
THEORIZING SEPTEMBER 11: SOCIAL THEORY, HISTORY, AND GLOBALIZATION¹

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Momentous historical events, like the September 11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent Terror War, test social theories and provide a challenge to give a convincing account of the event and its consequences. In the following analyses, I want first to suggest how certain dominant social theories were put in question during the momentous and world-shaking events of September 11, and offer an analysis of the historical background necessary to understand and contextualize the terror attacks. I take up the claim that “everything has changed” in the wake of September 11 and attempt to indicate both changes and continuities to avoid one-sided exaggerations and ideological simplicities. I argue that the terror attacks show contradictions in the nature of globalization and new technology that requires dialectical analysis of these phenomena. I conclude with some reflections on the implications of September 11 and the subsequent Afghanistan Terror War and 2003 war against Iraq for critical social theory and democratic politics, envisaging a new global movement against terrorism *and* militarism and *for* democracy, peace, environmentalism, and social justice.

In the following study, I am using the term “Terror War” to describe the Bush administration’s “war against terrorism” and its use of unilateral military force and terror as the privileged vehicles of constructing a U.S. hegemony in the current world (dis)order. The Bush administration has expanded its combat against Islamic terrorism into a policy of Terror War where they have declared the right of the U.S. to strike any enemy state or organization presumed to harbor or support terrorism, or to eliminate “weapons of mass

destruction” that could be used against the U.S. The rightwing of the Bush administration seeks to promote Terror War as the defining struggle of the era, coded as an apocalyptic battle between good and evil and has already mounted major military campaigns against Afghanistan and Iraq, with highly ambiguous and unsettling results (Kellner 2003).

Social Theory, Falsification, and the Events of History

Social theories generalize from past experience and provide accounts of historical events or periods that attempt to map, illuminate, and perhaps criticize dominant social relations, institutions, forms, trends, and events of a given epoch. In turn, they can be judged by the extent to which they account for, interpret, and critically assess contemporary conditions, or predict future events or developments. One major theory of the past two decades, Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History* (1992), was strongly put into question by the events of September 11 and their aftermath. ² For Fukuyama, the collapse of Soviet communism and triumph of Western capitalism and democracy in the early 1990s constituted “the end of history.” This signified for him “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.” Although there may be conflicts in places like the Third World, overall for Fukuyama liberal democracy and market capitalism have prevailed and future politics will devolve around resolving routine economic and technical problems, and the future will accordingly be rather mundane and boring.

Samuel Huntington polemicizes against Fukuyama’s “one world: euphoria and harmony” model in his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). For Huntington, the future holds a series of clashes between “the West and the Rest.” Huntington rejects a number of models of contemporary history, including a “realist” model that nation-states are primary players on the world scene who will continue to form alliances and coalitions

that will play themselves out in various conflicts. He also rejects a “chaos” model that detects no discernible order or structure. Instead, Huntington asserts that the contemporary world is articulated into competing civilizations that are based on irreconcilably different cultures and religions. For Huntington, culture provides unifying and integrating principles of order and cohesion, and from dominant cultural formations emerge civilizations that are likely to come into conflict with each other, including Islam, China, Russia, and the West. On Huntington’s model, religion is “perhaps *the* central force that motivates and mobilizes people” and is thus the core of civilization.

Although Huntington’s model seems to have some purchase in the currently emerging global encounter with terrorism, and is becoming a new dominant conservative ideology, it tends to overly homogenize both Islam and the West, as well as the other civilizations he depicts. As Tariq Ali argues (2002), Huntington exaggerates the role of religion, while downplaying the importance of economics and politics.³ Moreover, Huntington’s model lends itself to pernicious misuse, and has been deployed to call for and legitimate military retribution against implacable adversarial civilizations by conservative intellectuals like Jeane Kirkpatrick, Henry Kissinger, and members of the Bush administration.

In sum, Huntington’s work provides too essentialist a model that covers over contradictions and conflicts both within the West and within Islam. Both worlds have been divided for centuries into dueling countries, ethnic groups, religious fractions, and complex alliances that have fought fierce wars against each other and that continue to be divided geographically, politically, ideologically, and culturally (see Ali 2002). Moreover, Huntington’s ideal type that contrasts East and West, based on conflicting models of civilization, covers over the extent to which Arab and Muslim culture preserved the cultural traditions of the Greece and Rome during the Middle Ages and thus played a major role in constituting Western culture. Huntington downplays as well the extent to which Western science

and technology were importantly anticipated and developed in the Middle and Far East.

Furthermore, Islam itself is a contested terrain and in the current situation there are important attempts to mobilize more moderate forms of Islam and Islamic countries against Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terror network and Islamic extremism (see Ahmed 2003). Hence, Huntington's binary model of inexorable conflict between the West and Islam is not only analytically problematic, but covers over the crucial battle within Islam itself to define the role and nature of religion in the contemporary world. It also decenters the important challenge for the West to engage the Islamic world in a productive dialogue about religion and modernity and to bring about more peaceful, informed, and mutually beneficial relations between the West and the Islamic world. Positing inexorable conflicts between civilizations may well describe past history and present dangers, but it does not help produce a better future and is thus normatively and politically defective and dangerous.

Globalization includes a homogenizing neo-liberal market logic and commodification, cultural interaction, and hybridization, as well as conflict between corporations, nations, blocs, and cultures. Benjamin Barber's book *McWorld vs. Jihad* (1996) captures both the homogenizing and conflictual elements of globalization. Barber divides the world into a modernizing, homogenizing, Westernizing, and secular forces of globalization, controlled by multinational corporations, opposed to premodern, fundamentalist, and tribalizing forces at war with the West and modernity. The provocative "Jihad" in the title seems to grasp precisely the animus against the West in Islamic extremism. But "Jihad" scholars argue that the term has a complex history in Islam and often privilege the more spiritual senses as a struggle for religion and spiritualization, or a struggle within oneself for spiritual mastery. From this view, bin Laden's militarization of Jihad is itself a distortion of Islam that is contested by its mainstream.⁴

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

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

Consequently, the events of September 11 and their aftermath suggest that critical social theory needs models that account for complexity and the historical roots and vicissitudes of contemporary problems like terrorism rather than bifurcated dualistic theories. Critical social theory also needs to articulate how events like September 11 produce novel historical configurations while

articulating both changes and continuities in the present situation.⁵ It requires historical accounts of the contemporary origins of Islamic radicalism and its complicity with U.S. imperialism, as I recount in the next section. I suggest that Chalmers Johnson's concept of "blowback" (2000) provides a more convincing account than dualistic (and dualistic!) "war of civilization" discourses of the September 11 terrorist attacks that better contextualizes, explains, and even predicts such events. Moreover, a historicized "blowback" model also provides cogent suggestions concerning viable and inappropriate responses to global terrorism.

The causes of the September 11 events and their aftermath are highly multifaceted and involve, for starters, the failure of U.S. intelligence and the destructive consequences of U.S. interventionist foreign policy since World War II and the failure to address the Israeli-Palestinian crisis; U.S. policies since the late 1970s that supported Islamic Jihadist forces against the Soviet Union in the last days of the Cold War; and the failure to take terrorist threats seriously and provide an adequate response. In other words, there is no one cause or faction responsible for the 9/11 terror attacks, but a wide range of responsibility to be ascribed. Taking account of the history and complexity of the issues involved, Johnson's model of blowback (2000) provides a useful account of how U.S. policy and institutions contributed to producing the most destructive terrorist attacks on U.S. territory in history with destructive consequences still threatening and unfolding.⁶

The Bush Administrations, the CIA, and Blowback

In retrospect, the events of September 11 can be seen as a textbook example of "blowback," a concept developed in a book with this title by Chalmers Johnson (2000) who uses it to describe the unintended consequences of aggressive military and covert policies, a shorthand term for describing that a nation reaps what it sows. As Johnson notes: "The term 'blowback,' which officials of the Central Intelligence Agency first invented for their own internal use, is starting

to circulate among students of international relations. It refers to the unintended consequences of policies that were kept secret from the American people. What the daily press reports as the malign acts of ‘terrorists’ or ‘drug lords’ or ‘rogue states’ or ‘illegal arms merchants’ often turn out to be blowback from earlier operations” (2000: 8). The concept of “blowback” can be applied to the September 11 events since bin Laden and the radical Islamic forces associated with the Al Qaeda network were supported, funded, trained, and armed by the CIA and U.S. administrations in the late 1970s and 1980s. In this reading, the U.S.’s catastrophic failure was not only to have not detected the danger of a terrorist attack on the U.S. and taken action to prevent it, but to have actively contributed to producing the groups who are implicated in the September 11 and other terrorist assaults on the U.S.

Johnson provides a wealth of examples of blowback from problematic U.S. foreign policy maneuvers and covert actions which had unintended consequences, as when the U.S. became associated with support of terrorist groups or authoritarian regimes in Asia, Latin America, or the Middle East, and its clients turned on their sponsors. For instance, the U.S. helped overthrow a democratically elected government in Iran and install the autocratic Shah. When the Shah was overthrown in 1979, militants seized the U.S. embassy and took its inhabitants hostage and since then has maintained hostile, although intricate, relationships with the U.S.

In Johnson’s sense, September 11 is a classic example of blowback, in which U.S. policies generated unintended consequences that had catastrophic effects on U.S. citizens, New York, Washington, and the American and indeed global economy. As I suggest in the following analysis, U.S. policy in Afghanistan at the end of the Cold War and to the present contributed to the heinous events of September 11. A useful summary by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair describes U.S. covert operations in Afghanistan in the late 1970s that had momentous consequences:

In April of 1978 an indigenous populist coup overthrew the government of Mohammed Daoud, who had formed an alliance with the man the U.S. had installed in Iran, Reza Pahlevi, a.k.a. the Shah. The new Afghan government was led by Noor Mohammed Taraki, and the Taraki administration embarked, albeit with a good deal of urban intellectual arrogance on land reform, hence an attack on the opium-growing feudal estates. Taraki went to the UN where he managed to raise loans for crop substitution for the poppy fields.

Taraki also tried to bear down on opium production in the border areas held by fundamentalists, since the latter were using opium revenues to finance attacks on Afghanistan's central government, which they regarded as an unwholesome incarnation of modernity that allowed women to go to school and outlawed arranged marriages and the bride price. Accounts began to appear in the western press along the lines of this from the *Washington Post*, to the effect that the *mujahedeen* liked to "torture their victims by first cutting off their noses, ears and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another."

At that time the *mujahedeen* was not only getting money from the CIA but from Libya's Moammar Q'addafi who sent them \$250,000. In the summer of 1979 the U.S. State Department produced a memo making it clear how the U.S. government saw the stakes, no matter how modern minded Taraki might be or how feudal the Muj. It's another passage Nat might read to the grandkids: "The United States' larger interest would be served by the demise of the Taraki-Amin regime, despite whatever set backs this might mean for future social and economic reforms in Afghanistan. The overthrow of the DRA [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] would show the rest of the world, particularly

the Third World, that the Soviets' view of the socialist course of history being inevitable is not accurate."⁷

In a 1998 *Le Monde* interview, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski had bragged about how he conceived of arming Islam-extremist militants against the Afghan government as a ploy to draw in the Soviet Union more deeply and thus help destroy their system.⁸ What Brzezinski proudly proclaimed as his contribution to defeat the Soviet Union in the Cold War appears in retrospect as a highly problematic U.S. intervention in the late 1970s that intensified civil war in Afghanistan. Overthrow of the secular and modernizing regime in Afghanistan by Islamic fundamentalists helped mobilize and empower the forces that would turn on the U.S. and institute a reign of global terrorism in the current situation.

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

In the 1980s, the U.S. began more aggressively supporting Islamic fundamentalist Jihad groups and the Afghan project was a major covert foreign policy project of the Reagan-Bush administration. During this period, the CIA trained, armed, and financed precisely those Islamic fundamentalist groups who later became part of the Al Qaeda terror network who are now the nemesis of the West, the new "evil empire." In the battle to defeat Soviet Communism in the Cold War, the U.S. poured billions of dollars into Afghanistan to train "freedom fighters" that would overthrow the purportedly communist regime. This was a major project with overt and covert

aid from the U.S., Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. The military aid went into training and arming radical Islamic groups who would emerge with a desire to fight other wars for Islam in the countries that had earlier supported them in their Jihad against the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan administrations. These groups included Osama bin Laden and those who would later form his Al Qaeda network.

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

Not only did the U.S. secret war in Afghanistan to organize Islamic militia against the Soviets help create the Islamic terror network that is now the scourge of the global world, but the same Islamic radical forces, with the complicity of the CIA and other foreign intelligence services, produced one the most stupendous proliferations of drugs in history. As Cooley summarizes: "Never has so much South Asian marijuana, opium, and semi-processed opium products and heroin, reached the drug pushers, the adult addicts, the children,

and the general populations of the West, as in the late 1990s. Much of this was another direct consequence of the CIA's holy war of 1979-89" (2000: 5). It is, of course, impossible to document how much tonnage of drug products were exported, but while Afghanistan produced mostly for local consumption before 1979, according to UN figures production in 1995-1996 had risen to 2,6000 tons of raw opium, increasing to 2,800 tons in 1997 (2000: 150). The results were skyrocketing drug addiction in neighboring countries and massive exporting of drugs to the West.

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

While later in the 1990s, certain U.S. interests would be attracted to the oil and gas possibilities in Afghanistan and would cozy up to and support the Taliban, in the early 1990s, the first Bush administration had other fish to fry, in particular Iraq — another Bush I intervention that had momentous consequences. For after arousing the Arab ire and opposition to the U.S. military intervention against Iraq, at the end of the Gulf war in 1991, the Bush administration persuaded the Saudi government to allow the U.S. to continue to maintain military forces in the Holy Land of Islam. This auspicious event has yet to be fully perceived in its blowback effects. For it was the permanent positioning of U.S. troops in what

was perceived as the Islamic Holy Land, Saudi Arabia, that especially angered bin Laden and more radical Islamic groups (Kepel, 2002, 316). When Saudi Arabia continued to allow the presence of U.S. troops after the Gulf war, bin Laden broke with his country and was declared *persona non grata* by the Saudis for his provocative statements and behavior. It was also reported at this time that Saudis put out a contract on bin Laden's life, supposedly with the assent of the first Bush Administration (Weaver 1996) and later with the assent of the Clinton administration, although assassination attempts obviously failed, if they were seriously attempted at all.

After civil war in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s, the Taliban eventually took over control of much of the country (see Rashid 2001). The Taliban were recognized by the Saudis and Pakistanis as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, but not by the UN and much of the rest of the world, which recognized the Northern Alliance groups fighting the Taliban as the legitimate representative of Afghanistan. When bin Laden and his associates were expelled from Sudan in 1996, they entered into a fateful association with the Taliban and went to Afghanistan where they solidified their network, developed training camps, and solicited recruits and financing (Kepel 2002).

The Clinton administration at first engaged the Taliban government in dialogue, but soon broke off relations and failed to deal with the bin Laden problem. For in the 1980s and 1990s, bin Laden established an organization of former Afghanistan holy war veterans, called Al Qaeda, "the host."⁹ In February 1998, Al Qaeda issued a statement, endorsed by several extreme Islamic groups, declaring it the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens — civilian or military — and their allies everywhere. The bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa later in 1998 was ascribed to the bin Laden/Al Qaeda network, and the Clinton administration responded by shooting 70 Cruise missiles at a factory supposedly owned by bin Laden in Sudan that produced chemical weapons and at camps in Afghanistan that supposedly were populated by bin Laden and his group. The factory

in Sudan turned out to be a pharmaceutical company and the camps in Afghanistan were largely deserted, producing another embarrassment for U.S. policy in the Middle East. Clinton later claimed that his administration also was plotting to assassinate bin Laden, but that a change of Pakistani government disrupted the plot.¹⁰

Although this is rarely mentioned in the mainstream media, the George W. Bush administration became one of the largest financial supporters of the Taliban, providing over \$100 million in early 2001 in what they described as “humanitarian aid,” as well as a supplemental grant of \$43 million in May of 2001 for the Taliban’s promise to declare opium production “unIslamic” and thus to cut back on a potent source of the world’s drug trade. Critics have suggested that the Bush Administration was acting in the interests of the Unocal oil consortium to build an oil-pipe line across Afghanistan, and of the Enron corporation, a major contributor to the Bush administration, which had done a feasibility study for the project. Enron and Unocal had lavishly courted the Taliban and encouraged U.S. support of the regime since they were deemed the group most likely to stabilize Afghanistan and allow the pipeline to be built.¹¹

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

between Washington and the Taliban that continued until just days before the attacks of 11 September.”

Thus, just as Bush senior turned on Saddam Hussein whom he supported in the 1980s and 1990s, so too did Bush Junior turn on the Taliban whom he had been generously sustaining, supposedly with the hopes that his friends could do energy deals with them. The Taliban, of course, were a highly theocratic and repressive fundamentalist regime that some have described as “clerical fascism” (Chip Berlet), or “reactionary tribalism” (Robert Antonio). Their treatment of women was notorious, as was their cultural totalitarianism that led to banning of books, media, destruction of Buddhist statues, and other outrages (see Raschid 2001 and Kepel 2002).

The Taliban practice a form of Islam called “Deobandism,” influenced by a 19th century sect that tried to purify Islam of its modern aspects (see Rashid 2000: 88-90), much as the Saudis version of “Wahabbism” followed strict Islamic law, while rejecting much of the modern world. The Taliban went further than the Saudis in trying to purify Islam in a particular anti-modern version, by following an especially reactionary strain of Muslim fundamentalism, rejected by the more mainstream Sunni and Shiite Islamic schools. The Taliban have also been the host of Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network since they were expelled from Sudan in 1996, at U.S. pressure and insistence. Although bin Laden and Al Qaeda were designated enemies of the U.S. since their evident involvement in a series of terrorist crimes, the Bush Administration continued to provide support to the Taliban group that hosted and protected them until the September 11 terror attacks.

Moreover, there has been a close relation between the Bush and bin Laden families for generations. Salem bin Laden, head of the family empire and Osama’s eldest brother, reportedly invested in George W. Bush’s first business venture, Arbusto Energy. According to several sources, the deal was brokered by Bush’s friend James

Bath, who was also involved in the infamous BCCI bank scandals and was allegedly a CIA agent recruited by W's father, as well as a business agent for the bin Laden family.¹² The bin Laden family has also been involved in other ventures with the Bush family. Internet commentator Sally Slate cited an interesting passage from a PBS *Frontline* Web-site on the bin Laden and Bush connection:

Like his father in 1968, Salem [bin Laden] died in a 1988 air crash . . . in Texas. He was flying a BAC 1-11 which had been bought in July 1977 by Prince Mohammed Ben Fahd. The plane's flight plans had long been at the center of a number of investigations. According to one of the plane's American pilots, it had been used in October 1980 during secret Paris meetings between U.S. and Iranian emissaries. Nothing was ever proven, but Salem bin Laden's accidental death revived some speculation that he might have been "eliminated" as an embarrassing witness. In fact, an inquiry was held to determine the exact circumstances of the accident. The conclusions were never divulged.¹³

This shocking report indicates that the Bush and bin Laden families might have been involved in covert political activities, as well as business deals, including the "October Surprise," one of the most controversial stories of the Reagan-Bush years. It has long been claimed that representatives from the Reagan-Bush election team in 1980 negotiated with Iranians to hold Americans hostage until after the 1980 election, depriving then President Carter of an "October Surprise" from release of the long-held U.S. hostages in Iran that might give Carter the election.¹⁴ This story suggests the longtime, secretive, and highly complex relations between the Bush and the bin Laden families. It is highly suspicious that bin Laden's father and Salem bin Laden, whom had inherited control of the family's empire of business and political interests after his father's death both died in Texas airplane crashes. As I note below, the Bush and bin Laden families were involved in many enterprises.

Unraveling these threads will no doubt be one of the most important and revealing tasks for future historians.

Whatever the bizarre and shady past relations between the Bush and bin Laden family, it is striking that relations between the families continued up until September 11. It has been widely reported that the bin Laden family had been an investor in the Carlyle investment group, in which James Baker and George H.W. Bush are major partners.¹⁵ Moreover, Bush senior and the bin Ladens were allegedly involved in the earlier major global scandal of its era, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) that funneled the money of spies, criminals, shady businesses, and the CIA during the Reagan-Bush era (see Brewton 1992; Cooley 2000; and Brisard and Dasquie 2002).

The official spin-line of Bush and bin Laden family spokespeople is that the family has long expelled and condemned their wayward son Osama and cannot be held responsible for Al Qaeda crimes. But as Sally Slate notes: “Last Thursday on ABC’s *Primetime*, Carmen bin Laden, the estranged wife of Osama’s brother Yeslam, told Diane Sawyer, in regard to Osama’s standing in Saudi Arabia, “What I have heard is he has the backing of some of the royal family. They think the same way. Not all of them, but some of them. You have to understand, I think in Saudi Arabia Osama bin Laden has a little following. And in my opinion, this is what makes him dangerous. . . . Because he has, I think, he has the backing of a lot of people there.”¹⁶

Other commentators have claimed that the bin Laden/Al Qaeda network has been supported by wealthy Saudis, including members of bin Laden’s family, and that up until the September 11 terror attacks, there were close connections between the Bush administration, the Saudis, and the Taliban. A November 2001 PBS *Frontline* on “The Saudi Time Bomb” made clear the support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Al Qaeda network by Saudi Arabian groups. It also revealed that many in the bin Laden Al Qaeda network

and the Saudis shared a similar Wahabbi interpretation of Islam that is rooted in an 18th century attempt to return to the early version of Islam, is highly puritanical and repressive of women, and is exceptionally hostile to the West. The Saudis helped fund the Taliban and set up throughout the world fundamentalist Wahabbi Islamic schools that became recruiting grounds for bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network. Other Saudis directly contributed to Al Qaeda through “charitable” foundations or other means.

Not only did the Bush family have a long and mysterious history of dealings with the bin Laden and other dubious Saudi families who funded the Al Qaeda network, but, as noted, Bush senior and friends would strongly benefit from the war through their connections with the Carlyle group which heavily invests in the military-defense sector and include as investors the bin Laden family, election-thief and Bush family friend James Baker, and George H.W. Bush, leading the conservative Judicial Watch group to insist that Bush Senior resign from the group because of conflict of interests. A shocking FBI memo later revealed that the agency was ordered by the Bush administration to stop investigating connections between the Al Qaeda network and bin Laden family and to “lay off the bin Ladens,” no doubt because of the longtime Bush/bin Laden family connections.¹⁷

The Bush-Baker-Cheney-Saudi band have, of course, long been involved in Mid-East oil wheeling and dealing and assorted sordid business deals and political intrigue in the area. Many believe that the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan was at least partly motivated by an interest in controlling the flow of Mid-East oil and enhancing these business interests — as was the last Bush-Cheney operation, the Gulf War.¹⁸ Reports abound of the tremendous oil reserves in Central Asia and the need to build pipelines across Afghanistan that would secure passage. Using U.S. government sources, Michael Klare writes that the Caspian Sea basin “harbors as much as 270 billion barrels of oil, or about one-fifth of the world’s total proven reserves of petroleum. (Only the The Persian Gulf, with 675 billion barrels in proven reserves, holds a larger supply.) The Department of

Energy also estimates that the Caspian Sea region houses some 665 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, representing one-eighth of the world's gas reserves" (Klare 2001: 2). Moreover, "the untapped oil of the Caspian Sea basin... was estimated by the Department of State in 1997 to be worth some \$4 trillion" (Klare 2001: 15).

The oil-focused machinators in the Bush administration were focusing on different ways to control the flow of Caspian Sea basin oil, including pipelines that would be built across Afghanistan. The desirability of secure terrain around the pipeline led, according to some, to Bush administration support of the Taliban who had promised to build the pipeline and create internal security to protect it. But when it was obvious that the Taliban could not be trusted and were involved with the bin Laden network and terrorism, Bush-Cheney turned on their former allies, as did Bush senior-Cheney-Powell against Saddam Hussein, whom had been a U.S. ally throughout the 1980s and whom some believed came to power in Iraq with CIA backing (see Kellner 1992).¹⁹

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

In any case, the events of the September 11 terrorist attacks should be seen in the context of several U.S. administrations and CIA support for the perpetrators of the monstrous assaults on the United States from the late 1970s, through the Reagan-Bush years, to the present. This is not to simply blame U.S. policy in Afghanistan for the terrorist assault of September 11, but it is to provide some of the context in which the events can be interpreted. During the hysterical fear of terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11

and anthrax attacks, there was a surge of patriotism whereby many argued that anyone who mentioned political causes of Arab hostility toward the U.S. was part of the “blame America” crowd. Indeed, even liberals resisted the “blowback” thesis as illicitly blaming the victim. It is rather a question, first, of gaining historical understanding of the context and situation concerning those radical Islamic sectors of the Arab and Islamic world who have declared Jihad war against the U.S. Secondly, it is a question of ascribing responsibility for those in the U.S. foreign policy establishment who helped organize, fund, train, and arm the terrorists now plaguing the U.S. If we do not understand the past not only are we condemned to repeat it, but we have no chance of constructing an intelligent, enlightened, and peaceful future.

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

Consequently, the conjuncture of Islamic radicalism with the failure of subsequent U.S. administrations to take seriously the threats that terrorist groups posed helped to make possible the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S., as did the failure of U.S. intelligence

agencies. More specifically, the Bush administration downplayed the threats of terrorism. An explosive article by Michael Hirsch and Michael Isikoff on “What Went Wrong” published in the May 28 *Newsweek*, however, contained a series of revelations of how the Bush administration had missed signals of an impending attack and systematically weakened U.S. defenses against terrorism and the bin Laden network. According to the *Newsweek* story, the Clinton administration national security advisor Sandy Berger had become “totally preoccupied’ with fears of a domestic terror attack and tried to warn Bush’s new national security advisor Condoleezza Rice of the dangers of a bin Laden attack.” But while Rice ordered a security review “the effort was marginalized and scarcely mentioned in ensuing months as the administration committed itself to other priorities, like National Missile Defense (NMD [i.e. National Missile Defense]) and Iraq.”

Moreover, *Newsweek* reported that John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General, was eager to set a new rightwing law and order agenda and was not focused on the dangers of terrorism, while other Bush administration high officials also had their ideological agendas to pursue at the expense of protecting the country against terror attacks. Ashcroft reportedly shut down wiretaps of Al Qaeda-related suspects connected to the 1998 bombing of African embassies and cut \$58 million from a FBI request for an increase in its anti-terrorism budget (while at the same time switching from commercial to government jets for his own personal flight). On September 10, when Ashcroft sent a request for budget increases to the White House, it covered 68 programs, none of them related to counter-terrorism. Nor was counter-terrorism in a memorandum he sent to his heads of departments stating his seven priorities. According to *Newsweek*, in a meeting with FBI chief Louis Freeh, he rebuffed Freeh’s warnings to take terrorism seriously and turned down a FBI request for hundreds of additional agents to be assigned to tracking terrorists.²⁰ In the *Newsweek* summary:

It wasn't that Ashcroft and others were unconcerned about these problems, or about terrorism. But the Bushies had an ideological agenda of their own. At the Treasury Department, Secretary Paul O'Neill's team wanted to roll back almost all forms of government intervention, including laws against money laundering and tax havens of the kind used by terror groups. At the Pentagon, Donald Rumsfeld wanted to revamp the military and push his pet project, NMD. Rumsfeld vetoed a request to divert \$800 million from missile defense into counterterrorism. The Pentagon chief also seemed uninterested in a tactic for observing bin Laden left over from the Clinton administration: the CIA's Predator surveillance plane. Upon leaving office, the Clintonites left open the possibility of sending the Predator back up armed with Hellfire missiles, which were tested in February 2001. But through the spring and summer of 2001, when valuable intelligence could have been gathered, the Bush administration never launched even an unarmed Predator. Hill sources say DOD [Department of Defense] didn't want the CIA treading on its turf.

A *Time* magazine cover story later in the summer by Michael Elliot, "The Secret History" (Aug. 4, 2002), provides more detail concerning how the Clinton administration had together a program to attack Al Qaeda in November 2001, when the contested election battle in Florida was raging. The Clinton administration was not able to implement the plan, however, because: "With less than a month left in office, they did not think it appropriate to launch a major initiative against Osama bin Laden." Clinton administration officials claim that Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was fully informed of this plan, and that Clinton National Security Advisor Sandy Berger stressed the need for a major initiative against bin Laden and Al Qaeda, but nothing was done. Moreover, the head of anti-terrorist operations in the Clinton administration, Richard Clarke, who stayed on for the Bush administration, had

himself drawn up the plan and urged its implementation when the Bush team took office. According to *Time*:

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

Unfortunately, fighting terrorism was not a priority in the Bush administration that was hell bent in pushing through its rightwing and procorporate agenda, and so the plan for attacks on Al Qaeda went through the usual 1001 layers of bureaucracy, finally reaching Bush and his inner circle in early September, too late to prevent the September 11 attacks. As these revelations unfolded in summer 2002, Democrats and others called for blue-ribbon commissions to study intelligence and policy failures that made possible the September 11 terrorist attacks. Republicans, led by Vice-President Dick Cheney, predictably attacked the patriotism of anyone who ascribed blame to the U.S. government concerning the September 11 attacks. Moreover, according to Democratic Senate Majority leader Tom Daschle, Cheney had repeatedly urged him not to hold hearings on U.S. policies or failures that led to the September 11 attacks. Bush administration spokespeople attacked as well California Senator Dianne Feinstein who retorted in a memo:

I was deeply concerned as to whether our house was in order to prevent a terrorist attack. My work on the

Intelligence Committee and as chair of the Technology and Terrorism Subcommittee had given me a sense of foreboding for some time. I had no specific data leading to a possible attack.

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

Despite repeated efforts by myself and staff, the White House did not address my request. I followed this up last September 2001 before the attacks and was told by 'Scooter' Libby that it might be another six months before he would be able to review the material. I told him I did not believe we had six months to wait.²¹

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

responsible for Bush administration ignoring of pre-September 11 terrorist threats.²²

As I write in summer 2003, so far the Bush administration has blocked serious investigations into U.S. government failure to stop the September 11 terror attacks and it remains to be seen if such investigations will ever be carried out. In any case, there is no doubt that but the September 11 attacks were one of most significant events of recent history and in the next section I will discuss some aspects of what it tells us about contemporary society, globalization, and the present moment.

September 11 and Terror War: Has Everything Changed?

In the aftermath of September 11, there was a wealth of commentary arguing that “everything has changed,” that the post-September 11 world is a different one, less innocent, more serious, and significantly altered, with momentous modifications in the economy, polity, culture and everyday life. There were some doubters such as historian Alan Brinkley who stated in a *New York Times* interview (Sept. 14, 2002): “I’m skeptical that this is a great rupture in the fabric of history.”²³ Time alone will tell the depth of the magnitude of change, but there are enough significant shifts that have occurred already to see September 11 as a *transformational event* that has created some dramatic alterations in both the U.S. and global society, signaling reconfigurations and novelties in the current world.

In the context of U.S. politics, September 11 was so far-reaching and catastrophic that it flipped the political world upside down, put new issues on the agenda, and changed the political, cultural, and economic climate almost completely overnight. To begin, there was a dramatic reversal of the fortunes of George W. Bush and the Bush administration. Before September 11, Bush’s popularity was rapidly declining. After several months of the most breathtaking hardright turn perhaps ever seen in U.S. politics, Bush seemed to lose control of the agenda with the defection of Vermont Republican

Senator Jim Jeffords to the Democratic Party in May 2001. Jeffords' defection gave the Democrats a razor-thin control of Congress and the ability to block Bush's programs and to advance their own (see Kellner 2001, Chapter Eleven). Bush seemed disengaged after this setback, spending more and more time at his Texas ranch. He was widely perceived as incompetent and unqualified, and his public support was seriously eroding.

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

The U.S. media's demonizing coverage of bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network of terrorists and constant demand for strong military retaliation precluded developing broader coalitions and more global and less militarist approaches to the problem of terrorism. The anthrax attacks, unsolved as I write in summer 2003, fueled media hysteria and mass panic that terrorism could strike anyone at any time and any place. Bush articulated the escalating patriotism, vilification of the terrorists, and the demand for stern military retaliation, and a frightened nation supported his policies, often without seeing their broader implications and threat to democracy and world peace.

There was a brief and ironical ideological flip-flop of Bush administration policy, in which it temporarily put aside the unilateralism that had distinguished its first months in office in favor of a multilateral approach. As the Bush administration scrambled to assemble a global coalition against terrorism with partners such as Pakistan, China, and Russia, that it had previously ignored or in the case of China even provoked, illusions circulated that the U.S. would pursue a more multilateral global politics. Yet the U.S. largely chose to fight the Afghanistan war itself, eschewing NATO, UN, or other multilateral support. One could indeed argue that the failures of the Afghan intervention to capture bin Laden, Mullah Omar, and other top Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership was a result of the U.S. choosing a unilateral military policy rather than a more multilateral approach (see Kellner 2003b).

With the collapse of the Taliban and the defacto conclusion of the intense military phase of the Afghanistan Terror War by December 2001, moreover, the Bush administration intensified its unilateral approach and only many months later invited in a more multilateral policing force. Moreover, the Bush doctrine articulated in his January 2002 State of the Union address projected an “axis of evil” threatened by U.S. military action, called for unprecedented military action and build-up, and evoked an image of an era of war via U.S. military intervention throughout the world for the foreseeable future. The threat of a new militarism as the defining feature of the Bush era was intensified as his administration came to formulate his doctrine of “preemptive strikes” during the summer of 2002 and the Bush and Blair largely unilateral war against Iraq in April 2003.

Previous to September 11, the Bush administration had been rabidly pro “free markets” and anti-government, and it was forced by the September 11 events to recognize the need for stronger government programs. There was widespread consensus that federal funds and programs were necessary to help rebuild New York, provide increased domestic security, and regulate industries like the airplane business, which showed itself to be woefully lacking in security

measures. Yet it should be noted that the main government interventions undertaken by the Bush administration were in the areas of “homeland security” and a gigantic military build-up. These included a highly illiberal rightwing law and order program of unleashing government agencies to surveil, arrest, and detain those suspected of being terrorists in what many see as the most outrageous assault on civil liberties and the open society in U.S. history. There have been no serious initiatives in the area of investing to rebuild infrastructure of cities, highways, or the public health system. Moreover, Bush’s proposed “economic stimulus” package largely consisted of tax breaks for the wealthy rather than new government programs to help the poor and those losing their jobs during a severe economic downturn.

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

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

parcel of everyday life, such as airplanes or mail delivery, could be weapons of destruction. Furthermore, fears proliferated that technological weapons of mass destruction threatened Americans anywhere and anytime, creating new forms of insecurity and anxiety which the media fuelled with hysteric coverage of the anthrax attacks, endless accounts of terrorist networks, and highly dramatized reports of the Afghanistan Terror War.

Crucially, the September 11 events dramatized that globalization is a defining reality of our time and that the much-celebrated flow of people, ideas, technology, media, and goods could have a down side as well as an upside, and expensive costs as well as benefits. The 9/11 terror attacks also call attention to the complex and unpredictable nature of a globally-connected networked society and the paradoxes, surprises, and unintended consequences that flow from the multidimensional processes of globalization. Al Qaeda presented an example of a hidden and secretive decentered network dedicated to attacking the U.S. and their Afghanistan base represented what theorists called “wild zones” or “zones of turmoil” that existed out of the boundaries of “safe zones” of globalized metropolises like Wall Street and Northern Virginia (see Mann 2001 and Urry 2002). Globalization thus generates its Other, its opponents, just as it destroys tradition and incorporates otherness into its modernizing and neo-liberal market.

For the first time, the American people were obliged to perceive that it had serious enemies throughout the globe and that global problems had to be addressed. No longer could the U.S. enjoy the luxury of isolationism, but was forced to actively define its role within a dangerous and complex global environment. Moreover, the terror attacks of 9/11 put in question much conventional wisdom and forced U.S. citizens and others to reflect upon the continued viability of key values, practices, and institutions of a democratic society. In particular, the events of September 11 force the rethinking of globalization, new technology, democracy, and national and global security. 9/11 and its aftermath demonstrate the significance of

globalization and the ways that global, national, and local scenes and events intersect in the contemporary world. The terror spectacle also pointed to the fundamental contradictions and ambiguities of globalization, undermining one-sided pro or anti-globalization positions.

9/11 was obviously a *global event* that dramatized an interconnected and conflicted networked society where there is a constant worldwide flow of people, products, technologies, ideas and the like. September 11 could only be a mega-event in a *global media world*, a society of the spectacle (Debord 1970), where the whole world is watching and participates in what Marshall McLuhan (1964) called a global village. The 9/11 terror spectacle was obviously constructed as a media event to circulate terror and to demonstrate to the world the vulnerability of the epicenter of global capitalism and American power.

Thus, September 11 dramatized the interconnected networked globe and the important role of the media in which individuals everywhere can simultaneously watch events of global significance unfold and participate in the dramas of globalization. Already, Bill Clinton had said before September 11 that terrorism is the downside, the dark side, of globalization, and after 9/11 Colin Powell interpreted the terrorist attacks in similar fashion. Worldwide terrorism is threatening in part because globalization relentlessly divides the world into have and have-nots, promotes conflicts and competition, and fuels long simmering hatreds and grievances -- as well as bringing people together, creating new relations and interactions, and new hybridities. This is the objective ambiguity of globalization that both brings people together and brings them into conflict, that creates social interaction and inclusion, as well as hostilities and exclusions, and that potentially tears regions and the world apart while attempting to pull things together. Moreover, as different groups gain access to technologies of destruction and devise plans to make conventional technologies, like the airplane, instruments of destruction then dangers of unexpected terror events, any place and any time

proliferate and become part of the frightening mediascape of the new millennium.

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

Hence, September 11 exhibited a technological terror that converts benign instruments like airlines and buildings into instruments of mass destruction. Within a short time after the 911 terror attacks, in early October, the mail system was polluted by anthrax. Since infected letters were sent to politicians and corporate media, there was maximum public attention on the dangers on a lethal anthrax attack, making postal work, mail delivery, and the opening of mail a traumatic event, infused with fear. This is exactly the goal of terrorism and media hysteria over anthrax attacks went far in promoting war fever and hysterical fear that led the public to unquestionably support whatever military retaliation, or domestic politics, the Bush administration choose to exert. Curiously, while the Bush administration seemed at first to blame the Al Qaeda network and

then Iraq for the anthrax attacks, it appears that the military high grade of anthrax has the genetic footprint of U.S. laboratories in Fort Detrick Maryland. But eventually the FBI and academic experts believe the source of the attacks was an individual working for the U.S. defense and biological weapons establishment (see note 11).

It is clear from September 11 that the new technologies disperse power, empowering angry disempowered people, leveling the playing field and distributing the use and application of information technology and some technologies of mass destruction. Many military technologies can be obtained by individuals and groups to use against the superpowers and the access to such technology produces a situation of asymmetrical war where weaker individuals and groups can go after superpowers. The possibility of new forms of cyberwar, and terrorist threats from chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, creates new vulnerabilities in the national defense of the overdeveloped countries and provides opportunities for weaker nations or groups to attack stronger ones. Journalist William Greider, for instance, author of *Fortress America: The American Military and the Consequences of Peace*, claims that: “A deadly irony is embedded in the potential of these new technologies. Smaller, poorer nations may be able to defend themselves on the cheap against the intrusion of America’s overwhelming military strength” (abcnews.com, 11/01/99) — or exercise deadly terrorism against civilian populations.

Hence, the U.S. discovered that it is vulnerable domestically to terrorist attack. Likewise, it is becoming clear that the more technologically advanced a society is, the more vulnerable it is to cyberwar. There are now, of course, serious worries about the Internet and cyberterrorism disrupting the global economy and networked society. It is somewhat strange that terrorist groups have not, in fact, gone after the Internet, and attempted to shut it down since they were obviously attempting to disrupt global business by attacking the World Trade Center and airlines industry. Already Paul Virilio evoked the frightening possibility of the collapse of the Internet through a major technological “event”

that would cause its shutdown — disruptions previewed by hacker attacks, worms, and viruses over the past years.²⁴

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

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

attacks; and the networked society of globalization, with its dark sides, enabled terrorists to attack the very symbols of American global wealth and power.

Certainly bin Laden's Al Qaeda network represents bad globalization, most would agree, and the perverted use of technology. But in a sense the Al Qaeda Jihad is the reverse image of McWorld, which imposes its Jihad on tradition and local culture, wanting to create the world in its image. Just as Al Qaeda dreams of imposing a radical premodern Islam on the world, taking over and destroying Western infidel culture and imposing a homogenized Islamic fundamentalism, so too does McDonald's want to destroy local and traditional eating habits and cuisine and replace them with a globalized and universalized menu.

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

September 11 also revealed the failures of the laissez-faire conservative economics, which claimed that there was a market solution to every problem. Just as *Grand Theft 2000* revealed the failure of voting

technology, the voting registration process, the very system of voting, as well as the failure of the media and judicial system (see Kellner 2001), so too did September 11 reveal the massive failure of U.S. intelligence agencies, the National Security State, and the U.S. government to protect the people in the country, as well as cities and monuments, against terrorist attack. The privatization undergone by the airlines industry left travelers vulnerable to the hijacking of airplanes; the confused and ineffectual response by the federal government to the anthrax attacks uncovered the necessity of a better public health system, as well as more protection and security against terrorist attacks. Going after the terror networks disclosed the need for tighter financial regulation, better legal and police coordination, and an improved intelligence and national security apparatus. Rebuilding New York City and the lives of those affected by the terror attacks showed the need for a beneficent welfare state that would provide for its citizens in their time of need.

Thus, September 11 ends the fantasies of Reagan-Bush conservative economics that the market alone can solve all social problems and provide the best mechanism for every industry and sector of life. The Bush-Enron scandals also reveal the utter failures of neo-liberalism and the need for a stronger and more effective polity for the U.S. to compete and survive in a highly complex world economy and polity (see Kellner 2003b, Chapter 9).

On the whole, September 11 and its aftermath have made the world a much more dangerous place. Regional conflicts from the Israel-Palestine hostilities in the Middle East to India-Pakistan conflict to discord in Africa, the Philippines, Columbia, and elsewhere have used Bush administration discourse against terrorism to suppress human rights, to legitimate government oppression, and to kill political opponents throughout the world. Bush administration unilateralism in pursuing the war against terror throughout the world, including against an imagined “axis of evil” not directly related to the Al Qaeda terror network, has weakened multilateral agreements and forces from NATO to the UN and has increased collective insecurity immensely. The Bush administration polarizing policy of “you are with us or against us” has

divided alliances, is ever more isolating the U.S. and is producing a more polarized and conflicted world. The alarming build-up of U.S. military power is escalating a new militarism and producing proliferating enemies and resentment against the U.S., now being increasingly seen as a rogue superpower. Finally, aggressive U.S. military action throughout the world, failed propaganda in the Arab world, and what is perceived as growing U.S. arrogance and belligerence is producing more enemies in the Arab world and elsewhere that will no doubt create dangerous blowback effects in the future.

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

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

Thus, Bush administration policy has arguably exploited the tragedy of September 11 for promoting its own political agenda and interests and threatens to undermine the U.S. and world economy and American

democracy in the process. September 11 thus represents a clear and present danger to the U.S. economy and democracy as well as the threat of terror attacks. Of course, many people lost loved ones in the September 11 terror attacks and their lives will never be the same. Other individuals have returned to the routines and patterns of their pre-September 11 life, and there are thus continuities in culture and everyday life as well as differences and changes. It is not clear if there will be a significant and lasting resurgence of civic re-engagement, but more people now realize that global politics are now perceived as highly significant and that there should be more focus and debates on this terrain than previously.

Still, many corporate and political interests and individual citizens pursue business as usual at the same time that significant differences are enforced in the economy and politics. There are, however, intelligent and destructive ways to fight global terrorism and such a virulent global problem requires a global and multilateral solution, demanding alliances of a complex array of countries on the legal, police, economic, and military front. In this global context, there are serious dangers that the Bush administration will make the problem of terrorism worse and will immeasurably weaken the U.S. and the global economy and polity in the process. In the name of containing terrorism, the Bush administration is both championing curtailment of civil liberties and the public sphere domestically and promoting military solutions to terrorism which legitimates other repressive regimes to suppress human rights and democracy and to themselves use military and police methods to deal with their respective regime's opponents and critics — as was evident in the India-Pakistan dispute, the intensification of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and numerous other actions around the world following the Bush administration Afghanistan intervention.²⁵ In this situation, it is now becoming increasingly important to seek global solutions to global problems, to defend democracy and social justice, and to criticize both militarism and terrorism.

For Democracy and Against Terrorism and Militarism

In conclusion, I want to argue that in the light of the Bush administration attacks on democracy and the public sphere in the United States and elsewhere in the name of a war against terrorism, there should be a strong reaffirmation of the basic values and institutions of democracy and a call for global solutions to global problems. Progressive social movements should thus struggle against terrorism, militarism, and social injustice and for democracy, peace, environmentalism, human rights, and social justice. Rather than curtailing democracy in the name of fighting terrorism we need to strengthen democracy in the name of its survival and indeed the survival of the planet against the forces of violence and destruction. Rather than absolve Bush administration domestic and foreign policy from criticism in the name of patriotism and national unity, as the administration's supporters demand, we need more than ever a critical dialogue on how to defeat terrorism and how to strengthen democracy throughout the world.

Democracy is in part a dialogue that requires dissent and debate as well as consensus. Those who believe in democracy should oppose all attempts to curtail democratic rights and liberties and a free and open public sphere. Democracy also involves the cultivation of oppositional public spheres and as in the 1960s on a global scale there should be a resurrection of the local, national, and global movements for social transformation that emerged as a reaction to war and injustice in the earlier era. This is not to call for a return to the 1960s, but for the rebirth of a global movement for peace and justice that builds on the lessons of the past as it engages the realities of the present.

In addition to re-affirming democracy, we should be against terrorism and militarism. This is not to argue for an utopic pacifism, but to argue against militarism in the sense that the military is offered as the privileged solution to the problem of terrorism and in which the military is significantly expanded, as in the Bush administration

massive military build-up, and promotion of unilateral military action. Thus, while I would argue that military action against terrorism is legitimate, I would oppose U.S. unilateralism militarism outside of the bounds of recognized military conventions and law, and would favor more multilateral action in the context of global law and coalitions.

There is little doubt that that the Bin Laden and Al Qaeda terrorists are highly fanatical and religious in their ideology and actions, of a sort hard to comprehend by Western categories. In their drive for an apocalyptic Jihad, they believe that their goals will be furthered by creating chaos, especially war between radical Islam and the West. Obviously, dialogue is not possible with such groups, but equally as certain an overreactive military response that causes a large number of innocent civilian deaths in a Muslim country could trigger precisely such an apocalyptic explosion of violence as was dreamed of by the fanatic terrorists. It would seem that such a retaliatory response was desired by the Bin Laden group which carried out the terrorist attacks on the U.S. Thus, to continue to attack Arab and Islamic countries could be to fall into the Bin Laden gang's trap and play their game—with highly dangerous consequences.

Further, we need to reflect on the global economic, social, environmental and other consequences of promoting militarism and an era of warfare against terrorism. Evoking and fighting an “axis of evil” called for by the Bush administration is highly dangerous, irrational, and potentially apocalyptic. It is not clear that the global economy can survive constant disruption of warfare. Nor can the environment stand constant bombardment and warfare, when ecological survival is already threatened by unrestrained capitalist development (see Wilson 2002). To carry out continued military intervention, whether against an “axis of evil” or any country that is said to support terrorism by the Bush administration, risks apocalypse of the most frightening kind. Continued large-scale bombing of Iraq, Iran, Syria or any Arab countries, especially after

growing anger following the U.S./U.K. war against Iraq in 2003, could trigger an upheaval in Pakistan, with conceivable turmoil in Saudi Arabia and other Moslem countries. It could also help produce a dangerous escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, already at a state of white-hot intensity, whose expansion could engulf the Middle East in flames.

Thus, while it is reasonable to deem international terrorism a deadly threat on a global scale and to take resolute action against terrorism, what is required is an intelligent multifaceted and multilateral response. This would require a diplomatic consensus that a global campaign against terrorism is necessary which requires the arrest of members of terrorist networks, the regulation of financial institutions that allow funds to flow to terrorists, the implementation of national security measures to protect citizens against terrorism, and the worldwide criminalization of terrorist networks that sets international, national, and local institutions against the terrorist threat. Some of these measures have already begun and the conditions are present to develop an effective and resolute global campaign against terrorism.

There is a danger, however, that excessive unilateral American military action would split a potential coalition, creating uncontrollable chaos that could destroy the global economy and create an era of apocalyptic war and misery such as Orwell evoked in *1984*. We are living in a very dangerous period and must be extremely careful and responsible in appraising responses to the events of September 11 and other terrorist attacks bound to happen. This will require the mobilization of publics on a local, national, and global level to oppose both terrorism and militarism and to seek productive solutions to the social problems that generate terrorism, as well as to terrorism itself.

Consequently, while I would support a global campaign against terrorism, I believe that we cannot depend on war or large-scale military action to solve the problem of global terrorism. Terrorists

should be criminalized and international and national institutions should go after terrorist networks and those who support them with the appropriate legal, financial, judicial, and political instruments. Before and during Bush administration military intervention in Afghanistan, an intelligent campaign was underway that had arrested many participants and supporters of the bin Laden and other terror networks, that had alerted publics throughout the world to the dangers of terrorism, and that had created the conditions of possibility for a global campaign against terror. But we need global movements and institutions to oppose purely militarist attacks on terrorism and that legitimate the suppression of democracy in the name of the war against terrorism.

Another lesson of September 11 is that it is now totally appropriate to be completely against terrorism, to use the term in the arsenal of critical social theory, and to declare it unacceptable and indefensible in the modern world. There was a time when it was argued that one person's "terrorism" was another person's "national liberation movement," or "freedom fighter," and that the term was thus an ideological concept not to be used by politically and theoretically correct discourse -- a position that Reuters purportedly continues to follow.

In terms of modern/postmodern epistemological debates, I would argue against absolutism and universalism and for providing a contextual and historical account of terms like terrorism. There were times in history when "terrorism" was an arguably defensible tactic used by those engaged in struggles against fascism, such as in World War II, or in national liberation struggles, such as in the movements against oppressive European and later U.S. empire and colonialism. In the current situation, however, when terrorism is a clear and present danger to innocent civilians throughout the world, it seems unacceptable to advocate, carry out, or defend terrorism against civilian populations because of the lethality of modern weapons, the immorality of indiscriminate crime, and the explosiveness of the

present situation when terror on one side could unleash genocidal, even species-cidal, terror as a retaliatory response.

It is therefore neither the time for terrorism nor reckless unilateral military intervention, but for a global campaign against terrorism that deploys all legal, political, and morally defensible means to destroy the network of terrorists responsible for the September 11 events, but also that is for democracy. Such a global response would put terrorist groups on warning that their activity will be strongly opposed, and that “terrorism” will be construed as a moral and political malevolence not to be accepted or defended. But a progressive global campaign should also not accept militarism, the erection of a police-military state, and the undermining of democracy in the name of fighting terrorism.

Thus, while I would support a global campaign against terrorism, especially the al Qaeda network, that could include military action under UN or other global auspices, I would not trust U.S. unilateral military action for reasons of U.S. failures in the region and its sustained history of supporting the most reactionary social forces (see Kellner 2003b). Indeed, one of the stakes of the current crisis, and of globalization itself, is whether the U.S. empire will come to dominate the world, or whether globalization will constitute a more democratic, cosmopolitan, pluralistic, and just world, without domination by hegemonic states or corporations. Now more than ever global institutions and movements are needed to deal with global problems and those who see positive potential in globalization should renounce all national solutions to the problem of terrorism and seek global ones. Consequently, while politicians like Bill Clinton and Colin Powell have deemed terrorism “the dark side of globalization,” it can also be seen as an unacceptable response to misguided and destructive imperial national policies which themselves must be transformed if a world without terror is possible.

Finally, this will require the anti-globalization movement to rethink its nature, agenda, and goals. There may well be a “clash of

civilizations” occurring today between the globalizing forces of transnational capital and resistance to global capitalism by heterogeneous configurations of individuals, groups, and social movements. But in its first stages the movement against capitalist globalization tended to be defined more by what it was against than what it was for, hence, the common term “anti-globalization movement.” A new social movement for the millennium must, however, define itself by what it is for as well as against. In the wake of September 11, I am suggesting that local, national, and global democratic movements should be for democracy, peace, environmentalism, and social justice and against war, militarism, and terrorism, as well as the multiplicity of injustices that social movements are currently fighting. Now, more than ever, we are living in a global world and need new global movements and politics to address global problems and achieve global solutions.

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Notes

1. This text is extracted from my study *From 9/11 to Terror War: Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (Kellner 2003b) which continues work done in my books *The Persian Gulf TV War* (Kellner 1992), *Grand Theft 2000* (Kellner 2001) and *media spectacle* (Kellner 2003a). I first

presented the analysis in this project at the University of Kansas a couple of weeks after the September 11 attacks and thank the Department of Sociology for the invitation and a lively discussion. I then began writing up the analysis and presenting it on my Web-site, producing an experiment in writing contemporary history as it evolved, thus circulating a first-draft on the Internet with weekly updates and revision. Thanks to Rhonda Hammer and Richard Kahn for continuous support and critical analysis of my September 11 studies and to Kahn for administering the Web-site.

2. Fukujama's 1992 book was an expansion of a 1989 article published in the conservative journal *The National Interest*. His texts generated a tremendous amount of controversy and were seen by some as a new dominant ideology proclaiming the triumph of Western ideals of capitalism and democracy over all of their opponents. With a quasi-Hegelian gloss, Fukuyama proclaimed the victory of the Ideas of neo-Liberalism and the "end of history," and his work prompted both skepticism ("it ain't over, til its over") and impassioned critique. If terrorism and the Bush administration militarism soon pass from the historical scene and a neo-liberal globalization driven by market capitalism and democracy returns to become the constitutive force of the new millennium, Fukuyama would end up being vindicated after all. But in the current conflictual state of the world, his views appear off the mark and put in question by the present situation.

3. Ali also notes (2002: 282f) that after the September 11 attacks, Huntington modified his "clash of civilization" thesis to describe the post Cold War era as an "age of "Muslim wars," with Muslims fighting each other, or their specific enemies (see Huntington essay in *Newsweek*, Special Davos Edition (Dec-Jan. 2001-2). As Ali maintains, besides being a highly questionable overview of the present age, it contradicts his previous model, reducing Huntington's thought to incoherency.

4. For an astute analysis of the different senses of Jihad and a sharp critique of the Islamic terrorists' distortions of Islam, see Raschid 2002 and Ahmed 2003.

5. I provide my own historical and theoretical account of the background to the events of September 11 in this chapter. Put abstractly, such a theory would combine the Hegelian-Marxian perspectives of a globalized world and the vicissitudes of capitalism and the contemporary era with concrete historical study of specific events, like the September 11 terrorist acts, and the lessons for contemporary social theory and

democratic politics. It would combine historical, political, economic, and cultural analysis in a multiperspectivist model that eschews reductionism and simplistic monocausal models. In the light of the importance of the media in the construction of the September 11 spectacle and subsequent Terror War, I also employ the tools of cultural studies and media critique.

6. In addition to Johnson 2000 that I am utilizing to provide a conceptual overview of the concept of blowback and to interpret the September 11 terrorist acts, I am also drawing upon a series of studies of U.S. foreign policy and Afghanistan, including Rashid 2001; Cooley 2000; Kepel 2002; Achbar 2002; and Vidal 2003. I also draw upon Mary Ann Weaver, "Blowback," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1996), available at www.theatlantic.com/issues/96may/blowback.htm; a collection of articles contextualizing the events at *The Nation* web site, especially Dilip Hiro, "The Cost of an Afghan 'Victory,'" at www.thenation.com; articles collected at www.counterpoint.com; and a variety of other books and articles that I will cite as I proceed.

7. See Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, "The Price. Was it Really Worth it, Mrs. Albright?" *Counterpoint*, September 26, 2001. See their archive for useful daily postings on the current crisis at <http://www.counterpunch.org/wtcarchive.html>.

8. The 1998 *Le Monde* interview with Brzezinski is posted October 8, 2001 at <http://www.counterpunch.org/wtcarchive.html>. For a full account of the background of the Brezezinski-Carter decision to intervene in Afghanistan politics and the Soviet response, see Cooley 2000: 9ff.

9. Gilles Kepel claims that the name "Al Qaeda" emerged around 1986 when bin Laden began making a data bank of members of the Jihad network, with Al Qaeda signifying "the base" (2002, 314); on the bin Laden network, see also Brisard and Dasquie 2002.

10. According to one account, it was "irrational hatred" of Sudan by the Clinton administration that prevented the West from gaining access to Sudan's detailed files on Al Qaeda, which they were reportedly willing to share with the West, but which were repeatedly refused; see David Rose, "Resentful west spurned Sudan's key terror files," *Guardian*, Sept. 30, 2001 and "The Osama Files," *Vanity Fair* (Jan. 2002: 64ff). Rose especially blames Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who reportedly blocked the FBI from gaining the Sudan files, on the grounds that Sudan was a "terrorist state." Three days later, the Clinton administration bombed Sudan in retaliation for the Al Qaeda bombings

of U.S. embassies in Africa. A Clinton administration member, Gayle Smith, however, claims that the Sudanese were not serious about sharing their intelligence files and did not provide any useful information on the bin Laden group (see *Los Angeles Times* (Dec. 7, 2001: B15). In his 2003 memoirs, Sidney Blumenthal claims that Clinton wanted to more aggressively fight bin Laden and terrorism, waging “a mostly secret war that was largely screened from the public.” According to Blumenthal, FBI director Louis Freeh’s “hostility to the White House dictated his lack of cooperation with the war against bin Laden.” Blumenthal claims that Clinton planned to follow up the cruise missiles on Al Qaeda and wanted to drop Special Ops troops into the mountains of Afghanistan in a surprise attack, but the Pentagon blocked the plan, saying such an attack would be too risky. A twisted, tortured tale of failed U.S. policy in the region remains to be told.

11. On the background of the Unocal pipeline project, see Rashid 2001, Chapters 12 and 13. In the Southeast Asian press, there have been speculations that the U.S. policy in Afghanistan under Bush II was to stabilize the country under Taliban rule to enable the Unocal-corporation to build a gas pipe-line across Afghanistan and exploit its potential natural gas and oil resources. See Ranjit Devrag who writes:

Where the “great game” in Afghanistan was once about czars and commissars seeking access to the warm water ports of the Persian Gulf, today it is about laying oil and gas pipelines to the untapped petroleum reserves of Central Asia. According to testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives in March 1999 by the conservative think tank Heritage Foundation, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan together have 15 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. The same countries also have proven gas deposits totaling not less than nine trillion cubic meters. Another study by the Institute for Afghan Studies placed the total worth of oil and gas reserves in the Central Asian republics at around U.S.\$3 trillion at last year’s prices.

Not only can Afghanistan play a role in hosting pipelines connecting Central Asia to international markets, but the country itself has significant oil and gas deposits. During the Soviets’ decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, Moscow estimated Afghanistan’s proven and probable natural gas reserves at around

five trillion cubic feet and production reached 275 million cubic feet per day in the mid-1970s. But sabotage by anti-Soviet *mujahideen* (freedom fighters) and by rival groups in the civil war that followed Soviet withdrawal in 1989 virtually closed down gas production and ended deals for the supply of gas to several European countries.

Natural gas production and distribution under Afghanistan's Taliban rulers is the responsibility of the Afghan Gas Enterprise which, in 1999, began repair of a pipeline to Mazar-i-Sharif city. Afghanistan's proven and probable oil and condensate reserves were placed at 95 million barrels by the Soviets. So far, attempts to exploit Afghanistan's petroleum reserves or take advantage of its unique geographical location as a crossroads to markets in Europe and South Asia have been thwarted by the continuing civil strife.

In 1998, the California-based UNOCAL, which held 46.5 percent stakes in Central Asia Gas (CentGas), a consortium that planned an ambitious gas pipeline across Afghanistan, withdrew in frustration after several fruitless years. The pipeline was to stretch 1,271km from Turkmenistan's Dauletabad fields to Multan in Pakistan at an estimated cost of \$1.9 billion. An additional \$600 million would have brought the pipeline to energy-hungry India. From *OnLine Asia Times*, October 6, 2001 (<http://atimes.com/global-econ/CJ06Dj01.html>).

After the collapse of the Enron corporation in Fall 2001, it was reported that one of its many projects was promotion of the Unocal oil and gas pipeline across Afghanistan; see the documents assembled in www.bushwatch.com and note 19 below.

12. See Brewton 1992: 221ff; Beatty and Gwynne 1993; Hatfield 2000: 55-56; and Brisard and Dasquie 2002. According to Hatfield (2000: 56), after Bath's shady business deals were exposed, Bush denied ever doing business with Bath, with whom he had served in the Texas National Guard and was reportedly good friends. But inspection of later court papers revealed that Bath indeed invested in Bush's Arbusto oil company, along with the bin Laden family. Bush Senior has also had longtime relations with members of the bin Laden family and other Saudis who provided money to the bin Laden network. For Bath's colorful story,

including business and bank scandals and illegal support for the contras, and alleged recruitment into the CIA by George H.W. Bush, see Brewton 1992. BBS reported as well on bin Laden investment in Bush's oil company on November 7, 2001 and Bush administration orders to U.S. specialagent to back off the bin Laden family and Saudi royals after Bush became president; see the summary and detailed reporting in "U.S. agents told: Back off bin Laden," smh.com.au, Nov. 7, 2001.

13. Sally Slate's explosive column is available, <http://www.onlinejournal.com/Commentary/Slate103001/slate103001.html>; the PBS *Frontline* commentary is at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/family.html>. An editor's note was added to the *Frontline* report cited above stating: "The above paragraph is inaccurate. Salem bin Laden was piloting a light aircraft, not a BAC 1-11, when he crashed. As for 'secret Paris meetings between U.S. and Iranian emissaries' in October 1980, such meetings have never been confirmed." For sources that claim that such meetings took place and that George H.W. Bush was involved in the negotiations, see the sources in note 16 below. For the official bin Laden family position that Osama is an outcast, see Michael Moss, "Bin Laden Family Strives to Re-establish Its Reputation," *New York Times* (Oct. 28, 2001). A *ABC* report, however, indicated that several members of the bin Laden family were connected with groups suspected of supporting and financing terrorist networks (see the summary and detailed reporting in "U.S. agents told: Back off bin Laden," smh.com.au, Nov. 7, 2001).

14. On the October Surprise, see Sick 1990 and the documents assembled by Robert Parry in www.consortiumnews.com.

15. See the assembled documents from various sources including the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* that document the elder Bush's connection with the Carlyle group at www.bushwatch.com, as well as Oliver Burkeman and Julian Borger, "The ex-president's club," *Guardian* (October 31, 2001); Dan Briody, "Carlyle's way. Making a mint inside 'the iron triangle' of defense, government, and industry," *Red Herring*, Jan. 8, 2002; and Tim Shorrock, "Crony capitalism Goes Global." *The Nation* (April 1, 2002: 11-16. The bin Laden family sold their Carlyle fund interests after September 11 and members of the family in the U.S. fled the country by private jet following the September 11 terror acts and the Bush and bin Laden family connections became a source of embarrassment to the Bush family that so far has not been systematically explored by the media.

16. See note 13 above for the Sally Slate source; the tape of Saudis clerics visiting bin Laden that was found in Afghanistan and released to great fanfare and controversy in December 2001 documents the strong support for bin Laden in Saudi Arabia, an issue I discuss later.

17. See Greg Palast, "FBI and U.S. Spy Agents Say Bush Spiked bin Laden Probes Before September 11." *The Guardian* (Nov. 7, 2001). Palast's article is collected on his home page that has a lot of other interesting reports on Bush administration activities; see www.gregpalast.com and the collection of his articles in Palast 2002.

18. See Wayne Madsen, "Afghanistan, the Taliban, and the Bush Oil Team" who claims that Afghanistan interim president Hamid Karzai was a top adviser to the Unocal Corporation interested in the Central Asian Gas pipeline, that Enron did the feasibility study for the project, that Cheney's Halliburton company was set to do the construction work, and that the Bush administration top representative in Afghanistan today, Zalmay Khalilzad, had also been a Unocal adviser and see member of the Bush administration GOP (Grand Oil Plan) (see democrats.com [January 2002] and <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD201A.html>).

19. Some critics are skeptical that creation of an oil pipeline across Afghanistan is a major motivation for the Bush administration's Terror War policy. See, for instance, "No War for Oil!" *The American Prospect* (August 12, 2002): 27-30. While it would be a mistake to reduce Bush administration policy to serving oil industry interests, there is no doubt but that the oil-obsessed Bushites have long been viewing the prospects of controlling Caspian Sea basin oil and natural gas. Moreover, since the Afghanistan invasion, as I note later in this study, U.S. bases have been built throughout the area, deals have been made with the Afghanistan and Pakistan government for oil pipelines to be built that follow the original Unocal/Enron plans, and one imagines that the ultimate insider/realist legitimation for the extent of the U.S. military involvement in the region is to gain access to oil supplies in case Persian Gulf supplies are threatened or become depleted. For an excellent account of the role of oil "resource" politics and how the drive to control oil supplies has been fueling U.S. post-Cold War policy, see Klare 2001.

20. In "Ashcroft Knew," Bruce Shapiro names Ashcroft "the official responsible for the most dramatic failures of September 11" (*Salon*, May 23, 2002). Ashcroft will indeed emerge as one of the villains of this book, in part because of his stunning incompetence and failures to address the dangers of terrorism due to his fanatic obsession to push through a rightwing law and order agenda. But Ashcroft also carried out

the most systematic assault on civil liberties in U.S. history and emerges as a clear and present danger to constitutional democracy. Yet in my reading, it is the collective responsibility of the Bush administration to fail to heed warnings of imminent terror attacks and its systematically carrying out policies that made them more likely, an argument I expand in Chapter 1 and elsewhere in this book.

21. The Feinstein memo is found at www.senate.gov/~feinstein/Releases02/attacks.htm).

22. See *CBS News*, “New Terror Task Force. Cheney To Lead at Terrorist Threats to U.S.,” May 8, 2001. A June 30, 2001 *CNN* report headlined “Cheney is point man for administration” noting that Cheney would be in charge of task forces on three major issues: energy, Global warming, and domestic terrorism.” We know that Cheney concentrated on energy issues, to the detriment of paying attention to terrorism, and there should be an inquiry into what he did and did not do as head of the Bush administration anti-terrorism task force. A www.disasterrelief.org Web-site on May 11 also posted a report that states that: “Bush asked Vice President Dick Cheney to lead the task force, which will explore how attacks against U.S. citizens or personnel at home and overseas may be detected and stopped.” To prevent future terror attacks on the U.S., it would thus be highly important to see exactly what Cheney did or did not do and address the problems revealed. See discussions of Cheney, Enron, and the oil industries in 9.2, 11.3, and elsewhere in this study.

23. Brinkley elaborated his position in a forum at Columbia University on October 5, 2001; see http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/01/10/historical_reflection_9_11.html.

24. For Virilio, every technology has its accident that accompanies it, so the airplane’s accident is the crash, the automobile a wreck, and a ship its sinking. For Virilio, the accident the Internet faces is “the accident of accidents,” as he calls it, the entire collapse of the global system of communication and information, and thus the global economy. On Virilio, see Kellner 1999.

25. Human Rights Watch has released a report that has documented how a wide spectrum of countries have used the war against terrorism to legitimate intensified repression of its domestic opponents and military action against foreign adversaries. See <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/02/usmil0215.htm>