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September 11: Symbolism and Responses to "9/11"

Mark Hopkins and Raymond F. Hopkins

Abstract

Professors Hopkins and Hopkins review the impact of 9/11 as a symbol in American politics. Following the terrorist attacks, "9/11" became a simple reference condensing wide-ranging events and emotions. Various interpretations emerged about what caused "9/11" and enabled the attacks. The authors claim that 9/11 allowed US leaders to pursue certain policy prescriptions that otherwise would have been blocked. Among four possible prescriptions for responding to the attacks, the Bush administration chose a "praetorian" policy of preventive war, with Iraq as its first example. In the authors' view, by pursuing an expansive but highly militarized response, the US has overlooked the need to alleviate the conditions that made 9/11 possible. The authors recommend that the US, as part of a multilateral effort, allocate major resources to expanding "global public goods," including measures that strengthen barriers to proliferation, enhance fighting of global crime, and reduce incentives for terrorism, especially ones arising in failing states where distorted education and weak protection of human rights encourage organized terrorism.

KEYWORDS: presidency, foreign policy, terrorism

I. Introduction

On September 15, 2001, at a meeting in Camp David, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz reportedly argued that the terrorist attacks of the previous Tuesday provided an opportunity for US military action against Iraq.¹ At the time President Bush found insufficient connection between Iraq and the attacks to warrant action. Nevertheless, 18 months later the President gave that order, initiating a military conquest of Iraq on March 17, 2003 using the events of September 11, 2001 as a primary justification. During that time, no tangible evidence of a link between the events of September 11 and the Baathist regime in Iraq had surfaced. In fact, analysts suggested that, to the contrary, there was little in common between the aims of Saddam Hussein and the Al-Qaeda terror network.

This poses an interesting question about the process that shaped U.S. policy responses to the events of September 11. How did the emotion-laden symbol of "9/11" come to be used as a justification for a wide-range of prescriptive responses, including the war on Iraq, some of which diverge significantly from the proximate cause and threat of the attacks?

In this paper we argue that in the months following the terrorist attacks on the United States three intellectual processes shaped the subsequent responses. First, there was a search for a simple reference that linked the complicated events of that day. People sought a term that condensed many related actions, both before and after the terrifying plane crashes. Second, interpretations of the symbol appeared. Once the neutral symbol—September 11 or *9/11*—emerged, it became the depository for interpretations of a wide set of events as well as the emotional meanings attached to them. In this way the symbol served to absorb and condense ongoing and diverse understandings. Finally, a third process, prescription, took place. Using the interpretations developed, individuals, government agencies, and other "actors"—both in the United States and around the world—considered how they should respond. This final process, one that continues as an unfolding world drama, is contentious. Varying interpretations from *9/11* motivate different policy prescriptions. US national leaders have used, or permitted the use of, the symbol to justify military intervention policies that otherwise would have been blocked.

We examine these three processes in this paper. We do not appraise the "truthfulness" of outcomes as such, but rather discuss the events of *9/11* from the perspective of these processes, which is, of course, itself one interpretation of what happened. In this sense this paper is a part of the interpretation process. Like others, we use our own pre-existing views about how causal ties operate to assert claims about global affairs. We do so because an analysis of the processes of simplification, interpretation and prescription reveals how "*9/11*" is a key link to important policy departures taken by the US in its aftermath.

At the least, these policies expanded transnational government networks to coordinate anti-terrorist intelligence and suppression; they also spurred divergent views about what constituted terrorism and how and when to use military force against it. The outcomes of these three processes shaped not only what the United States government has been

¹ According to New Yorker writer Mark Danner, Wolfowitz and others saw this as a "new opportunity presented by the war on terror—that is, an opportunity to argue to the public that Iraq presented a vital danger to the United States." (PBS Frontline, 2003).

willing to do, but also affected what other governments in Europe, Asia and the Middle East have done in support, reaction or opposition to the US. It helps explain the US attack on Iraq in March 2003 and the nearly unilateral quality of the American action.

II. Simplification: from Attack on America to “9/11”

The earliest news reports about 9/11 were references to the hijacking of four airplanes and their crashing into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Subsequent details of the disasters, especially in New York, were reported with many complicated introductions, along with coverage of responses by rescue workers and political leaders. “Terrorists”, “attacks”, “tragedy”, and “in America” were key terms. As September went along, a wide variety of headlines and television subtexts sought to capture in a few words the central story. Media coverage contained myriad references within the continuing story; most included a focus on who were the terrorists, how the airplanes were hijacked, what happened in the startling collapse of the Twin Towers, and when the fate of people in NY and Washington would be clarified. Such references flooded newspaper headlines and radio and TV broadcasts.

Between September 12 and mid-October people around the world tried various phrases to refer to all that had happened and was being learned. To accomplish a simplification, one that permitted a multitude of events to be conflated together while allowing it to be adaptable to complex interpretations, a short, preferably one word symbol was sought via trial and error by the various participants, particularly journalists.² This search for the best term to refer to the complex of events that led up to and followed the deliberate “suicide” acts of terrorism was an important challenge for the media.

One proposal, “911,” occurred early but was discarded because it already was used in the US to mean an emergency call. Hence it was loaded with meanings. Other candidates, for instance several in which the word terrorism was used, e.g. “Terrorism in America,” put focus on the action. They proved unwieldy and too narrow.

Place names often emerge as condensation symbols for a terrorist event: “Waco,” “Columbine,” or “Jonestown” are examples. However, no single place reference, such as “Twin Towers”, would suffice. While an emphasis on the victims was important, to refer only to “Ground Zero,” for example, would be to slight the two other planes, the dead innocent people in Washington and Pennsylvania, as well as the immediate heroism of many first responders to these violent events. The surge of shared patriotism that engulfed US citizens and the solidarity with America exhibited in other countries, especially in Europe and Russia, and to a lesser degree in Latin America and Asia was also missing from a symbol that was linked to a place or strategy. “Events of September 11” became a common term that as time went by was shortened to “9/11.”³

² For a discussion of symbols, their use to condense complex events and emotions and their role in rationalizing personal policy preferences, see Lasswell (1935), Eldelman (1963), Lasswell (1972) and Weldes (1999).

³ By November 2001 the use of “9/11” was established. The New York Times ran a series of interpretative essays using this reference. Just a month later it was used as a quick reference to link disparate stories—e.g. “9/11 as Tax Hike Rationale” (December 12).

9/11, like “Watergate,” “Vietnam,” and “Pearl Harbor” provides a clear three-syllable term to serve as a succinct and open-ended reference into which meanings and interpretations can be poured. The pervasiveness of *9/11* in national discussion indicates that we now live in a “post-*9/11* world,” one in which US citizens hold sharply enhanced motivations to project power and be engaged internationally. Eighteen months after that historical day, for example, in *The New York Times*’ month-long special section on “A Nation at War” hundreds of stories relating *9/11* and the war in Iraq appeared. Press and media coverage of the US invasion of Iraq contain numerous links to *9/11*. The war that Bush initially rejected became one result of the attacks of *9/11*.⁴

III. Interpretation

Around the world the tragedies of September 11 were met initially with expressions of sympathy and offers of cooperation in apprehending all those involved. Locally, responses of immediate priority were rescuing, rebuilding, and aiding victims’ families. Throughout the US, in the following days and weeks interpretations also arose focused on who was to blame and what should be done to increase vigilance. This included discussions of new measures for airline safety, ways to detect and apprehend terrorists, and measures to destroy their support.

As the symbol *9/11* emerged, however, specific questions about the details soon began to give way to a second phase in the symbol development processes: interpretation. Public debate shifted from questions like “how many were killed?” or “who are the attackers?” toward questions about the cause and lessons of *9/11*. Increasingly the symbol of *9/11* included an implicit demand for satisfactory answers to these more complex interpretation questions.

First interpretations: What was the cause of 9/11?

There are probably as many interpretations of *9/11* as there are interpreters, and the process of interpretation continues today as a significant and complex component of social and political life. A multitude of diverse views exist around the world, such as the idea that *9/11* was a reaction to the United States’ own foreign policy or that the “culprits” of *9/11* terrorism were in fact the CIA and/or Israel. In our discussion of interpretation we make no attempt at being inclusive of all of these views. We do, however, seek elements of commonality among prominent interpretations. We look principally at interpretations held within the U.S. and at economic and political “causes” of *9/11*. Of particular causal

⁴ Numerous articles, books and websites use *9/11* as a condensation symbol. For example, see: <http://www.ssrc.org/sept11/>. It contains excerpts from two books published by the Social Science Research Council interpreting *9/11*. Accounts using the symbol and discussing what it encompasses include Brill (2003), Talbot and Chanda, (2001), Gertz (2002), Schulhofer and Leone (2003), Bernstein (2001) and Tickner (2002). Chomsky (2001), under the exact title of *9-11*, offered just two months after the attacks an account criticizing the U.S. as a colonizing-type state.

importance are the roles of *globalization*, local and global *institutions*, and new advancements in *technology*.⁵

The world's political economy has emerged from a bi-polar Cold War era into a new, "globalized" era of competing heterogeneous political and economic interests (Held et al, 1999 and Giddens, 2000). This environment can explain much about the motivations and capacities behind the events of 9/11 and its aftermath. Globalization, for instance, stands out in many answers offered to the question "what motivated the terrorists?" The reasons such groups arose and targeted the United States only make sense in terms of the trade, investment and intrusion of Western norms into countries and cultures previously less affected by the "outside" world.

Further, if we ask: "What will change these motivations?", "what will make terrorist actions harder to succeed?", and "what will give the world better intelligence about terrorists?" the answers all suggest the need for global intervention to reshape institutions that influence motivations, capabilities, and oversight. We see family structures, schools and religion as well as those media and political organizations that legitimate terrorism as objects for policies that aim to reduce terrorism by increasing tolerance and respect for life.

In addition, technology has played an important role in making terrorism both more attractive and more profitable. Conversely, it also provides avenues for limiting these effects. The advancement and proliferation of technology enabled the few to have a disproportional impact on the lives of many – and in that way, it has increased the attractiveness of non-conventional warfare. The technological changes underpinning the growth of the global economy also have particular aspects – such as the increasing complexity of production stages and geographic disintegration of that production. These have made the economy particularly susceptible to being "held-up" by terrorist agents.

At least six specific causal features compose our basic argument. These emerge from the three "modern" conditions – globalization, weak institutions, and rapid technological change – that underlie the attacks. These six involve: (1) the creation and proliferation of disproportional destructive capability; (2) lowered barriers to transnational organization; (3) ease of movement of destructive power, (4) cultural backlash to Western values and capitalism, (5) rewards for entrepreneurs of anti-American movements, and (6) US prominence as a target thanks to its wealth and military hegemony.

Disproportional destruction

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) have become more accessible to terrorists and are now cheaper, harder to deter, and more readily constructed than in past decades. As a result, it is now possible for a few people to kill many. This disproportionate threat has occurred because of both new technologies and of new economic patterns. Technology has lowered barriers to the creation of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons:

⁵ We recognize that, by citing "globalization" as a fundamental factor shaping 9/11, we risk invoking a second highly charged and ambiguous symbol as an explanation for a first. To avoid this we will try to focus on several specific features of globalization that created the conditions and exacerbated the motivations for 9/11.

knowledge and its diffusion for construction of large deadly mechanisms in the 21st Century are irreversible.

Superior weapons and new technologies, such as dynamite, have for centuries altered conflict and given disproportionate advantage to a few. Witness how diseases spread by a few Europeans arriving in the Americas the 16th Century killed millions of Aztecs, Incas and Mayans,⁶ or German guns laid waste to Hehe (Tanzania) and Herrero (Namibia) warriors at the turn of the last century. Traditionally, however, these have represented instances of a militarily advanced group imposing costs on a weaker one. The reversal of this appears to be a feature new to the modern world.

It is notable both that the estimates of the direct economic costs of the hijackers on September 11 in lost physical and human capital are on the order of \$20-40 billion, *and* that this number, while significant, is far less than the total costs imposed on the US economy by the events of that day. The indirect economic costs are many, and include both private and public financial expenditures on increased security, lowered economic activity due to increased uncertainty, and reductions in investment and growth. The costs of this uncertainty and associated counter-terrorism activities have led to the notion that there is a new "terrorism tax" being imposed on our economy.⁷ Estimates of this tax are on the order of 0.3 percent of GDP, or \$33 billion per year, which is quite a bit more than the actual costs of 9/11 itself.⁸

One interpretation of this cost asymmetry is that because technology has increased our ability to cooperate for mutual economic gain it has also, as a result, enhanced the capacity of a few to impose costs on many. Many of the same economic forces underpinning recent efficiency gains have also made it easier for a few people to "hold-up" the global economic process in order to extract better bargains. The increasing complexity of production processes associated with modern economies can greatly magnify the economic cost arising when there is even a small *probability* that a terror attack would occur. This is so even if the prospective attack would affect only one stage of production, when production activities demonstrate strong complementarities (Kremer, 1993). In addition, the global dis-integration of production stages to exploit international comparative advantage, and the increasing economic interdependency of firms through trade networks (which give rise to complementarities among firms), increases the targets of opportunity for terrorists. The threat of supply-chain disruptions may require firms to bear higher inventory-carrying costs.⁹

Another source of vulnerability created by modern technology lies not in the global spread of production but, conversely, in the concentrated geography of production that results in industries that exhibit scale economies and employ inputs that enjoy greater geographic mobility than the subsequent output.¹⁰ Among the best examples of such

⁶ See Diamond (1997); also note the review of technology, colonial conquest and changing roles for conflict that result from these in Herrera and Mahnken (2003).

⁷ Economists note that the true "cost" of a tax (the deadweight welfare loss it creates) depends on the degree to which it distorts individuals' behavior. The phrase "if we change our lives, the terrorists have already won" often used after September 11, suggests a general awareness of this same idea.

⁸ The Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress provide a review of relevant estimates from several sources in a report entitled "The Economic Costs of Terrorism" (May 2002).

⁹ Estimates by UBS Warburg cited by the IMF (2001) suggest that roughly a 10 percent increase in inventories would be carried by US firms in response to 9/11 and could cost the US roughly \$7.5 billion.

¹⁰ A useful introduction to these ideas is Fujita, Krugman and Venables (1999).

industries are financial and other professional services – which represent a significant and growing share of U.S. output. As a result, attacks of rather “limited” physical impact on production or financial centers can now have a disproportionately large economic impact on a country.

Another cost asymmetry arises from the strategic nature of terrorist threats and the defense against them. In a simple, stylized game, in which terrorists choose an industry (A or B) to attack, and the government chooses an industry (A or B) to defend, there is no equilibrium in pure strategies.¹¹ Both the terrorists and the government would “mix” strategies – randomly choosing A or B with some probability that leaves the other party with no incentive to also choose that industry over the other. This conception of the strategic interaction, however, misses some vital aspects of reality. First, government defense of a potential terrorist target is unlikely to be unobservable to the terrorists; second, effort spent on the defense of any single target is likely to display diminishing returns. As a result, an effective government strategy must be to allocate resources to defense of all possible targets. From the terrorist standpoint, however, if there are some fixed costs to launching an attack on any target then terrorist resources are likely to be focused entirely on a single target. This is important when one considers the dynamics of growth through the creation of new, specialized inputs (e.g. Romer, 1987): as the number of new inputs to production grows, the cost of protecting them from attack faced by governments – relative to the investment cost required by terrorists to attack them – grows exponentially.

In summary, advancements in technology have facilitated terrorism in three distinct ways. First, by providing greater access to disproportionate destructive force, it has lowered the cost of terrorist actions. Second, it has increased the potential payoff to a successful terrorist attack in the sense that global economic prosperity is now linked increasingly to (a) multiple, complementary production activities coordinated across countries, and (b) production activities that, within each country, are increasingly geographically centralized in urban areas. Finally, because of the asymmetric cost structure involved with terrorist threats and the defense against them, simply the credible threat of terrorism poses a growing cost on governments.¹²

Growth of transnational organization capabilities

Economic globalization and technological change has also greatly facilitated communication and the movement of money across borders. A wide variety of social movements have utilized these conditions to build global networks of like-minded individuals, and pooled resources for various causes. The 1997 convention banning land mines, led by Jody Williams (for which she received a Nobel Peace Prize), was built

¹¹ For instance, a game such as that given by the payoff matrix below.

	Attack A	Attack B
Defend A	-1,-1	-2,1
Defend B	-2,1	-1,-1

The payoffs given are simply suggestive, intended to capture the notion that terrorist attacks are more attractive when not defended against, and impose a greater cost when this is so.

¹² This defense spending cost may grow at a rate that is greater or less than the rate of income growth. In a growth model like that of Romer (1987), this would depend on the elasticity of substitution among the new industries.

largely on Internet communications that allowed for the bridging of many sponsoring groups for this one task.

In similar fashion, Al Qaeda has been able to align with many other Islamic groups, to raise and disperse money using informal channels, and to acquire resources – including access to international media exposure – thanks to the platform that makes such international NGO growth possible.¹³ As noted by others, 9/11 confirmed the growing capacity of transnational non-governmental actors (Mansbach and Ferguson, 2003).

Low Cost of Power projection

In addition to communication, the opening of borders for trade, travel and migration has also facilitated the projection of military power. Classical analyses of threats to a nation-state examine the power projection capabilities of other states. Without the means to move an army outside a country's borders or to deliver weapons by military plane or warship, a country's coercive threat capacity is discounted. China, for instance, with a large population and the world's largest army is not considered an offensive threat because of its limited ability to "project" this military power.¹⁴

In the contemporary world, however, millions of people move across international borders.¹⁵ For a terrorist group, one not responsible for providing order or other public goods, conventional analyses on the limitations on power projection do not apply. As long as such groups can achieve clandestine access to the dense flows of people and goods across long distances, weapons can be projected. The events of 9/11 are especially telling on this point, since the weapons involved were themselves symbols of modern global mobility: airplanes became powerful bombs with precision guidance achieved by hijacking them.

While this particular modality is (hopefully) less available as airline "safety" has been raised, numerous scenarios for other peaceful infiltration have been identified. Threat planners and novelists have regularly noted ways agents bent on launching destructive attacks might strike, such as sending weapons inside mislabeled shipping containers, or using small boats and planes to deliver lethal weapons, similar to techniques of clandestine movement developed by drug smugglers. And, of course, if "soldiers" disguised as tourists or students can infiltrate and then build with local materials a weapon of mass destruction, then their power projection can occur without moving weapons.¹⁶

¹³ The cost of starting an NGO with international reach in the US has dropped dramatically in the last 30 years. See Sikkink and Keck (1998) and Matthews (1997).

¹⁴ China lacks a blue water navy, for example. Only those on its land borders see a threat from its existing capabilities, including weapons of mass destruction.

¹⁵ Recent estimates suggest the number of people living outside their countries of birth has risen from 70 million 30 years ago to 185 million today (UNU, 2003).

¹⁶ Again, the novelty of 9/11 was that existing non-military technologies were used, so the attack did not require terrorists either to smuggle WMD into the country or to have access to them within the country, but only to enter the country themselves.

US Prominence as a Target

With the world's largest GNP, most powerful military, and most copied cultural artifacts, the US is widely seen as the core player in the contemporary world. US policy and actions have widespread effects across the globe, and this "fact" leads many to refer to the US as a *hegemon* – a state able to dominate others. While many countries may contain or export offensive values – whether mores about religion, the roles of women, the virtues of floating currencies – it is U.S. leadership in many such exports that is crucial in their influence around the world at least as viewed by both supporters and critics of US values.

One of the sad ironies the US faces is that, as a hegemon, the US is often assigned responsibility not only for its actions but its inactions. The presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia, a result of US intervention in Kuwait during the first Gulf War, is clearly a US policy action that evoked hostile reactions among some fundamentalist Muslim groups. However, it is perceived lack of action in helping solve the Israel-Palestine conflict that has bred negative public sentiment among wider and more moderate Arab audiences (Telhami, 2002). The growing perception that the US always "gets its way" raises the susceptibility of the US becoming a scapegoat for nearly all complaints under the justification that "it would not be so if the US did not want it so."

Cultural backlash

In many societies around the world a backlash has emerged against the status quo, as billions of people react against the resentment of their economic marginalization and political impotence. For them their country's direction and pace of change has become offensive. Such people are discontent with governments that are seen as repressive, backward and anachronistic. Maoists in Nepal and Muslim Brotherhood type religious movements in Middle East countries thrive on the sentiment that their country and its people are deprived of status and are forced to defer to religions or values contrary to their own.

Such anger spawned by religious values and frustrations at low status in the world have fueled social movements across whole regions expressing these sentiments (Huntington, 1996). Much of the anger and frustration arises from the seeming inferior status enjoyed by such peoples compared to residents of the West. More information about differences with the West, and greater anger about lost status has been a boon for organizations using such ideas to justify a "jihad" against Western culture. Indeed this jihad symbol has proved a powerful rationale to recruit members (Kepel, 2002). Foreign education, exposure to modern media, and little preparation for life outside a traditional home life can accelerate this sentiment among anomic urban residents in societies in transition (Wright, 2002).

Opportunistic Entrepreneurs

The conditions discussed above, of anti-American sentiment and discontent with existing social and economic conditions, provide a motivation to perhaps billions of people in less developed regions especially in the Islamic world. Leaders seeking to

improve their power find that excoriating the U.S., offering action to defend traditional values, and promising economic justice, leads them and their organizations to flourish. In this fashion many political movements have come into existence. The success of the leaders of the Iranian revolution of 1979, amplified by using anti-American slogans, is a good example. Leaders of the revolution boosted their support by depicting the US as an agent of the devil.

Promising cultural and economic benefits to people already discontent, has served to elevate and sustain entrepreneurs of social and political movements in many parts of the world. In recent decades, such strategies have worked widely, from the Shining Path Movement in Peru to the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. Islamic movements in the Philippines, Indonesia and several Middle Eastern countries have found an anti-American appeal especially useful in recruiting. This strategy is not unique to the Islamic world, however; it has served other entrepreneurs from Castro to Milosevic.

A militant Islamic philosophy, that brands the US as evil has been especially effective in the Middle East. There discontent with existing Arab political institutions, often authoritarian and supported by the US, coupled with resentment at the sharp religious differences between fundamentalist Islam and the moral traditions of the West provides fertile opportunities to recruit followers, including suicide terrorists, as Osama bin Laden's entrepreneurship exemplifies (Kepel, 2002)

Second Interpretations: What are the lessons of 9/11?

The six elements cited in the previous section constitute our interpretation of the nature and origins of the 9/11 threat. They appear, to differing degrees, in interpretations of the "cause" of 9/11 offered by policy makers, academics, the media, and other commentators. As these causal interpretations were developed and promulgated, the process of interpreting 9/11 moved from understanding the nature of the threat to suggesting some lessons that could be drawn.

Be alert: new information provides a stimulus to act

In understanding the lessons of 9/11, it is important to note that the only real change that occurred on September 11, 2001 – aside from obvious physical destruction and tragic loss of life – was one of information. The actual threat of terrorism did not change between September 10 and 12 – only the perception and awareness of the threat.¹⁷ Yet this new awareness created a sea change in U.S. politics as traditional political constraints on policy responses to terrorism were lifted. New powers taken on by the Executive Branch went largely unopposed by the traditional checks and balances of the legislative and judicial branches, as well as by the classic democratic agents of constraint provided by opposition political parties, media, or special interest groups. New restrictions on individual liberties were similarly accepted without many political backlashes.

¹⁷ In 1999 Defense Secretary Cohen wrote based on a DOD study that terrorism was the greatest threat facing the US. In 2000 the Senate Intelligence Committee proclaimed at a hearing: "Together, these factors foster a complex, dynamic and dangerous global security environment that will spawn crises affecting American interests." (February 2, 2000).

Look at how the U.S. is vulnerable

Many viewed the events of 9/11 as further evidence that the US was more vulnerable to attack than generally recognized, and their process of interpretation sought to ask why. One major difference in viewpoint that has led to different interpretations of 9/11 is how to reduce the probability of future American deaths and economic damage from terrorism. The expected cost of terrorism can be decomposed as

$$E[\text{cost}] = E[\text{cost} \mid \text{successful attack}] * \Pr(\text{success} \mid \text{attack}) * \Pr(\text{attack}).$$

or the expected cost given that a terrorist attack succeeds, multiplied by the probability of success given that an attack is launched, multiplied by the probability an attack is launched. In other words, there are three distinct aspects to US vulnerability: the extent of the destruction terrorists can achieve, the probability that an attack once launched will succeed, and the probability that such an attack will be motivated. One policy dilemma, therefore, is how to allocate resources between reducing threats, discouraging motivation, and protecting targets. Unlike hardening of missile silos during the Cold War, protecting “assets” from attack by terrorists is a much larger, perhaps impossible task. The lesson of 9/11 is how vulnerable U.S. targets have become, and the difficulty of protecting them with any reasonable economic outlay.

While some interpretations of 9/11 focused on the question of how the attack could occur (e.g., understanding the motivations of the terrorists or the lapses in homeland security), others – including the President – focused their attention instead on the incredible destruction of the attack. In his 2003 State of the Union Address (1/23/03) President Bush stated that:

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.

Pay greater attention to defense and foreign policy

The view articulated by President Bush is that the greatest threat from *terrorism* comes not from the terrorists themselves but from non-terrorist state regimes like Iraq that seek to develop weapons of mass destruction outside of international rules. Since both reducing the *productivity* and the *probability* of attacks requires the expenditure of resources, these are in some sense competing priorities. The President’s view presupposes that the greatest impact in reducing the expected number of deaths from terrorism can be achieved by allocating resources to reducing the expected number of deaths *given* an attack, rather than reducing the probability of an attack itself. This is consistent with a vision in which there are too many potential attacks to effectively guard against, but any and every potential terrorist attack can be reduced in scope and destructive capacity simultaneously by action against the weapons of those attacks. This

interpretation tends to suggest a policy response to terrorism aimed broadly at reducing the destructive power of any “non-friendly” states.

However an equally valid argument can be made using the same logic in the opposite direction. Despite our success against Iraq, North Korea – now a nuclear power – continues to export arms abroad, raising the possibility that there are too many potential weapons available to effectively guard against. However, if one is able to isolate the primary motivation for terrorist attacks and eliminate it, one could reduce the likelihood of deaths arising from any of the currently proliferating weapons of mass destruction.¹⁸ As we discuss in the next section, this interpretation leads naturally to a prescription of greater global cooperation to increase security alliances and alleviate the conditions fueling international terrorism.

The lessons above constitute interpretations of both the nature and origins of the 9/11 threat. As with causal factors, they appear, to differing degrees in packages of interpretations offered by government agencies and scholars. The lessons to be drawn from these are, as just noted, that, first, the only real change that occurred on 9/11, aside from physical destruction, was one of information. Second, cost asymmetries inherent to non-conventional warfare were a threat to the US domestic population for perhaps the first time. And, third, attention to defense and foreign policy has risen dramatically in the US, providing political support for much greater US involvement overseas (See the Appendix regarding expenditures reflecting this support.)

IV. Prescriptions

So what should be done? The final and perhaps most important step in thinking about 9/11 is to move from identifying causes and lessons of the event to prescribing ways to alter these favorably. The set of prescriptions explored in this section place different emphases on the interpretations listed in the last section: what one perceives to be the “correct” response to 9/11 depends on one’s beliefs about the proper interpretation of 9/11. Often, these interpretations – and therefore the resulting prescriptions – were shaped by beliefs held prior to 9/11. This may explain in part the tremendously varied – and often conflicting – set of prescriptions proposed in response to 9/11.

The idea of a “*war on terrorism*” is similar to *wars* on poverty or drugs: the target is diffuse, and the goal is to eradicate an illusive danger. Such a war is quite different than one in which the object is capturing specific territory or eliminating certain people, in that the goal is to wipe out the conditions that breed terrorism, such as radical religious teachings and frustrations over repressive rule. In this case, however, *war* may simply be a term that has allowed military professionals to define the solution.

Various public officials, academics and international debates have proposed at least four sets of prescriptions. These are:

¹⁸ It has even been suggested that pursuit of war with Iraq could increase the insecurity faced by the US. In his letter of resignation from the State Department, former diplomat John Brady Kiesling wrote “The policies we are now asked to advance are incompatible not only with American values but also with American interests.... We have begun to dismantle the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known. Our current course will bring instability and danger, not security.” (*New York Times*, 27 Feb 2003).

1. ***terrorist-centric***: a minimalist prescription favored by realists. This follows from interpretations highlighting the low costs of transnational terrorist organization and on the success of economic/political entrepreneurs in building terrorist groups. Its goal is simply to find and *get* the terrorists.

2. ***civilizational***: a prescription focused on the role of cultural frictions and built on evolving world circumstances: the prominence of the US as a target and the inevitability of anti-Americanism. Envisioning a post-cold war era in which cultural differences define the fault lines of global politics, it seeks to avoid large-scale conflicts across civilizational divides. Strategies such as befriending leaders of the "clashing" states, e.g. Pakistan or Jordan, avoiding religious affronts, and containing weapon development in such areas are recommended.

3. ***praetorian***: a prescription associated with the "neo-conservatives" in the Bush administration and the ideas of their "New American Century" project. It draws on the growing threat of WMD and the disproportional force it gives states opposed to the US. Additionally, it sees the ease of forming transnational terrorist organizations and the capacity for ill-willed states to project destructive power as justification for attacking leaders of such groups and states. A prime example is the doctrine adopted by the Bush administration in the National Security Council paper of September, 2002.

4. ***global public goods***: a rather expansive prescription drawing on almost all of the causal interpretations of the previous section.¹⁹ The argument is that investment in public goods is necessary to strengthen barriers to proliferation, assist liberal education and support human dignity and religious tolerance. This prescription gives less priority to military capacity as providing a solution, and more to the use of U.S. power derived from the large international flows of goods and services.

Each of these prescriptions rests on a different interpretation of what happened and hence look to different tools for how to prevent future *9/11*s.

The terrorist-centric prescription

The terrorist-centric is a minimalist prescription, constricted to fighting an "enemy": transnational terrorist groups and their bases of support. This view rests on the interpretation of *9/11* as a result of the "evil" of a few thousand terrorists, people who banded together in the late 1990's. This group based in Afghanistan and a half dozen other countries from which members are recruited, embraces an old formula of suicide terrorist attacks as the most effective tool to threaten the US and other industrialized countries, which they have located as a substitute enemy, displacing frustrations that arise in their own countries. The repression of Islamic fundamentalist political movements in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Chechnya and elsewhere led to this formation of an Al-

¹⁹ It builds on five of the six "causes" – all but the point related to integration and ease of movement.

Qaeda network. Sponsored by a rich Saudi, bin Laden, and protected by the regime then in power in Afghanistan, the Taliban, this Wahhabist Islam group poses a global threat.

The terrorist-centric prescription focuses on the task of identifying and destroying these terrorists, primarily by military means. It is understood that this may take a few years to complete, although much of the core task for reducing the threat of future terrorism has already been accomplished. Many classic realists make this prescription; its advocates generally opposed the war on Iraq as an overreaction, and an imprudent foreign policy act (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2003). They believe the US should continue to use targeted information and coercive capacity to "root out" networks of terrorists, and to deter those who might assist them. Of course, terrorists themselves are not easily deterred. States, however, are. The US has great challenges, now and in the future, to work with states, using coercive diplomacy, if necessary, to cope with dangers in the Middle East. In the long run, however, relations with Europe and China as possible rivals are more important. The key is to target American power with prudence, not abandon.

It is disquieting for minimalists that 200,000 American military forces were sent to fight in Iraq. For them, it was an unnecessary war, and threatens to entangle the US in nation (re)building. Overall, for the terrorist-centric minimalists the danger of 9/11 is that the US may become distracted by problems in Middle East politics, by economic downturns or by humanitarian and reconstruction needs in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The goal is for the US to use force sparingly, and to focus on longer-term threats coming from larger national entities than those identified with terrorist organizations. The Bush presidency has become overextended in diplomatic tasks that are not in the vital interests of the country, and this remains a central concern of terrorist-centric minimalists.²⁰

The civilizational prescription

A second prescription evokes a clash of civilizations: it is rather expansive and yet somewhat gloomy. It sees the destructive consequences of 9/11 arising from and leading to a splintering of the world along religious lines (Huntington, 1993, 1996). Islamic fundamentalism lies at the heart of the social and economic causes of 9/11. Fundamentalist groups blame globalization for marginalizing and frustrating people in countries where the benefits of internationalization have been held up by local patterns of

²⁰ This prescription includes a strong interpretation that 9/11 was a special kind of coercive attack, requiring a coercive and highly focused response. A specimen of this point of view is contained in an email circulated on September 14. Retired Lt. Col. Tony Kern wrote:

[O]ur soldiers will be tasked with a search and destroy mission on multiple foreign landscapes, and the public must be patient and supportive until the strategy and tactics can be worked out. For the most part, our military is still in the process of redefining itself...by men and women who grew up with....Cold War doctrine, strategy and tactics. We must also be patient with our military leaders. Just keep faith in America, and continue to support your President and military, and the outcome is certain. If we fail to do so, the outcome is equally certain. God Bless America.

Dr. Kern's letter represents the viewpoint of classic realism in political analysis. The point is to balance threat and response, targeting a group of *terrorists* and not launching a war on *terrorism*. It is the strategy for attacking Al Qaeda recommended by George Tenet to President Clinton in 1998, and launched by President Bush immediately following 9/11.

authority, and where there is widespread rejection of the liberal tenants of capitalism that growth is based on productivity [and not oil rents].

Believing these cultural tensions to be inevitable, the prescription proposed is one of prudence. The US should pursue containment of cultural aggression, maintain an alliance among countries with shared values (the West), and be vigilant regarding non-state actor threats. Like the minimalists, this prescription eschews use of military force except against terrorist non-state groups, and proposes containment and alliances to provide a balance among large blocs of the world. A major concern of this group is that attacks from a religion or social movement opposed to the West will generate such a large response that this will deepen and harden the current fault lines of the globe. To a fair degree this prescription fears a self-fulfilling prophecy, where entrepreneurial groups that harbor suspicions and resentments escalate support for terrorism or are more successful in capturing state power thanks to US action that vindicates their hatred of the West.

Culture is the dominant source of conflict; but this conflict need not be principally military or result in war. The concern here is to use sufficient force to deter terrorism by making it too risky, and to avoid angering large number of Muslims in the process. Indeed, siding with Islamic or Buddhist governments against terrorists in their countries, as with Indonesia and Sri Lanka, can be seen as sensible moves by the Bush administration.

The praetorian prescription

A third response to 9/11 is to unleash the military. The damage of 9/11 and the fact it was focused on the United States become the principal events for an emphasis on retaliation—getting the “evil doers.” Elements of this expansive prescription aim at pre-emption of any challenge to US power. The use of large military resources is seen as the solution, despite the absence of any weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by the hijacking terrorists. With the NSC Memorandum of September 2002 it has become the dominant prescription for US policy.

Beginning with the President’s speech on September 20, 2001 a key idea in the response was that the US was going to **war**—“A War on Terrorism.” This determination occurred symbolically as Bush spoke before a Joint Meeting of Congress. The “War on Terrorism” declared in the President’s address has an understandable vagueness to it. In fact, the Executive branch envisages the use of military means for much of this war. At its core this is a martial solution. It rests on a rather praetorian view of how states can be held accountable for terrorism, and what can be done with military force to terminate the regimes in states that are insufficiently “helpful” in the “War.”

The link between 9/11 and the martial prescription of a “War on Terrorism” began to form within days of the events. The key Departments consulted, and key officials asked to shape the response were all specialists in violence. With crucial interpretations coming from White House speechwriters and the informal “war cabinet” created in the wake of the attacks, a diffuse but military-centered response was probably inevitable. Leaders with different viewpoints than those controlling the Bush Administration might have put together interpretations differently. It is possible that the US could have pursued not only different prescriptions but also used the 9/11 symbol with less abandon.

The “War on Terrorism,” however, became the defining praetorian response by the Bush Administration, with its early stages visible as early as the end of September 2001. Its meaning and application, however, have adapted and remain subject to debate. Criticism in the US of this prescription is modest, but discernable. By the time the US invaded Iraq, for example, criticism rose. Complaints were voiced about the distorted and dangerous way “the cowboy myth defines our democracy.”²¹ By mid-2003 the process of simplification, now fully complete, allows justification of major policies: 9/11 is now used as readily as earlier established symbols, such as Munich or Pearl Harbor to promote and justify expansive military policy.

Contrasting the statements of George Bush as candidate to ones he made after 9/11 highlights a dramatic change in US international assertiveness. During the 2000 presidential debates then-Governor Bush argued for a more “humble” approach to foreign policy (“If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us...but if we're a humble nation, they'll respect us”). Although he once hinted of future action against Iraq,²² this was not perceived as a policy option in his campaign. After 9/11, however, the rhetoric of now-President Bush increasingly revealed a vision of the US “national interest” as something very distinct from (though not necessarily incompatible with) the preferences, desires or even perceptions of other countries. In his 2003 State of the Union address, Bush stated:

In all these [anti-terrorism] efforts, however, America's purpose is more than to follow a process -- it is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world.... [T]he course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people...I will not wait on events, while dangers gather.

A Doonesbury cartoon (Sunday, June 1, 2003) captures the sense that the Bush administration uses the 9/11 symbol to justify virtually all policy (see page 15). The praetorian prescription gives a wide license; to a dangerous degree it permits 9/11 responses to be used to justify virtually all Executive actions and policy as in the immediate U.S. interest. In contrast to the *civilizational* prescription, moreover, the maintenance of foreign alliances and how the US is perceived abroad seem no longer important to US “national interest.”

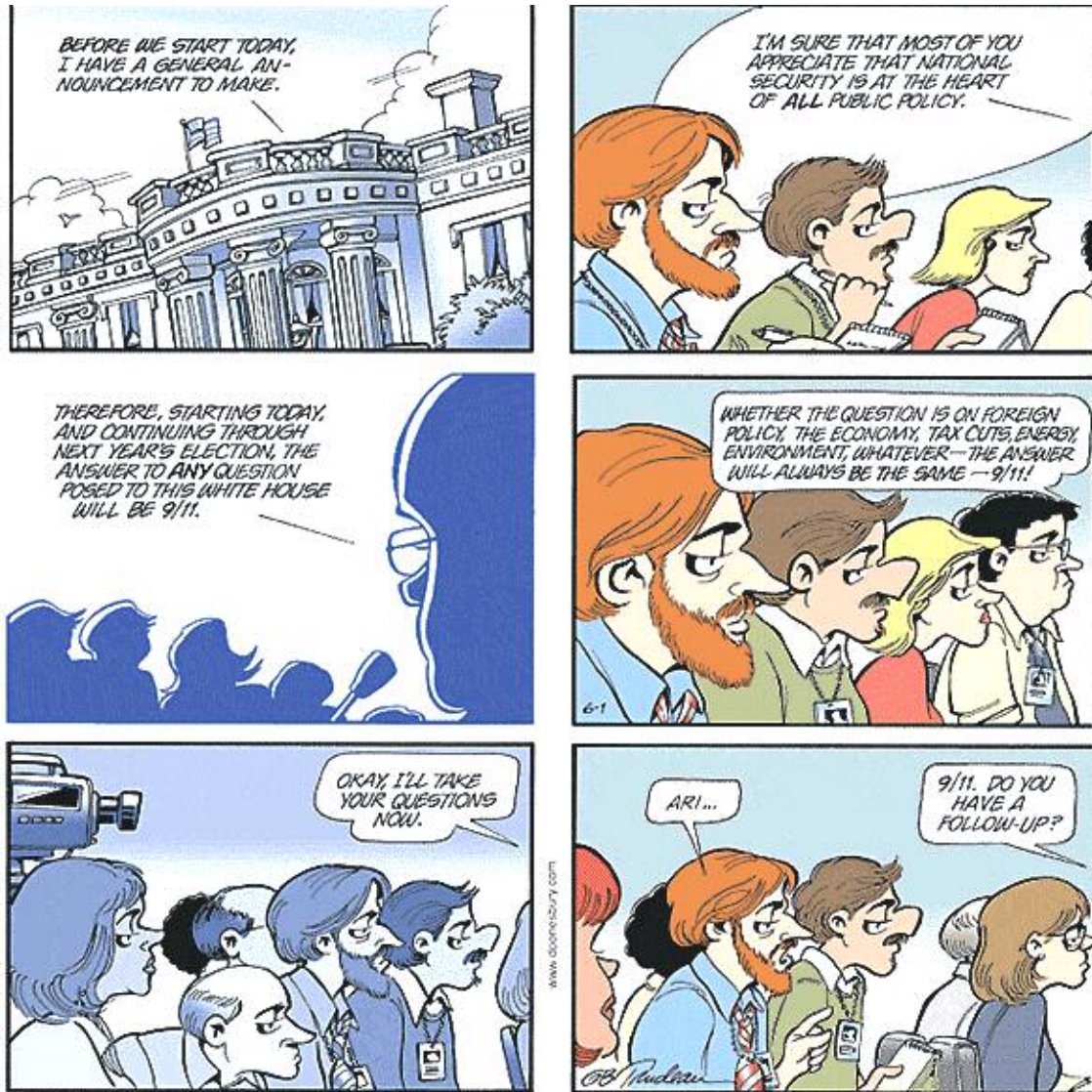
The global public goods prescription

The fourth prescription proposes that the medicine needed to avert future and worse events than 9/11 can be obtained through global public goods (Kaul, 1999). We find this prescription the most convincing. Global public goods include stronger states, changes in education, effective legal systems and other often private institutions that affect the diffusion of norms of tolerance, rule of law and universal human dignity across gender, religion, ethnicity and age.

²¹ See, for example, *The New York Times*, April 5, 2003, for a reply to an op-ed article suggesting the Iraq war was presented, mistakenly, as a moral necessity.

²² For example, Governor Bush stated “we don't know whether [Saddam Hussein is] developing weapons of mass destruction. He better not be, or there's going to be a consequence should I be the president.”

The US has a powerful interest in working with others in the “modern” world to wage an expensive and sustained campaign to restructure how the world works. This requires a shift away from the secrecy of the Patriot Act to a practice of expanded transparency and openness. Knowing who people are and what they do—certainly for all those who participate in communal activities—is a global good, and should be symmetrical with no



rights or secrets for special government officials. It also means a shift from national security to human security as a goal. Military capabilities that serve well classical definitions of national security have become analogous to talented heart surgeons: not irrelevant to health but not well equipped for the fighting infectious diseases of terrorist movements and failing states.

Against the terrorism of 9/11 the U.S. is challenged to fight a new and different war. Understanding how to kill the sources of this global social pathology is essential.

Humane concerns, social solidarity, reliable trust must be strengthened from households to global enterprises. A list of key investments in global public goods would include:

- Encouraging “tolerant” education for all people
- Strengthening global law enforcement over money flows, international criminal activity, and the growing informal sector that makes acts of terrorism easier
- Reducing global inequality of opportunities, which foster resentment and feed extremist ideologies of jihad
- Supporting economic development and the strengthening of failing states
- Securing national contributions or creating international taxes to pay for these global public sector measures

This prescription’s measures are quite different from the measures given priority in the praetorian prescription, namely, proposals that the US fight a military war against other states perceived to have lost the right to sovereignty because they seemed to be developing weapons of mass destruction and could make them available to terrorists.²³

The months since 9/11 are a notable contrast to what was done by the U.S. in response in World War II. Within months of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was mobilized on wartime footing, producing the goods needed in the fight. Currently there is an absence of building of global public goods by the U.S. or its allies. Compared to the earlier war, following a surprise attack, at the same time that an all out military effort was being constructed, diplomatic and post-war plans for a secure peace were also being laid. In 1942 work was underway to create a post war regime, with changed educational systems in the “enemy” countries, and plans for a permanent UN system for maintaining peace in the post-war era. Tragically, in the post-9/11 world the prospect of imperial overstretch is currently growing; the resources available for non-military action against sources of threat has been ignored in favor of tax cuts. These in turn threaten to vitiate the measures most needed for an effective response, including solidarity in foreign policy and voluntary support for international efforts. Today, the US and its European and other allies have made little effort and developed no ideas toward the creation of post-war-on-terrorism institutions.

Without this the US and the world seem bound to follow the classic failure of winning a war and “losing” the peace, as occurred after WW I (Ikenberry, 2001). Afghanistan’s rising disorder already exemplifies the problem, but concerns go beyond that territory. Within a few months of the US’s “victory” in Iraq it was failing in the basic duties of an “occupying power” – not only for lack of planning but also from reluctance to invest the resources needed to reform societies antagonistic to western norms of

²³ US policy that would make a sustainable reduction in terrorism has not been developed.

An effective permanent response must include not only military or normal diplomatic action. The US was targeted, and remains targeted because of long term actions of American firms and culture that have “invaded” many societies unready for change, often ones with authoritarian rule that is resented. US policy that would make a sustainable reduction in terrorism has not been developed.

capitalism and human rights. The target of an expanded policy to respond to the threat revealed by 9/11 cannot be limited in geography – and certainly not just to the Middle East.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The events of September 11, 2001 have become a defining event in international foreign policy. The powerful symbol “9/11” evolved quickly to embrace and simplify a vast array of disparate emotions, beliefs, prejudices, demands, and responses among the people of the U.S. and the rest of the world. The creation of this symbol allowed a feeling of unity – even among many who had conflicting “interpretations” of the event itself. The combination of ambiguity, solidarity, and emotion embodied in the abstract symbol 9/11 has allowed it to be used as a justification for a wide array of prescriptions for policy responses to the terror attacks on the U.S.

Summary

This paper has examined the three-stage process of symbol construction, interpretation and prescription, attempting to characterize the intellectual processes that have shaped each. In classifying different interpretations of the “meaning of 9/11,” we have highlighted in particular the roles played by globalization, technological advances, and strategic cost asymmetries in non-conventional warfare. The relative prominence of each of these features helps to highlight differences among the interpretations.

Despite these differences, many interpretations share common features – particularly amazement at the damage caused by only a few people; demands to punish those responsible; and calls to prevent future terrorism. Unlike previous attacks on the World Trade Center, and other US targets such as Cobalt towers and the US Embassies in East Africa, the attacks of September 11 seemed to demand a very aggressive policy response. Prescribing the “correct” response, however, depends critically on one’s interpretation of events. We find there to be four broad categories of prescriptions ranging from a “minimalist” approach of targeted military action against those directly responsible, to the more expansive approach of the Bush administration aimed at shifting the playing field to a more symmetrical (and advantageous) conventional warfare waged against states.²⁴

The praetorian prescription, relying on martial orientations and resources has dominated Bush administration decisions since early 2002. Current US policy therefore has blended an expansive view of what needs to be done with a focus on state structures and use of the military as a solution. Violence has empowered specialists in violence within the world’s sole hegemon.

Our own “interpretation” prescribes a more constructive response, extending beyond the minimum destructive attack on the Al Qaeda organization that all prescriptions propose. Reclaiming solidarity and cooperation across the world in the wake of the

²⁴ Bush administration officials such as Defense Secretary Rumsfeld characterized the actions of Al Qaeda, a non-state actor, as worrisome precisely because the organization took advantage of its asymmetric situation through non-conventional warfare.

divisive 9/11 events is critical to an effective response to global terrorism. Terrorism as a technique for relieving distress of peoples whose way of life seems threatened is hardly new. It has been growing since the 1960s; however ways to combat it, and destroy its roots have been neglected and continue to be neglected in the Bush's administration's response.

9/11 and the Future

What lies ahead for our globalized era? With irreversible technology of rapid communications, massively destructive weaponry, and global social movements, the US must act in the world as a "benign" hegemon, seeking greater world solidarity by elevating human dignity and condemning terrorism. The sea of free-floating hatred that nurtured the 9/11 attacks focused easily on targets symbolizing the economic and military power of Western capitalism. The people who did this were alienated to the point they could depersonalize others as well as themselves.

Given the reactions of people pleased at 9/11 events and the martial policies of the Bush administration (demonstrating hard but not soft power), we must assume that the divisive direction of international relations will continue. US economic and military hegemony has cast us as the satanical emblem for some parts of the world. The interpretations of key neo-conservatives in the Bush administration as to the causes of and appropriate responses to 9/11 reflect a cavalier attitude toward culture, norms and voluntary cooperation and compliance. A recent Pew Research Center international poll found that "the war has widened the rift between American and Western Europeans, further inflamed the Muslim world, softened support for the war on terrorism, and significantly weakened global public support for the pillars of the post-World War II era—the U.N. and North Atlantic Alliance" (Gourevitch, 2003).

Consider the reaction of Richard Perle (2003), a chief architect of the praetorian prescription, as he offered his interpretation of the "success" in removing Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein:

Saddam Hussein's reign of terror is about to end. He will go quickly, but not alone: In a parting irony he will take the U.N. down with him...As we sift the debris it will be important to preserve—the better to understand—the intellectual wreckage of the liberal conceit of safety through international law administered by international institutions.

This is a massively dangerous interpretation. While talk of improved air security or retaliation against "those responsible" [and their hosts] is sensible, it is folly to see such actions as adequate to improve global human security. Studies in the Pentagon and elsewhere projected the events of 9/11 almost precisely. A 'get all culprits and damn the law' posture, part of the praetorian prescription, deflects attention from longer-term important security measures to make the world safe from such violence.

Fundamentally, we need a cultural and economic offensive, supported by the entire industrialized world, aimed at economic and social integration, erasing the gaps that pit part of the world against the other. Doing this also requires all of us to bear some responsibility. Private actions can do well overseas, or be the source of resentment, as

much as government ones. Ultimately, the goal must be to shape attitudes everywhere in ways consistent with tolerance for the modern world. Without progress in institutions of inclusion, our permissive globalized environment will continue to motivate and allow a few to kill many.²⁵

Limiting a successful response to September 11 only to displacing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, or to ending the Hussein regime in Iraq, accomplished by capturing or killing some hated leaders in that region, risks trivializing the problem. Action against Al Qaeda was a component in every prescription for US action, one offered by US and by foreign leaders. Believing this a sufficient definition of victory, however, may undercut more basic responses to the structural danger we face—from the diffusion of hatred combined with technical skills for making weapons of mass destruction. The November 2003 authorization of \$87 billion supplemental for the war on terrorism, of which \$18.6 billion was for public goods such as police and schools in Iraq, illustrates the weakness of the principal Bush administration interpretation and prescription. Responses to the supplemental request revealed a greater willingness of the US public to support its military but a reluctance to pay for basic law and infrastructure public goods in conquered states. The importance of such public goods was not part of the Bush administration interpretation, so it is hard for them to sell this for Iraq as a prescription.

Military-managed resources used to fight terrorism may be an expensive distraction, if they lead to "winning" a war and then losing the "peace". One future need is state-building as an international undertaking. This means earnest efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq should be made to set up basic services and governance. People need public goods of law and order, exchange rights and infrastructure. For Afghanistan, Iraq, and other states that breed terrorism such as Somalia, Palestine or Liberia, the US should help support sustainable institutions of restraint, agencies that will contain violence and liberate options for people. Nation-building, a complex cultural phenomenon, is a false alternative correctly rejected. It is not a task for outsiders. State building, however, is possible and is absolutely needed in our globalized world. Similar efforts are already underway in Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierre Leone. These endeavors offer lessons for international action in areas under a US "protectorate", such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and perhaps in other state-building challenges, as in the Israeli-Palestinian arena.

Preventing violence and state failure must be among the goals of a post-September 11 world.²⁶ These tasks are workable only as a multilateral undertaking. It will take hundreds of billions of dollars over the next decade or two. Given this requirement, each day such a commitment is ignored and public motivation to support it wanes, our future "victory" is weakened.

²⁵ In his science fiction novel, *O-Zone*, Paul Theroux presents a world in which disasters have created decentralized power centers from which "owners" fly about the world blasting aliens. These aliens, it turns out, are mostly abandoned, underprivileged citizens of former nations, now estranged as the world has disintegrated into a technologically gifted but alienated elite and disorganized servant and outlaw bands.

²⁶The threat continues of attack by weapons of mass destruction controlled by agents hostile to our country. However, we are missing the chance to make basic policy changes to avert future disasters. Most US government action so far has been aimed at making terrorism harder to succeed, not in changing intentions of those who might become terrorists. See the Appendix on the calculus of these.

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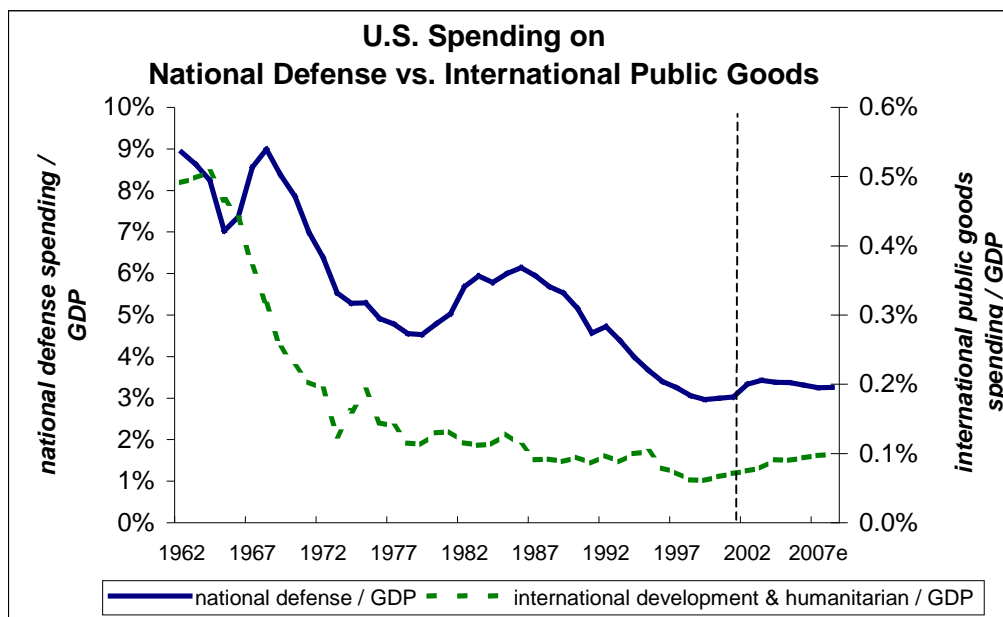
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Appendix

The graph below shows that international development assistance (151) fell off even more sharply than military spending (050) in the post-Vietnam era (although the fall in 151 started before Vietnam ended). Defense spending rose during the 1980s, although 151 — funds for the UN, World Bank, and bilateral development and humanitarian aid — continued a slow decline. Post 9/11, both appear to be on the rise again (a trend more stark in dollar terms than as a % of GDP) with growth in development assistance (151) outpacing defense spending. These represent broad segments of the US budget, of course, and spending under 151 undoubtedly includes aid commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq, which cannot properly be viewed as “preventative” assistance to provide multilateral public goods.



Note: Post-9/11 data (to the right of the dotted line) represent budget projections. Data and projections are from official OMB budget statistics for the 050 defense account and the 151 international development and humanitarian assistance account of the US. Calculations as a percent of GDP made by the authors: forecasts presume a 5.2% annual growth in nominal GDP.