



A Dark Day for Civilization

by John Hamre

Tuesday, September 11, was a dark day for America, but not for America alone. It was a dark day for civilization as well. Frankly, America is lucky to have been spared tragedies that the rest of the world sees all too often. On September 11, however, terror came home. The physical tragedy is inescapable, and our hearts go out to the injured and to all those who lost their loved-ones. But there is another cost - the potential loss of hope. Our innate hope in a larger good was shattered by an unexplainable evil.

We must now start to draw lessons about the broader meaning of these tragic events. My first hope is that this tragedy breaks the rhythm of the popular drumbeat around the world that "proud America" needs to be taken down a notch. Our grief is great, and we have all been enormously consoled by the flood of thoughtful messages from friends around the world. These words of encouragement demonstrate the depth of support that America can count on in a time of crisis. Our friends are standing with us and they are many.

I also hope that through this tragedy we can overcome the growing divide between America and the rest of the world about American "unilateralism." I do not personally believe that America has turned down a unilateralist path, although I hear the argument made often. What is clear from the events of September 11 is that, in a global age, national security depends on extensive collaboration with other countries. We have no hope of stopping terrorists in the United States if we try to manage the problem alone. In fact, these events prove we must have strong collaboration with other countries not just to knock down hateful extremists, but to tackle the range of problems that transcend the sovereign control of any one country.

This tragedy opens an opportunity for a new partnership in the world. The nature of our global age is such that we cannot solve problems in America that spring from causes in other countries without the partnership of those countries in the shared challenge. That is the nature of governance in the twenty-first century. We need two things to navigate safely and successfully the dangerous waters of globalization: strong and competent governments around the world and a shared consensus on problems and solutions. We cannot handle the dark side of globalization, or really benefit from its opportunities either, without both of these conditions.

It was this cooperative spirit that drove us to work with other countries fifty years ago to create the global institutions that so successfully managed the challenges that we have since faced. We need to rediscover this spirit at the start of this decade. I hope that this is the phoenix that rises from the terrible rubble in New York and Washington.

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Additional CSIS Commentary

On the terrorist attack. Following Tuesday's brutal attack, the solidarity shown by allies and friends, as well as some adversaries has been widespread. It provides an opportunity for rebuilding the Grand Coalition that, 10 years ago, was to shape a new world order. In Europe, the allies understand that the feasibility of such an attack on the United States reveals their own exposure as well. That is why NATO members have hardly objected to stating their solidarity in the context of the alliance's Article 5. In Russia, Vladimir Putin sees this as an opportunity to bare the soul the president gave him, as well as to get some credit for the internal problems he may fear in and beyond Chechnya. In the Middle East, the Arab states are growing increasingly concerned over a conflict that is getting out of hand, first between Israelis and Palestinians in the streets, and now between Islamist radicals and America (and others). Even under enormous time pressure - with retaliation possible sooner rather than later - allied support for U.S. military action should be sought and can, in fact, be expected. The events of September 11 also serve as a reminder that the Middle East conflict cannot be neglected for long without dangerous impact elsewhere. Accordingly, U.S. military retaliation, whatever its form, will be most effective, and allied support most likely, if it is accompanied by a renewed U.S. engagement in the peace process.

Dr. Simon Serfaty, Director, Europe Program.

On new trends in Islamic extremism. The tragic events of September 11 point to a disturbing trend in the evolution of Islamic extremism and its regional and international networks. The new brand of extremists is ideologically less sophisticated, more inflexible, and more dogmatic. The core of their ideology is a distorted version of the concept of Jihad (Holy War), hence their identification as Jihadists. This particular brand of Islamic extremists has its roots in the Afghan conflicts: the Russo-Afghan War and the Afghan Civil War. In addition, many members and/or sympathizers of this brand have been hardened by doing battle elsewhere, including Bosnia, Chechnya, and the Tajik Civil War (1992-1997). This engagement in warlike situations has provided the new breed of extremists with military training skills, hereto unavailable to them, including flying sophisticated aircraft, and has given rise to a geographically widespread network of extremists who have common experiences.

The policy implications of dealing with the new breed of extremists and the network they have created requires new policies on the part of the United States beyond immediate retaliatory measures. A long-term strategy should include: building a more cohesive multilateral strategy to deal with international terrorism - especially with U.S. allies but also other countries who face problems of terrorism; a more active policy of peace-making in trouble spots, notably Afghanistan; a more

stringent policy vis-à-vis countries who in one form or another help terrorist groups, including countries such as Pakistan which do not have an openly hostile attitude towards the United States; insistence that countries - including some U.S. allies - who help Diaspora organizations with Jihadist tendencies stop such assistance and dissuade their private citizens and/or organizations from doing so; discouraging Muslim and other governments from using extremists groups - even if they are not exactly part of terrorist networks - from the advancement of their immediate goals without concern for long-term consequence. Afghanistan should serve as a sobering example of such an approach.

Dr. Shireen Hunter, Director, Islam Program.

On U.S. Security Implications. On Tuesday, our national security paradigm changed. We no longer have the luxury of thinking about U.S. national security primarily in terms of protecting American allies and interests abroad; we need to give far more serious attention to protecting the U.S. homeland against a range of asymmetric threats, including terrorism. In the weeks and months ahead, it is critical that we conduct a comprehensive interagency assessment of our homeland security requirements. Such an assessment should identify and prioritize shortfalls across the board and should produce a comprehensive plan to address these shortfalls in the upcoming budget cycle. This will mean broadening the discussion beyond missile defense to include everything from airport security, to enhancing our intelligence capabilities, to critical infrastructure protection, to defense against biological and chemical weapons, and more. As the meaning of this paradigm shift sinks in, the American public may be willing to trade some civil liberties for enhanced security. They may, for example, be more willing to put up with more extensive and intrusive security checks at airports. For the U.S. government, this shift should force us to break out of the organizational stovepipes that have constrained our ability to address threats like terrorism in the past. We must have a new level of interagency cooperation and a new way of doing business.

Ms. Michèle Fluornoy, Senior Fellow, International Security Program.

On a U.S. Response. We are now in a period where there is a real risk that we can overreact and use the wrong words. We face a new level of terrorism, an attack on our homeland tantamount to war. We need to act decisively. But we also need to fully understand who is responsible and not simply blame Osama bin Laden or Iraq or whoever else is convenient.

We need to prepare. We cannot achieve anything in terms of deterrence if we simply strike at low-level perpetrators. If we are to succeed, we must attack and kill the leaders of the movements responsible. At the same time, we must know the full chain of responsibility, whether governments are really involved and who in those governments is involved. We cannot simply lash out at another country like Afghanistan. We have to strike precisely. This means we have to rethink retaliation in our military operations and do so calmly and objectively.

Similarly, we cannot throw money at homeland defense or counterterrorism or simply try to defend against one type of attack. We need to have a comprehensive reassessment of how we budget and plan for homeland defense. We obviously need to change our priorities, but to do so, we need careful planning, and we need to be very, very sure that what we do is effective and is worth the cost both in dollars and our civil liberties. It is this need

for careful evolution which should be our response, not seeking some sudden fix or finding a scapegoat and attacking the wrong target.

Dr. Anthony Cordesman, Burke Chair in Strategy.

On Implications for Asia. It is too soon to speculate on the nature of American retaliation for the 11 September terrorist attacks on our nation, since neither the organizers nor collaborators have been clearly identified. However, the Pentagon has made it clear that the response will not be a single strike but "a broad and sustained campaign." As a result, it is not too soon to be asking what Washington might ask of its allies and friends in Asia.

The European response has been unequivocal; invoking Article 5 of the NATO Charter clears the way for NATO support for, and perhaps even direct participation in any U.S. military response. It appears unlikely that the U.S. would call on any of its Asia-Pacific allies - Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand - to participate directly in any planned retaliatory military operation, although some (or at least Australia) may offer to do so. America's Asia allies must be prepared unequivocally to stand behind any U.S. reaction, however, and to provide logistical support if needed.

In South Asia, this may also involve a test of the embryonic strategic relationship between Washington and New Delhi, since facilities in India may prove to be ideal staging bases if Afghanistan proves, as suspected, to be among those responsible. At a minimum, overflight rights may be required from India and/or Pakistan.

Throughout the greater Asia and Pacific regions, Washington is likely to also seek (and receive) greater cooperation in its international fight against terrorism - this is one area where U.S. and Chinese strategic objectives clearly overlap. China, like Russia, has strongly condemned the attacks and appears willing to work more closely with the U.S. to combat international terrorism.

Great care must also be taken to separate condemnation of Islamic (or any other type of) extremism from Islam itself. East Asia Moslem nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia have joined their East Asian neighbors in strongly condemning Tuesday's terrorist attack. But, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir is already arguing against retaliation. Such actions reinforce rather than break the link between the extremists and the moderate Islamic community.

Finally, to reinforce Dr. Hamre's opening message, we at the Pacific Forum have been deeply touched by the expressions of sympathy and support streaming in from throughout the Asia-Pacific community. This was not just an attack on America, it was an attack against humanity and we join our friends worldwide in grieving over this tragic, senseless loss of human life.

Ralph A. Cossa, President, Pacific Forum CSIS.