the source of the fury and despair that has led to suicide bombings, as commonly understood by those who are interested in the facts.

The U.S., and much of the West, prefers a more comforting story. To quote the lead analysis in the New York Times (Sept. 16), the perpetrators acted out of "hatred for the values cherished

in the West as freedom, tolerance, prosperity, religious pluralism and universal suffrage." U.S. actions are irrelevant, and therefore need not even be mentioned (Serge Schmemmann). This is a convenient picture, and the general stance is not unfamiliar in intellectual history; in fact, it is close to the norm. It happens to be completely at variance with everything we know, but has all the merits of self-adulation and uncritical support for power.

It is also widely recognized that Bin Laden and others like him are praying for "a great assault on Muslim states," which will cause "fanatics to flock to his cause" (Jenkins, and many others.). That too is familiar. The escalating cycle of violence is typically welcomed by the harshest and most brutal elements on both sides, a fact evident enough from the recent history of the Balkans, to cite only one of many cases.

What consequences will they have on US inner policy and to the American self reception?

US policy has already been officially announced. The world is being offered a "stark choice": join us, or "face the certain prospect of death and destruction." Congress has authorized the use of force against any individuals or countries the President determines to be involved in the attacks, a doctrine that every supporter regards as ultra-criminal. That is easily demonstrated. Simply ask how the same people would have reacted if Nicaragua had adopted this doctrine after the U.S. had rejected the orders of the World Court to terminate its "unlawful use of force" against Nicaragua and had vetoed a Security Council resolution calling on all states to observe international law. And that terrorist attack was far more severe and destructive even than this atrocity.

As for how these matters are perceived here, that is far more complex. One should bear in mind that the media and the intellectual elites generally have their particular agendas. Furthermore, the answer to this question is, in significant measure, a matter of decision: as in many other cases, with sufficient dedication and energy, efforts to stimulate fanaticism, blind hatred, and submission to authority can be reversed. We all know that very well.

:: Do you expect U.S. to profoundly change their policy to the rest of the world?

The initial response was to call for intensifying the policies that led to the fury and resentment that provides the background of support for the terrorist attack, and to pursue more intensively the agenda of the most hard line elements of the leadership: increased militarization, domestic regimentation, attack on social programs. That is all to be expected. Again, terror attacks, and the escalating cycle of violence they often engender, tend to reinforce the authority and prestige of the most harsh and repressive elements of a society. But there is nothing inevitable about submission to this course.

:: After the first shock, came fear of what the U.S. answer is going to be. Are you afraid, too?

Every sane person should be afraid of the likely reaction -- the one that has already been announced, the one that probably answers Bin Laden's prayers. It is highly likely to escalate the cycle of violence, in the familiar way, but in this case on a far greater scale.

The U.S. has already demanded that Pakistan terminate the food and other supplies that are keeping at least some of the starving and suffering people of Afghanistan alive. If that demand is implemented, unknown numbers of people who have not the remotest connection to terrorism will die, possibly millions. Let me repeat: the U.S. has demanded that Pakistan kill possibly millions of people who are themselves victims of the Taliban. This has nothing to do even with revenge. It is at a far lower moral level even than that. The significance is heightened by the fact that this is mentioned in passing, with no comment, and probably will hardly be noticed.

We can learn a great deal about the moral level of the reigning intellectual culture of the West by observing the reaction to this demand. I think we can be reasonably confident that if the American population had the slightest idea of what is being done in their name, they would be utterly appalled. It would be instructive to seek historical precedents.

If Pakistan does not agree to this and other U.S. demands, it may come under direct attack as well -- with unknown consequences. If Pakistan does submit to U.S. demands, it is not impossible that the government will be overthrown by forces much like the Taliban -- who in this case will have nuclear weapons. That could have an effect throughout the region, including the oil producing states. At this point we are considering the possibility of a war that may destroy much of human society.

Even without pursuing such possibilities, the likelihood is that an attack on Afghans will have pretty much the effect that most analysts expect: it will enlist great numbers of others to support of Bin Laden, as he hopes. Even if he is killed, it will make little difference. His voice will be heard on cassettes that are distributed throughout the Islamic world, and he is likely to be revered as a martyr, inspiring others. It is worth bearing in mind that one suicide bombing -- a truck driven into a U.S. military base -- drove the world's major military force out of Lebanon 20 years ago. The opportunities for such attacks are endless. And suicide attacks are very hard to prevent.

:: "The world will never be the same after 11.09.01". Do you think so?

The horrendous terrorist attacks on Tuesday are something quite new in world affairs, not in their scale and character, but in the target. For the US, this is the first time since the War of 1812 that its national territory has been under attack, even threat. It's colonies have been attacked, but not the national territory itself. During these years the US virtually exterminated the indigenous population, conquered half of Mexico, intervened violently in the surrounding region, conquered Hawaii and the Philippines (killing hundreds of thousands of Filipinos), and in the past half century particularly, extended its resort to force throughout much of the world. The number of victims is colossal.

For the first time, the guns have been directed the other way. The same is true, even more dramatically, of Europe. Europe has suffered murderous destruction, but from internal wars, meanwhile conquering much of the world with extreme brutality. It has not been under attack by its victims outside, with rare exceptions (the IRA in England, for example). It is therefore natural that NATO should rally to the support of the US; hundreds of years of imperial violence have an enormous impact on the intellectual and moral culture.

It is correct to say that this is a novel event in world history, not because of the scale of the atrocity -- regrettably -- but because of the target. How the West chooses to react is a matter of supreme importance. If the rich and powerful choose to keep to their traditions of hundreds of years and resort to extreme violence, they will contribute to the escalation of a cycle of violence, in a familiar dynamic, with long-term consequences that could be awesome.

Of course, that is by no means inevitable. An aroused public within the more free and democratic societies can direct policies towards a much more humane and honorable course.

From ct135@columbia.edu Fri Sep 21 14:16:58 2001
Date: Thu, 20 Sep 2001 10:36:12 -0400
From: Charles Tilly <ct135@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: [Fwd: Unconditional and Contingent Predictions]

Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001 22:31:46 -0400
From: spettergoldstein <spettergoldstein@netzero.net>
To: ct135@columbia.edu
Subject: Unconditional and Contingent Predictions

Dear Chuck,

From a lesser informed colleague (and former student).

In general, I find your contingent predictions to be more probable than your unconditional predictions.

The fact that the four hijackings occurred on the same day, at the same time, and with the same techniques indicates that there was some type of coordination. However, it is possible that this was carried on by different organizations with different leaders (yet, with some type of coordination with each other).

Your contingent predictions raise an aspect of your unconditional predictions which you do not discuss: the motivations behind the attacks. Could one of the strategies behind the attacks be the anticipated response from the U.S.? Why did the attackers choose this administration and not the previous one? Could they have been predicting this type of response from Cheney and Rumsfeld? If your contingent predictions are correct and the Bush administration does respond in the manner toward which it is posturing, the attacks will end up strengthening the terrorist networks rather than weakening them. I think this was one of the strategies behind the attacks. Another possible strategy was economic. By attacking when the U.S. financial markets were already depressed and the U.S. has been hovering on the brink of recession, it may have pushed the economy into a real recession. The question is whether this was also an intended effect.

Any more predictions? Please keep me posted of any revisions.

Sincerely,

Warren

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Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001 17:21:16 -0400
From: Jay Demerath <demerath@soc.umass.edu>
To: Chuck Tilly <CT135@columbia.edu>
Subject: WW3?

Chuck:

Your predictions just reached me, and I thought I'd respond in kind -- sort of. This may come under the heading of "everything's been said but not everyone has said it." But it has at least been cathartic for me, whatever poison it may have included for others who have seen it.

Jay Demerath 9/18/01

Second Thoughts on a Third World War

In the numbing aftermath of our terrorist attack, the U.S. has shown its true colors - patriotism, faith, altruism, resilience, heroism, plus a strong demand for retribution and putting the world right. President Bush has issued a rallying call for a "world war" to "eradicate terrorism," "rid the world of all evil-doers," and wreak vengeance upon those who have inflicted their hate upon us "because of their opposition to freedom and democracy." Much of this is the stuff of American folklore. But some will remember the iconic Henry Fonda in such Hollywood classics as "The Ox-Bow Incident" (about a lynch mob) and "Twelve Angry Men" (about an impatient jury in a murder trial). In both cases, Fonda was the hero because he opposed the quick resolve of an aggrieved majority, instead of being swept along by it. As one who has spent time in many spots around the world where religion and politics are entangled and inflamed, I want to suggest five reasons why I hope cooler heads will prevail in what is currently a white-hot White House.

1. As much as we Americans want to see ourselves as the embodiment of good and the singular fortress of freedom and democracy, there are many who see us oppositely, especially in countries such as Afghanistan, the Balkans, Chile, China, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Israel, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, and Sudan. Our opponents include Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists as well as Muslims. It is not our values they reject but rather our hypocrisy in using self-serving

economic, military, and political power to frustrate their own efforts to create a good society. Rightly or wrongly, terrorists hate us not for what we are proud of, but for things many Americans would deplore if they knew more about them.

2. There is a great deal of rhetorical potency in referring to "the first war of the 21st century" and to September 11 as "the Pearl Harbor for World War III." Surely this is a time for strong words and ringing phrases to rally the nation. But there is also considerable danger in what some may see as war-mongering. War is exactly what terrorists such as Osama bin Laden hope for. Our innocent collateral victims would provide further justification for their jihad to end all jihads. Leaders such as Israel's Ariel Sharon would also welcome war as a "turning point" in the struggle "between the good and the bad, humanity and the bloodthirsty" - in this case, as a license for a much more aggressive assault upon the country's Palestinians.

3. It is one thing to engage in wars between opposing nations where both the enemy and the criteria of victory are clear. It is quite another to go to war against chronic constants of the human condition such as terrorism specifically or evil in general - much less to hold out expectations of "total victory." Generals have told us from Vietnam forward that a country should only put its forces in the field when it has a clear notion of how, when, and why to get them out. A well-coordinated legal and police action against known terrorists makes sense; a vaguely conceived offensive against terrorism does not. We must be wary of playing Sancho Panza to a Presidential Don Quixote wandering into battle against one windmill after another, while inflicting a degree of destruction that turns ludicrousness into outrageousness.

4. If the President and his advisors fail to understand what a total war entails militarily, some may understand too well what such wars entail politically. There is nothing like a war to boost a President's sagging popularity and respect in the nation's public opinion polls - if only in the short-run as the President's father discovered after Desert Storm. But the long-run downside may be considerably greater for the President, the nation, and the world at large. An all-out campaign not only against terrorists but "any country that harbors, supports, or encourages them," could become a true third World War spiraling beyond even our control. The ultimate nightmare of any global strategist is a full-scale nuclear confrontation between the globe's North and West, on the one hand, and its South and East, on the other.

5. Confronting terrorism, as we must, requires two changes. First, we need a world-wide network of cooperative prevention, detection, and prosecution. This must include not just our usual allies but some of the very countries now most ambivalent and even hostile towards us. Virtually every Third World country needs our aid but cannot afford to seem our lackey. Second, we must find a way to reduce those alienating actions by which we create our own enemies. Of course, no country can end all conflict with others by ignoring its own interests or caving in to every foreign faction's political demands - competing as they are. But the U.S. can be more forthright and less duplicitous in its policies and dealings. It can avoid confusing its bully-pulpit with a bully's behavior. It can learn to see itself more as others see it, and make appropriate changes. In moments of crisis, great nations lift their heads to expand their global vision rather than bow their necks to fight blindly ahead.

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

From: Hhasan2@aol.com
Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 09:42:28 EDT
To: sidewalk@goamerica.net
Subject: Re: Saskia's Article

Comment

A message from the global south

Special report: Terrorism in the US

Saskia Sassen
Guardian

Wednesday September 12, 2001

Yesterday's attack brings home the fact that we cannot hide behind our peace and prosperity. The evidence has been growing but our leaders did not want to see it. The horrors of wars and deaths far away in the global south do not register. But missile shields cannot protect us. Powerful states cannot fully escape bricolage terrorism, nail bombs, elementary nuclear devices, and homemade biological weapons.

The growth of debt and unemployment, and the decline of traditional economic sectors, has fed an illegal trade in people directed at the rich countries. The diseases and pests of the global south are now in the global north as well: TB is back in the US and the UK, the encephalitis-producing Nile mosquito has arrived for the first time in the north. As governments become poorer they depend more on the remittances of immigrants in the north and have little

interest in managing emigration and illegal trafficking. The pressures to be competitive make governments in poor countries cut their health, education and social budgets, further delaying development and stimulating emigration.

The rising debt, poverty, and disease in the south are beginning to reach deep into rich countries in the north. We can no longer turn our backs on this misery. If we dislike humanitarian reasons for addressing these issues, we should at least be motivated by self-interest.

We must now accept that markets cannot take care of everything. Governments will have to govern more. But we cannot return to the old system of countries surrounding themselves with protective walls. It will take genuine multilateralism and internationalism; radical innovations and new forms of collaboration with civil society and supranational institutions. The violence, hunger and poverty; the destruction of once fertile lands; the oppression of weaker states by highly militarised ones; persecution - all these feed a complex, slow but relentless movement towards the north. The north creates much of the damage and the north has the resources to redress some of it.

Part of the challenge is actually to recognise the interconnectedness of forms of violence that we do not view as being connected or even as forms of violence. We are suffering from a translation problem. The language of poverty and misery is unclear and uncomfortable. The language of yesterday's attacks is clear.

There are two problems in particular that must be addressed: the debt trap and immigration. The debt trap is far more significant than many in the north understand. The focus is always on the amounts of the debts, which are a small fraction of the overall global capital market, now estimated at about 83 trillion dollars. But the debt trap will eventually ensnare the rich countries through the increase in illegal trafficking in people, in drugs, in arms, through the re-emergence of diseases we had thought were under control and through the further devastation of our fragile eco-system. The debt trap is now entangling more countries and it has reached middle income countries.

There are now about 50 countries that are hyper-indebted and unable to redress the situation. It is no longer a matter of loan repayment but a fundamental new structural condition. What is often overlooked or even unknown is that many of those debts are far more extreme than those that were considered as unmanageable levels of debt in the Latin American crisis of the 80s. Debt to GNP ratios are especially high in Africa, where they stood at 123%, compared with 42% in Latin America and 28% in Asia.

The IMF asks HIPC's to pay 20-25% of their export earnings toward debt service. In contrast, in 1953 the Allies cancelled 80% of Germany's war debt and only insisted on 3-5% of export earnings debt service. These are 1 Europe after Communism.

What can be done to pull these countries out of the trap? Poor countries need to import goods and the West will only accept payment in dollars or other high value currencies. This produces a trap that reproduces itself endlessly. One of the few solutions to neutralise the trap is to allow countries to pay in their own currencies, which would enable them to import needed goods for

development and, importantly, eventually strengthen their currencies.

Few poor countries can avoid trade deficits - of 93 low and moderate income countries, only 11 had trade surpluses in the year 2000. These countries would like to export more, as is shown by the recent setting up of a new African Trade Insurance Agency supporting exports to, from and within Africa. Such specialised and focused efforts are promising. Most countries in the south are heavily dependent on imports of oil, food, and manufactured goods. They need loans, and once they have debts, interest payments and other debt servicing costs escalate rapidly and their currencies are likely to devalue further. Borrowing in the leading foreign currencies is a trap.

The government debts of poor countries, and increasingly of middle-income countries as well, need to be taken out of the global capital markets and placed in the domain of the interstate system. J M Keynes proposed this in the 40s when the IMF was created. And the IMF went in this direction with its plan to provide early financing before a crisis, rather than bailing out rich countries' investors.

The second great problem in immigration and illegal trafficking in people. The growth of debt and its attendant economic griefs have created whole new migrations. As the rich economies become richer, they become more desirable places to be and have to raise their walls to keep immigrants and refugees out. So they actually encourage the illegal trade in people.

We may think that the debt and growing poverty in the south have nothing to do with the violence in New Y

The attacks are a language of last resort: the oppressed and persecuted have used many languages to reach us so far, but we seem unable to translate the meaning. So a few have taken the personal responsibility to speak in a language that needs no translation.

An updated version of Saskia Sassen's book, The Global City, is published by Princeton University Press.

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

From: "Deborah Lou" <debbie.lou@gte.net>

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001 23:55:10 -0700

To: socforum@sscf.ucsb.edu

Subject: [socforum] FW: Psychology of evil - Phillip Zimbardo

Here is an essay by Phillip Zimbardo, a leading researcher on the psychology of evil, and an advocate of placing evil not in persons who do evil deeds but in the situations which encourage and create evil doers.

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Dear Friends, I fear that the situation may worsen in many ways and the psychological aftershocks will reverberate and escalate over time, and the extremists in our country will begin to publicly model a mentality not too dissimilar from that of our newest enemy of the state.

Phil Zimbardo

Op Ed Essay

Philip G. Zimbardo, Ph.D. Psychology Professor, Stanford University
President-Elect, American Psychological Association

Faceless Terrorism as Creative Evil OR FIGHTING TERRORISM BY UNDERSTANDING MAN'S CAPACITY FOR EVIL

September 11, 2001, is the new day of infamy that may change forever the way Americans live their lives. A small band of commandos armed with only pocket knives did what no other global super power has been able to do to the United States. They struck terror in our hearts by totally demolishing in a single hour a cherished icon of American capitalism. They went further in their daring attack by destroying a substantial section of the Pentagon, the symbol of our military might. They may also have aimed to destroy the White House and take down Air Force One, and surely they sent our president and his staff scrambling for safety. They brought terror into our collective lives in ways no one of us had ever before experienced, not even the most seasoned war veterans. "They" are the new breed of "Terrorists," faceless men, and perhaps women, carefully programmed to destroy their enemy at all costs. They are likely educated, well trained, blindly obedient to authority, totally dedicated to an ideology, living in a time zone of present fatalism, with few possessions and nothing to lose except sacrificing their lives for a higher cause. They embody "creative evil" at its worst, and in a form that could become most terrifying to all democratic nations.

The bully in a moment can smash the sand castle that a child took hours to build. A vandal can deface a statue in a moment that an artist took years to create. Terrorists can destroy buildings in a moment that took years to erect, or end lives that took generations to nourish. Evil is the perversion of human perfection; it is the mind turned in on itself to hurt, harm, demean, destroy other people, along with their possessions and their most valued symbols. If we take Good as the natural human condition, then Evil is its antithesis, and Heroism its opposing force. But they are all facets of human nature. The terrorist attack on U.S. sovereignty represents a new level of "creative evil" in which human intellect subserves the basest motives of violence and destruction. Thus, it is imperative not to underestimate the power of this new enemy. It is a shadowy force without identifiable territorial boundaries, but one that has the charismatic power to unite disparate allies in many nations with its fervent ideological mission.

We are beginning to appreciate the extent to which this complex, expertly choreographed terrorist attack was the end product of extensive planning, training, and professional expertise

that required financial resources and networks of co-conspirators living in our midst. They had to know how a dozen or more of their skyjacking team members could breach airport security. They knew to select transcontinental jetliners filled to capacity with jet fuel that on explosion could melt steel girders. They had to understand enough kinetic physics and structural engineering to know the precise locations on the WTC that would make it maximally vulnerable to their explosive attack. They had to know how to pilot commercial jetliners, to disarm warning signals, and how four huge airplanes could fly in and out of our major urban centers totally undetected.

This creatively evil enemy cannot be underestimated any longer. Moreover, we have to change our perception of this attack as "senseless violence," as has often been described. Of course, this tragic destruction of lives and property does not make sense to us because it is incomprehensible that any individual or group would engage in such evil deeds. Calling it "senseless", "mindless", "insane", or the work of "madmen" is wrong for two reasons. It fails to adopt the perspective of the perpetrators, as an act with a clearly defined purpose that we must understand in order to challenge it most effectively. And such negative labeling also lulls us into thinking it is random, not comparable to anything we do understand, and is disrespectful of the high level of reasoned intellect behind these deeds, however distorted it may be. Constructive efforts at preventing future similar acts of international violence might best begin with attempts to understand not only the Who question, but the What question as well. Our national leaders will seek out those who orchestrated this destructive attack against our nation and bring them to justice. But even if the identifiable terrorist leaders were to be eliminated, would that stop future terrorism? Unlikely, unless the root causes of the hatred against America is modified, unless the ideological, political, and social bases of the mentalities of the next generation of potential terrorists are changed.

Evil has always existed in many forms, as recorded since Biblical times, and will continue to flourish in different ways in different places. Surely, there are individuals we acknowledge as embodying evil, just as Lucifer and Satan do-Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and other national tyrants. They are all dead, yet evil flourishes throughout the world with nameless conductors orchestrating ever new violence. It is well for us now to go beyond our tendency to focus on dispositional evil as a peculiar property or characteristic of despicable particular individuals. Instead, we might consider focusing on the situational determinants of evil in order to recognize the generic forces of evil, to identify the breeding grounds of evil that can seduce even good people to become perpetrators of evil. Even while acknowledging our individual and national need for retribution and punishment of the leaders of this terrorist attacks, we must also realize that without altering the fundamental sources of anti-American and anti-democratic beliefs and values in other nations, new replacements will emerge for each tyrant leader we punish or kill.

Much psychological research reveals the ease with which ordinary people can be recruited to engage in harmful, sadistic behaviors against their fellows.

In one classic study, by Stanley Milgram, the majority of ordinary American citizens who participated in the study blindly obeyed an authority figure in administering what they believed were painful, even lethal shocks to a stranger. My colleague, Albert Bandura, showed that intelligent research participants were willing to give increasingly higher levels of shock to other

college students when their victims had been labeled as "seeming like animals," by a research assistant. In another demonstration, from my laboratory, of the power of situational forces to distort individual values, normal college students recruited to role play prison guards became their roles in a matter of days, behaving with escalating violence toward their prisoners-other college students. We know that a cult leader, Jim Jones, reverend of Peoples Temple, was able to program his followers to commit suicide, or to kill one another on his command-more than 900 American citizens did so in the jungles of Guyana. Research by sociologist, John Steiner indicates that most Nazi concentration camp guards were "ordinary men" before and following their years of perpetrating evil. Many more examples could be culled to illustrate reasons why we should not demonize or medicalize these terrorists as an alien breed. Instead, we should focus on a better understanding of the mind control tactics and strategies that might make even good people engage in evil deeds at some time in their lives, and how generations of young people are recruited into lives of terrorism. We need also to better appreciate cultural ways of being that differ from our own, as well as acknowledge "the dark side of religion" in terms of how religiously-based value systems can be perverted to justify and reward the most horrendous of human deeds.

Tracking down the terrorist leaders by our intelligence and military forces, has the collateral danger of modeling revenge and retaliation at a national level that can become a stimulus for individuals to adopt a similar orientation toward innocent citizens in our own country whose ethnicity, religion, or appearance might be similar to those of the terrorists. We cannot allow that transfer of hostility to develop because in doing so, it fuels the cycle of violence started by the terrorists. Terrorists create terror; terror creates fear and anger; fear and anger create aggression; and aggression against citizens of different ethnicity or religion creates racism and in turn, new forms of terrorism. It is easier to make war than to make peace, so we must redouble efforts to try the harder way in our own lives by creating a peace zone around each of us that embraces others and enriches existence rather than diminishes it. We must individually and collectively refuse to adopt the terrorists devaluing of human life or they will win the next battle by giving into the kind of negative sentiments that their evil deeds have generated in us all. We have seen the enemy, do not let it become us. It is a time for American heroism to oppose terrorism. It is a new era in our nation and personal lives when heroism is defined not just as the sacrifice of life for others, but also as the opening of ourselves to the needs of others, as sharing some of our precious commodities, like time, with others in meaningful face to face encounters, as the willingness to do all we can to reinforce the bonds of the human connection. It is a time to choose to be a hero in your own family and community.

From vze22wrxs@verizon.net Fri Sep 21 14:16:58 2001
Date: Thu, 20 Sep 2001 19:42:45 -0400
From: Antonina Gentile <vze22wrxs@verizon.net>
Reply-To: Antonina Gentile <antonina.gentile@verizon.net>
To: amsoc <amsoc@columbia.edu>
Subject: A Palestinian-American perspective from Ramallah

Further to the note by the Director of the Community Mental Health Programme in Gaza that Chris Tilly sent last week, this should be of interest to amsoc subscribers. It was apparently

published in a paper in Tennessee, where Prof Moughrabi teaches. It appears on a new Australian anti-war activist webpage, opened on the site of a small publishing group with their permission in Australia: <http://www.oceanbooks.com.au/terror/>

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by Fouad Moughrabi

At one level, I am reassured that the majority of people throughout the world, including most Palestinians, have been totally outraged by the horrific acts of violence inflicted on ordinary Americans on September 11. The spontaneous reactions indicate that we have not completely lost our humanity.

Yes, a few Palestinians cheered and their pictures were flashed over and over again on television screens in the U.S. So did other victims of violence throughout the world. But most of them did not. Instead, they flooded the American consulate in East Jerusalem with condolences; they held candle vigils in front of the consulate; all Palestinian political factions, including the various governmental institutions, condemned the act; all students stood for five minutes of silence in their classrooms.

At another level, however, I am totally dismayed by the heightened levels of cynicism and dehumanization that I see all around. To me, the logic behind the statement that we should take out all terrorists even if it means killing many innocent people is no different from the logic of those who wanted to punish the American government and in the process killed thousands of innocent Americans.

This kind of logic has prevailed in this corner of the Middle East for far too long. Here the Israeli government has been hellbent on imposing its will by force on the Palestinian people, in the process using American supplied weapons including Apache helicopters that fire air to ground rockets courtesy of Boeing and Lockheed-Martin, F-16 airplanes and tanks, to assassinate people, to shell miserable refugee camps, to hit residential areas and to imprison an entire people within tightly controlled areas. If innocent people die as Israel pursues its targets, so be it. Israeli security concerns, often a euphemism for their desire to protect illegal settlements built on stolen Arab land, prevail over all else. At the same time, in their desperation, some Palestinians strike back against the Israeli government and often kill ordinary people on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Increasingly, innocent people on both sides who are unconcerned about politics and simply want to live normal peaceful lives are paying the price for the folly of their political leaders.

Ordinary Americans cannot understand why so many people throughout the world have become

hostile to the American government. Given what the American media tell them and what they learn at schools and universities, how can they be expected to understand? Therefore, they repeat the clichés and the stereotypes that define the media frames through which they try to comprehend the world around them, rarely ever wondering why so many people are angry with the U.S. In their anger, some of them lash out at people who may look Arab or Muslim in their midst, law-abiding citizens who simply want to go on with their lives.

A few media voices, mostly European, are courageous enough to tell it like it is. Jim Muir of the BBC reports (9/17/2001): The fact is that for more than five decades, in defiance of countless UN resolutions and of international law, the Palestinians land has been occupied and their rights ignored by Israel, with full diplomatic cover and open-ended financial and military backing from Washington. So for many Palestinians, Israel and the U.S. are virtually one and the same thing. And Robert Fisk of the Independent writes (9/18/2001): Ask any Arab how he responds to 20,000 or 30,000 innocent deaths and he or she will respond as decent people should, that it is an unspeakable crime. But they will ask why we did not use such words about the sanctions that have destroyed the lives of perhaps half a million children in Iraq, why we did not rage about the 17,500 civilians killed in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. And those basic reasons why the Middle East caught fire last September, the Israeli occupation of Arab land, the dispossession of Palestinians, the bombardments and state-sponsored executions all these must be obscured lest they provide the smallest fractional reason for yesterday's mass savagery. America's bankrolling of Israel's wars is no longer cost-free.

Almost a year ago, after the outbreak of the current Palestinian uprising, as a concerned American citizen, I wrote a letter to the new U.S. Secretary of State, in which I said: The deadly cycle of violence, which increasingly affects innocent people, coupled with the recent closure by Israel that is turning people's lives into pure hell are indicative of a serious problem of leadership on both sides of the divide. It is obvious that we are entering a period of political paralysis whose consequences, both in the short and the long term, are highly destructive for all people here. This cycle of violence threatens regional stability and fuels even more anti-American feelings. I then called for a forthright and unambiguous intervention by the new U.S. Administration to break this deadlock by putting pressure on both Israelis and Palestinians to stop the madness and engage in political dialogue. Mine was not the only voice expressing such concerns. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration stayed away from the conflict and let it simmer thereby giving General Sharon even more freedom to do what he wants. I did not even receive the courtesy of an acknowledgment. Those in the United States who argue for a tough military response, many of them ardent admirers of Israel's approach, are the same people whose arguments have led the U.S. to its current impasse. They focus on who instead of why and will end up dragging the U.S. and the rest of the world into a deadlier cycle of violence and counter-violence. This Israelization of America, both in foreign and domestic policy, as tempting as it may be to some, is the worst possible outcome of this sad state of affairs and will only add fuel to the fire.

The time has come for other Americans- and there are many of them- to raise their voices loud and clear, to show the world a different America, one whose instincts are to support the underdog, to fight for justice rather than retribution and to place more emphasis on a common humanity rather than political expedience- before it is too late.

Fouad Moughrabi is professor of political science at UTC. He is currently on leave of absence working in Ramallah, Palestine as Director of the Qattan Center for Educational Research and Development.

From dhn2@columbia.edu Fri Sep 21 14:16:58 2001
Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2001 09:46:06 -0400 (EDT)
From: Daniel Hugh Nexon <dhn2@columbia.edu>
To: amsoc@columbia.edu
Subject: The Speech

After listening to Bush's speech, a number of thoughts came to mind.

The most obvious, which I am sure we hear much of, is the Vietnam analogy. Will we really fight the 'forces of evil' everywhere, to prevent the fall of one government after another? For those of you who lived through the rhetoric of Vietnam, how similar and how different was this?

I also wonder whether anyone can doubt anymore that the US is an informal empire. Are we seeing the moment in which that informal empire crystalizes? After all, the barbarians at the periphery are threatening the Pax Americana--from central Asia no less! Now all political communities connected to the threat must either allow the equivalent of the imperial legions in--whether in the form of actual conventional forces or covert operatives, or the like--or face the consequences. The dilemmas faced in, for example, the Arab world are clearly those of empire: how local leaders will triangulate between domestic constituencies and imperial power. If Bush--or the people who wrote the speech--are serious, than we are seeking to constitute a New World (Imperial) Order of the kind that Bush pere only hinted that. I say this not to cast immediate illegitimacy on any American action, but to point out what I think is a clear historical analogy. Of course, the difference is that, given communications and modern transportation, the imperial periphery exists in a new relation to the core. On the one hand, the periphery is just like it always was: a frontier that the imperial powers will find almost impossible to control. On the other hand, the ability of the periphery to strike directly at the core is unprecedented in the period before 1945. The Europeans have been well aware of this, and now we are as well.

Finally, the discursive configuration invoked by Bush is itself both fascinating and horrifying. The links drawn between, on one side, modernity, civilization, and liberalism, and, on the other, anti-modernism, barbarism, and illiberalism (fascism/Nazism/totalitarianism) strike me as a significant reconfiguration of elements long present in American exceptionalist rhetoric. All that was missing was Hegelian heliotropism! Let me plug the work of Patrick Jackson, a friend and collaborator of mine, has written already on these subjects in his dissertation, an article in Millenium, and briefly in a peice we wrote for Dialog-IO.

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.

