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Postmodern Geopolitics in the 21st Century: Lessons from the 9.11.01 Terrorist Attacks

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CUSA's occasional paper series presents the often controversial views of the world's leading experts on the challenges of the new security landscape of the 21st century. Technological innovation and economic globalization have opened the world to business and industry, increased the power of the United States and its allies, and brought peace and prosperity to many parts of the planet. But not everyone has benefited from decades of sustained economic growth. A large pool of poor, frustrated, and angry people has formed that can be mobilized by extremists and criminals. Moreover, the infrastructure of the global market, which provides such great opportunities to entrepreneurs, is also readily accessible to terrorists, who can harness planet-spanning information, communication and transportation systems to highly destructive agendas. In this essay, Tim Luke suggests that the failures of world capitalism and the emergence of global terrorism are linked. He concludes that addressing the former is essential to neutralizing the latter.

I. Introduction

This study reviews a few qualities of everyday life during "America's New War." Vice President Dick Cheney regards living in this state of war as "the new normalcy," but I am uncomfortable with such a name, especially one concocted during dark days passed in an underground bunker at an undisclosed location. Of course, most commentary about the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks affirms how the events of that day "changed everything." From some perspectives, they did, but I also worry about giving a definite date or fixing a specific hour to determine pivotal moments in history. In fact, the attacks of 9.11 only have underscored much more deeply seated tendencies in today's postmodern geopolitics. While many wage an ongoing dispute about what the postmodern entails, there are some tendencies that political geographers, international relations scholars, and others believe to be the conditions of postmodernity. Here, I will explore three of these tendencies--the risky vulnerabilities of living amidst complex technoscientific systems, the cultural conflicts of industrial societies and virtual networks, and the nature of globalization after the end of the Cold War.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the project of modernization pitted the promise of democracy, affluence, equality, and reason against the traditional injustices of wide spread rural poverty, aristocratic privilege, and oppressive religion.[1] Evincing individual choice against collective predestination was a heroic struggle. Yet, those battles arguably also have been won in many places around the world by the end of the twentieth century.[2] Defining and determining which rational choices should be made over and above other rational choices is much more difficult; and, as early as 1959, C. Wright Mills saw these more indefinite ambiguities of permanent risk as the stuff of "the post-modern."[3]

With the triumph of technology over nature, the secular over the sacred, and affluence over poverty, science was believed to have improved life.[4] Still, science "it turns out, is not a technological Second Coming. That its techniques and its rationality are given a central place in a society does not mean men live reasonably and without myth, fraud, and superstition."[5] So, for Mills, at "the *post-modern* climax" of modernity, the promise of continual change, or permanent

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progress, bogs down, and perhaps even begins to collapse. Postmodernity, therefore, arrives with "the collapse of the expectations of the Enlightenment, that reason and freedom would come to prevail as paramount forces in human history."[6]

Like Mills, Lyotard also no longer believes in modernity's grand narratives from the Enlightenment, which have clad most of Western capitalist society's economic, political, and social practices in fables of reason and freedom. A ceaseless search for performance and profit instead appears to become the essence of today's postmodern conditions.[7] As Lyotard claims, the growth-driven agenda for capitalist development "continues to take place without leading to the realization of any of these dreams of emancipation."[8] With little trust in any metanarrative, or widely-trusted canonical stories of truth, enlightenment, and progress, the forces of science and technology working behind big business, Lyotard argues, now slip into the register of "another language game, in which the goal is no longer truth, but performativity--that is, the best possible input/output equation."[9] On another level, as Jameson claims, these persistent advances toward greater performativity are spinning up "a new social system beyond classical capitalism," proliferating through "the world space of multinational capital."[10]

Rather than being a "break, " "crisis," or "rupture" in modernity, this sort of postmodernization is merely a "turn" in the existing routines for already modernized forms of being.[11] In accord with making the consumption of commodities a way of everyday modern life, postmodernity essentially mimics the "fast capitalism"[12] of markets: it rejects closed structures, fixed meaning, and rigid order in favor of chaos, incompleteness, and uncertainty.[13] Its politics repudiate fixed territories, sacred spaces, and hard boundaries in favor of unstable flows, secularized practices, and permeable borders.[14] Postmodernity is not a wholly new social order. Rather it is instead a pastiche of adaptive strategies of collaboration that many cultures bring to world capitalism as it evolves into a kind of risk-filled "second modernity" that succeeds the "first modernity" made by industrialization's battles against natural scarcity.[15] Thus, the production and reproduction of an almost totally commercialized way of life becomes generalized on a transnational scale.[16] It is upon this terrain that terrorists now operate, finding their tools of assault and targets for destruction in the criss-crossed borders and rushing flows of global exchange.

II. The Vulnerabilities of Living in Big Systems

Some believe that destroying the World Trade Center (WTC) and damaging the Pentagon were futile efforts to crush the global economy and American military power. In some ways, they are right. World trade really has no single center, and the armed forces of the U.S. can be controlled from many different points scattered all around the nation, as the air and ground war in Afghanistan conducted from Tampa, Florida since Autumn 2001 easily demonstrates. Nonetheless, I would argue that buildings are signs, as well as sites, of wealth, power, and culture. So unleashing forces of chaos against centers of today's transnational ways of life by destroying or damaging significant buildings constitutes a successful first strike in a sign war. Indeed, it was a powerful blow against the nation that still dominates the means of communication and relations of signification at the dawn of the 21st century.[17] Such acts become an ultimate propaganda of the deed, and those who committed them know that the systems of signification will replay the images of deadly success over and over again in accord with the media's prime directive: "if it bleeds, it leads."

Contemporary life depends upon individuals coping with many risks in a network of complex, interlinked technostructures.[18] Whether it is communication, nutrition and transportation

or finance, housing, and medicine, ordinary technical artifacts and processes afford terrorists innumerable embedded assets that can be used for destructive purposes. Lethal capabilities can be created simply by contrafunctioning the everyday uses of many technics. Resourceful resistance fighters must create weapons from what is at hand, and the Internet, 24x7 finance markets, global airlines, agricultural fertilizers, rental trucks, and tourist industries readily provide the organizations, intelligence, weapons, and/or targets needed for a terrorist act. Combining a fully-fueled wide body airliner with a kamikaze pilot clearly can create a strange new type of cruise missile whose kinetic energy, chemical fuel, and symbolic impact can forever alter the world's air transport system, New York's skyline, and the exceptionalist myths of invulnerability that once flew over the U.S. Yet, this capability remains in place, and everyone continues to be at risk, as long as airliners fly and gritty geopolitical conflicts produce more suicide plots.

Protecting against any future attacks, moreover, becomes a nightmarish defense problem once the generic liberal assumptions of rational, life-enhancing utility presumed by modern technics are pushed outside the daily equations of ordinary technological use. Many large technical systems become highly problematic, threatening, and uncontrollable dangers if one repurposes their instrumental applications to cause harm rather than generate power or profit. The most relevant case in point is the American air transport system. On any given day prior to 9.11, 35,000 to 40,000 airplanes took off and landed, which included 4,000 commercial flights, at 460 FAA-controlled airports to serve almost 2 million passengers.[19] A clear forewarning of 9.11 was uncovered in 1995 in the plot to hijack and/or bomb twelve U.S. airliners in Asia and Oceania. Yet, little was done, because on any given day, finding terrorist suicide pilots among nearly 2 million passengers on 40,000 planes and 4,000 commercial flights is nearly impossible, even though each of these flights can become a terrorist-guided missile. The *modus operandi* of the Al Qaeda networks, which allegedly are behind many acts of domestic and international terrorism over the past decade, displays a measure of versatility and adaptability that seeks new disruptive possibilities in many places. Consequently, 9.11 is most likely not going to be repeated in exactly the same way. Instead the next major strike undoubtedly will leverage another embedded asset in some other existing technostructures to raise havoc at home or abroad.

This sort of anonymous resistance nests in networks, struggles against systems, and probes into processes. It is simultaneously underground, on the ground, and ungrounded in many different locales. Transnational ethnonational diasporas and ragged failed states shelter its militants, mobilize its supporters, and nurture its many streams of discontent. Because so many of the mechanisms, structures, and links in world capitalism must be essentially unsecure to operate optimally, defense against the insecurities of all who now live amidst these linked aggregates of big market-driven systems is neither certain nor final. Such uncertainty and contingency, once again, remediate the economies of risk that characterize postmodern times.

Organized stateless violence emerged during the Cold War in wars of national liberation, narcocapitalist crime syndicates, ethnic secessions, and shadowy counterintelligence units.[20] Tolerated by the superpowers from the 1940s to the 1990s, these entities often proved to be reliable tools in the border conflicts between the capitalist and socialist zone-regimes that once were tied to Washington and Moscow. In the political vacuums created in many states after 1989-1991, however, these entities acquired quasi-sovereign powers in far too many territorial areas across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and even parts of the former Soviet Union. Consequently, one finds small organized war machines with varying levels of capability, but no real closure over entire territories and populations, demodernizing many different places around the world in pursuit of their

contrasovereign illegitimate power.[21] From the Congo, Somalia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya, and Palestine, there are demodernized wild zones in which these stateless formations for organized violence play out their quest for institutional power on both a local and global level.[22]

Mostly dismissed as insignificant vortices of minor turmoil when their first effects were registered on 2.26.93 in the U.S. at the WTC, they now are regarded as sources of major chaos after the destruction at the WTC, Pentagon, and rural Pennsylvania on 9.11. Indeed, the U.S. has now entered into "a state of war" with "stateless warriors"--a situation that has not prevailed in the republic since its "civilizing campaigns" against Native Americans, the Barbary pirates, and Caribbean buccaneers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Instead of considering this condition a historical oddity, however, the U.S. needs to ask what strategic failures, political inconsistencies or economic discontinuities so plague its global roles as the world's last superpower, that such demodernizing tendencies are now becoming much more endemic.[23]

Just as the extent of Washington's collaboration with Saddam Hussein from 1978 to 1990 has never been fully disclosed, because of Baghdad's former role in the West's resistance against Islamic revolution in Iran, the full measure of American support for "the Afghan" Arabs who now are "Al Qaeda" during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan probably will not be known soon.[24] After being left high and dry by the U.S. once the U.S.S.R. began to fragment, the many Algerian, Egyptian, Gulf, and Saudi Arabs who answered America's call to defeat communist invaders in Afghanistan became enraged in 1990-1991 by the massive American military build-up in Saudi Arabia. Seeing these moves as a Western attempt to occupy the holiest places of the faith, Osama bin Laden and his confederates apparently spent the past decade infiltrating at least fifty to sixty countries to strike back against the U.S. in particular and the advanced industrial West in general.[25] Yet, the United States does not really know how far these networks run, and many of its global counterterrorist efforts to date largely have been total failures.[26] Not surprising then, there were no CIA agents in Afghanistan prior to 9.11. The Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California did not have Dari (a variant of Farsi) on its Fall 2001 curriculum. No one in 2001-2002 at State Department's Foreign Language Institute was studying Pashto (the Taliban's language). And, no up-to-date maps of Afghanistan (or most Third World states) were in the U.S. military's inventory, which has forced the coalition forces in Afghanistan to use old Russian ones since October 2001.

Old pictures of peril drawn from 1939, 1945, and 1956 of battle tanks and storm troopers from totalitarian dictatorships smashing across the countryside in blitzkrieg strikes at dawn shattered on 9.11. They have been replaced by more ominous depictions of danger--ordinary jetliners diving into iconic buildings in broad daylight. Few images could as powerfully underscore the postmodernizing qualities of the present moment as what appears to be premodern religious fanaticism mixed with late modern aerospace vehicles to collide into high modernist buildings. All of these fragments, in turn, strongly second C. Wright Mill's sense of the postmodern as a contradictory condition in which scientific rationality and techniques "are given a central place in society," but this does not mean people "live reasonably and without myth, fraud, and superstition."[27]

Many continue to see today's terrorist attacks as incidents from a neo-medieval jihad that aims to topple highly modernized western nations for abusing and/or exploiting the nations of Islam, but they also are a desperate response to the modernity of failure brought by corporate globalism to the world's poor and powerless. By March 2002, Al Qaeda and the Taliban had been

clearly defeated in most corners of Afghanistan after six months of intense fighting by the global coalition against terrorism. Moreover, the interim government of Hamid Karzai promises to bring that war-torn country back from the ruins that nearly twenty-five years of armed struggle have brought to the Afghan people. Still, Osama bin Laden and Mohammed Omar remain at large, and, as President Bush warned in his 2002 State of the Union address, tens of thousands of well-trained terrorists are still working as an underground resistance in many nations around the world.

Nonetheless, the geopolitical underpinnings of 9.11 are not new: they largely are the new contours cut by a unipolar correlation of forces that emerged after the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.[28] The New World Order of 1991, however, soon devolved into carpet bagging, fiscal skullduggery or benign neglect as many individuals and firms in the U.S. looked inward to seek El Dorado on the World Wide Web instead of dealing with the disintegration of the communist bloc.[29] As a result, large swaths of the old "Second" and "Third world" decayed, disconnected or devolved into demodernized chaos on a scale not seen since the 17th century as the Asian financial crisis of 1997, the Russian market crash of 1998, and the global slump of 1999-2002 deflated even the once robust economies of the Pacific Rim countries. While the American economy boomed throughout the 1990s, the Arab economies in the Middle East grew only 0.7 percent annually and the Islamic states in one-time Soviet Central Asia sharply contracted without big subsidies from Moscow.[30]

On one level, the terrorist networks behind 9.11 represent a profound failure of modernity, which rarely has been acknowledged in the triumphalism of the past decade.[31] In 1991, the U.S. oversaw the successful recapture of Kuwait from Saddam Hussein; and, then a few months later, it watched in awe as the Soviet Union totally unraveled. During the intervening years, the U.S. washed its hands of many Cold War alliances and policies, which often had been connected to authoritarian allies and violent means.[32] What had once seemed necessary to resist the U.S.S.R. was no longer required. At the same time, the U.S. slowly turned away from many larger internationalist responsibilities that befell it as the world's sole remaining superpower.[33] Instead of continuing to stand resolutely for modern ideals, like democracy, equality, and freedom, the U.S. left tyrants like Saddam Hussein in place after Kuwait's oil was once again secure, permitted gangster capitalism to establish itself securely in places as varied as Russia, Columbia, Romania, Congo, and Ukraine, and temporized as horrendous civil strife racked East Timor, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Bosnia, Congo, Iraq, and most of former Soviet Central Asia as well as Afghanistan.[34] At the same time, Washington ineffectively brokered a fragile peace process between Israel and the Palestinians that only increased tensions between Jews and Arabs as more militant groups on both sides pushed more and extreme measures to attain their goals after the Oslo peace process.[35]

The difficult detail, that most overlook in the putative triumph of "the West" over "the Rest" in the 1990s, then, is how fully a global modernity of failure coexists beneath, behind or beside the modernizing successes brought on by globalization through transnational corporate commerce.[36] For every Hong Kong, Singapore, Frankfurt, or San Jose in the 1990s, there were five Groznys, Kabuls, Luandas, Mogadishus, Sarajevos, or Kinshashas.[37] As the 21st century dawned in some places, many others slipped back into 17th or 19th century conditions of demodernizing disintegration.[38] Large parts of the world now do not have effective territorial governance by modern nation-state institutions.[39] Many regions of the world have slipped back into early modern relations of trade in which black markets for gems, oil, weapons, drugs, timber or even people clearly eclipse the open exchange for legitimate goods and services.[40] And, in this chaotic flux of

change, the modernity of failure suffered by many is easily blamed upon a modernity of success enjoyed by the few with the U.S. at the top of that small pile of highly modernized nation-states.[41]

Today, in 2003, the U.S. and its allies must not drop the ball in Afghanistan, as they did in 1992, by failing to provide sufficient economic, managerial, and technical assistance to help Kabul rebuild the country. In the midst of a serious recession, the U.S. concluded that it did not have the money to solve all of the world's problems in the early 1990s under the administration of President George W. Bush's father. This failure must not be repeated during the early 2000s as the U.S. endures another recession. If it is, then the promise of modernity will continue to be proven false in far too many places across the Middle East, Africa, and Southwest Asia where the terrorist backlash against the U.S. can find new recruits and fresh support.

III. Culture War and Postmodern Geopolitics

A culture war may rest at the core of 9.11, but I believe it is not one between Islam and Christianity, although it can be tied to the incommensurability of secularism and devotion in many respects of everyday life.[42] Liberal ideologies rest at the core of modern consumer society. Without the codes of conduct that channel everyday human behaviors through codes for autonomous rational agency, the technics that underlie market exchange, instrumental action, and personal happiness would grind to a halt.[43] To live is to consume, and to consume is to live.[44] By these lights, few, if any, modern individuals even can imagine rationally and freely choosing not to consume or to die. Consequently, the common sensibilities of the American public have been shocked from Guadalcanal in World War II to Hue during the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam to the WTC bombings in 2001 by dedicated violence committed in accord with illiberal visions of existence that readily put other collective goals ahead of the individual right to consume, work or acquire property. Believing God, History or Nature is on their side, "others" willingly can sacrifice themselves, their families, and their riches to attain long-term strategic goals. While destroying the Pentagon or WTC might not seem to offer many strategic benefits, the audacious devotion to such violent goals always can, first, confuse, and, then, shock liberal understandings of the self and society down to their core.

Therefore, any defense of ordinary liberal capitalist ways of life always will require an uncomfortable ongoing effort to comprehend the radical indifference to its codes of conduct that illiberal ways of acting and thinking can generate. All too often it takes a final phone call to loved ones who relay the latest CNN updates about terrorist attacks elsewhere to awaken ordinary consumers to such foundational threats to their existence. Then some readily rise to the call, even if it is too late for them. Radical Islamism obviously fits these shoes as its advocates allege that a new world order tied to liberal capitalist values, and the American society and state that stand behind them, are threatening Islam as a whole. Moreover, the U.S. in Iraq, Serbs in Bosnia, Hindus in Kashmir, Russians in Chechnya, the French in North Africa, or the Israelis in Palestine are all working to destroy the faith. Hence, its dispossessed radical followers can swear allegiance to "defeat the mightiest military power of modern times" by trusting, as bin Laden maintains, how fully "your lives are in the hands of God."[45]

This absolute profession of religious faith keeps radical Islam disciplined and resourceful, but its origins also highlight how easily everything can sour in the poorer, less developed regions of the world from Morocco to Indonesia as the peaceful followers of the faith struggle to coexist with fundamentalistic radicals. Moreover, the generic forms of liberal capitalist life brought to millions by transnational firms now compete on the same terrain with Al Qaeda not only in Egypt or Sudan, but

also in Russia or Bosnia as well as Ontario or Florida. In many ways, it is clear that the normalizing generic liberalism at the core of modern markets, technics, and societies is what radical Islamicists reject. Still, the "Occidentalosis" that Islamic critics and clerics have been decrying since the 1970s is not entirely focused upon the "Disneyfication" or "McDonaldsization" in everyday life that America has represented for many anti-globalization campaigns.

Instead what many radical Islamicists appear more dead-set against are older liberal principles in American life that derive from the Enlightenment: the separation of religion and government, basic natural rights to life, liberty and property, the emancipation of women, even scientific reason. This perceived threat in the prophet's homeland sparked bin Laden's *jihad* against the U.S., and these precepts are what globalization often portends for "the Rest" as they confront "the West." If they wish to resist this new opposition to their modern life, both the Left and the Right in the U.S. need to move past their current cultural warring over small stakes, and decide which foundational practices in what was once regarded as "Western modernity" are worth reaffirming. Yet, they must also be aware of how much those principles aggravate the anxieties of outsiders who see their values smothered by a civilization of cultural clash that constantly is inundating them with unpalatable changes. Of course, Islam can coexist, and has done so in the past, with scientific skepticism, the freedom of women, basic natural rights, and a separation of the faith and the state. Moreover, it is mostly religious fundamentalists in Islam who still assail these principles. And, as the Reverends Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell so artlessly illustrated when they interpreted 9.11 as God's retribution against America for being a nation of sinners, these illiberal tendencies also plague Christianity.

The strikes on the Pentagon and WTC are hardly apocalyptic events, even though the media drone on as if the destruction wrought upon these iconic buildings will mark a sea change in Western civilization. Of course, if such assertions are repeated often enough, then many might come to regard them as true in a cycle of self-fulfilling prophecies. This outcome could follow from 9.11. There is a frightening insularity shared by most average American consumers as they aspire to buy more and more of the world product at their local Walmarts, while remaining utterly clueless about why those goods are so abundant, cheap, and endless; why their credit is so steady, sound, and bottomless; or whose welfare elsewhere in the world is not as solid, certain, and strifeless. In response, President Bush has called for the "culture of permissiveness" to be replaced by a "culture of responsibility." Instead of reveling in prosperity promised by the neoliberal nightwatchman state and free markets, President Bush is, once again, rewriting the mission of the U.S., as President Truman did in 1947, as a positive pedagogical state devoted to winning another long twilight war against evil. For this president and his government, 9.11 is a pivotal point in America's history: "it was as if our entire country looked in to the mirror and saw our better selves. We were reminded that we are citizens with obligations to each other, to our country, and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate, and more about the good we can do."[46]

IV. Globalization and the End of the Cold War

For many, globalization is the key trope tying together neo-liberal capitalist rationalization, informational technics, mass consumption culture, and integrated world markets of a postmodern geopolitics.[47] Yet, I would maintain that the Al Qaeda terrorist networks also are in many ways the epitome of contemporary globalization. Whether it is the easy facility of these cadres with global finance, world travel or international communication, one must not mistake the sectarian traditionalism of Al Qaeda's *mujahededdin* for some sort of technological unsophistication or political

obtuseness. Indeed, the loosely articulated cellular structures of these networks are highly specialized "virtual organizations," pulling people, money, resources, and tactics from different places at different times into single teams for cohesive task performance without necessarily following any overly centralized strategy. Whether it is truck bombs, hijacked airliners, ship bombings, individual murders, or seizing symbolic buildings, global means of communication, organization, and transportation make it easier to refunction embedded technical assets as tools of terror in such loosely coupled, flexible means of destructive organization.

Still, this resistance only mirrors how fully global power is being recast in an informatic manner. American "soft power"[48] is what threatens radical Islamicists and surviving state socialists. In turn, international threats now are acquiring their own destatalized, dematerialized, and deformalized network terms. Whether it is the unknown hacker, a faceless narcocapitalist or Islamic underground terrorist cell, today's threat to the U.S. is being presented more in the forms of deterritorialized and decentered network assaults, and not always in registers of a certain secure statal authority. Strangely enough, President Bush called the nation to arms in his State of the Union address of January 29, 2002 by endorsing "a new culture of responsibility."[49] Recasting his administration's tasks as those of leading a global struggle, as a "hard power" center, against what he envisions as "an axis of evil," President Bush oddly departs from soft power arguments and repaints the U.S. in the fashion of a highly territorialized, strongly nationalized, and firmly centered superpower state. He assumes this battle stance to energize its people as well as to mobilize a global coalition of allied states behind the U.S.

These ideological ambitions were articulated very explicitly in the President's 2002 State of the Union address.[50] On that occasion, President Bush spoke of the U.S. confronting "an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world," and he promised the most notorious members of this new axis--Iran, Iraq, and North Korea--that "I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer."[51] While Washington regards these nations as an axis of evil, they tend to be viewed in European capitals, at worst, as minor miscreants or, at best, as promising trade partners. Hence, France denounced the axis of evil analysis as "simplistic," while Germany complained "we won't be treated as satellites."[52] Since it now spends 40 percent of the world's defense monies, the U.S. actually does not need any satellites to help protect it.[53] And, in many ways, this overwhelming lead in military spending, and the high tech weapons it buys, moves Washington to go it almost alone save for the legitimating presence of a few global "allies" to assure the American public, and its various adversaries, that others share its strategic vision. Therefore, the axis of evil rhetoric allows prominent pundits like Charles Krauthammer, to opine: "we are in a war of self-defense. It is also a war for western civilization. If the Europeans refuse to see themselves as part of the struggle, fine. If they wish to abdicate, fine. We will let them hold our coats."[54]

Before 9.11, the world was ridiculing Washington's efforts at resisting the Kyoto global warming accords, dismantling the 1972 ABM treaties, and touting more NAFTA-like trade pacts. After 9.11, this new enemy axis is producing a measure of cohesion and compliance in the U.S. not seen since 1947 at the dawn of a Cold War with the U.S.S.R. In many ways, then, 9.11 neatly provides the missing crown of legitimacy to Washington's emergent post-1992 imperium. What looked like unjustified privileges of imperial power in President Clinton's desultory strikes against Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan, now looks more like righteous wrath under President Bush's open-ended war on terrorism. Any disconnect between the American public's core values and the national elite's strategic assumptions can be bridged simply by replaying the tapes of the World Trade Center's collapse. Like the exploding battleships of Pearl Harbor on 12.7.41, we undoubtedly

will see the collapsing, burning buildings of 9.11 as enduring features of visual rhetoric in almost every geopolitical debate from here out to the indefinite future.

9.11 for President Bush also is a potential historic turning point for America's body politic. As John Bridgeland, the head of the new U.S.A. freedom corps experiment, suggests, "This can be a transforming time. We need to be citizens, not spectators. It's part of a complete and full life."[55] Along with a willingness to join the colors in military service, or pull out those credit cards to sustain the nation's economy, Americans also are now being enjoined to give two years, or 4,000 hours, of service to the nation in Ameri Corps, Peace Corps, Senior Corps or some other worthy civic service organization. Whether Bridgeland's vision of citizenship is more than moving from passive subjecthood to active subjecthood remains to be seen; but, the Congressional Republican leadership's reactions to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's mild questioning of how much success the U.S. really is having in Afghanistan leads one to doubt the sincerity of this call for real citizens to stand up, act, and be counted. Real citizens rule themselves, so questioning their own rule is perfectly acceptable. Yet, House Majority Leader Tom Delay calls efforts to question the Afghan campaign "disgusting," and Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott asks how dare anyone, including Senator Daschle, "criticize President Bush while we are fighting our war on terrorism, especially when we have troops in the fields."[56]

These twists and turns show how an elusive bin Laden with ever-present signs of Al Qaeda subversion at home and abroad are precisely the rallying tonic that the times demand as President Bush and his national security team assess today's threat environment. This is vital, because the first battle in this new war was a catastrophic defeat for the U.S. The whole terrorist budget for 9.11 could have been as little as $200,000, which is an astounding geoeconomic reality pitted against the estimated $60 billion in direct and indirect losses from the attacks of 9.11 the $140 billion in federal stimulus packages to rev up the U.S. economy, the $1.4 trillion in stock declines the week after the bombings, and the 150,000 jobs cut in the immediate wake of these incidents.[57] One forecast from New York sees the economic impact of 9.11 in the U.S. amounting to $630 billion during the first year after the attacks, including $11 billion for increased security from Washington, $5 billion from the states, and $2.6 billion from cities and towns. As President Bush noted in his 2002 State of the Union address, the war against terror is costing a billion dollars a month, and this cost now requires him to request the largest increases for defense spending in twenty years. At $328 billion in 2002, American defense spending is 5 times Russia's, 8 times Japan's, 10 times Germany's, and nearly thirty times all the "axis of evil" states plus Cuba, Libya, and rest of the Clinton administration's old "rogue states."[58]

9.11 at the WTC cannot be forgotten as easily as the 2.26.93 attack on the WTC was. The ordinary architectures of modern life make such calamities possible, and it only takes slight efforts by a few zealous cadres to turn common conveniences into tools for outrages. On any given day, each of us can nick ourselves on the modernized shards of uncertainty that pile up the postmodern rubble of risk. The wounds made on 9.11 however, are deep, and for many never likely to ever fully heal. An unpredictable combination of powerful aircraft, devoted militants, hidden box cutters, brutal violence, and televised devastation all came together in truly tragic events, even though ironically it had been predicted years before. Modern systems for providing convenient service were simply transmogrified by purposeful abuse into another violent marker of the postmodern times and places we now inhabit. On the one hand, in both the U.S. and Afghanistan, ordinary people must continue to occupy themselves with the push and pull of common commodities flowing down the

roads of the global commerce, while, on the other hand, their leaders will continue to hunker down in bunkers and caves, avoiding highjacked airliners or hunter-killer drones.

The rapid reversals in the Taliban's fortunes, and then its apparent defeat by the global coalition of forces arrayed against it have created another unreality on top of the almost unbelievable catastrophes of 9.11 in New York, rural Pennsylvania, and Northern Virginia. Operation Anaconda's fortunes and misfortunes in March 2002 have proven that considerable pockets of Taliban and Al Qaeda resistance remain active in Afghanistan, and the evasiveness of those forces' highest leadership leaves the final outcome of the struggle still undetermined. Yet, at the same time, a new regime is struggling to stabilize and then revitalize Afghanistan's cities and much of its hinterland as if the war was over, victory is final, and no doubts remain.

This world struggle against terrorists will continue because our global economy simultaneously creates many possible weapons and angers many possible enemies. The on-going processes of globalization, as such, and the persistent diffusion of neoliberal ideologies of globalism per se, will almost certainly continue creating new resentments against the U.S. and the West. And, at the same time, a feckless GOP administration whose agenda once had been tied to ill-conceived tax cuts, corporate welfare, and slap-doodle economic restructuring now has resurrected Cold War era logics of enemy-definition, threat-containment, and defense-mobilization on a scale that Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and maybe even the alleged "axis of evil," could not have foreseen before 9.11.

V. Summary

Promising to go anywhere anytime to fight any terrorist force, I have argued that the new Bush administration is framing its "new normalcy" around reimagining global terrorism as a foe worthy of permanent war. This search for a "new enemy" in the register of grand Cold War-era struggles has been an on-going project since 1991. Communist China, Latin narcocapitalists, and post-1991 Russia have all failed the screen test over the past decade, but radical Islamic and state-sponsored terrorism now are being recast into playing this lead.[59] In the 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush "names" names--North Korea, Iran, and Iraq--and assigns blame to "states like these, and their terrorist allies" who constitute the twenty-first century's "axis of evil."

Where the rest of this war will be fought, by whom, and at what cost remain to be seen, but it begins with Bush having the highest approval ratings of any U.S. President ever, Congress declaring an undeclarable war with a very generous initial $40 billion credit line, NATO invoking its collective defense charter for only the first time in its history, scores of nations from Britain to Uzbekistan pledging full support to Washington for the fight, young Americans flocking to the flag in ways not seen since before the Vietnam War, and a high-tech blitzkrieg bringing apparent victory during "round one" in Afghanistan. Likewise, the new "Bush doctrine" holds that anyone who does not stand with the U.S. in the war against terrorism stands against Washington and its anti-terrorist allies. For those who attacked the U.S. on 9.11 as the homeland of "a rogue superpower," these new geopolitical realities can not easily be ignored. Yet, even for those rallying to the flag in the U.S., the costs of the last big war in Asia also will not be forgotten.

Rather than trusting entirely in the U.S. Marines or its B-2 stealth bombers, the U.S. needs to ask to what extent today's existing globalist ideologies with their neoliberal systems of industrial production, cultural reproduction, and public administration are sparking the bitter conflicts it currently faces with terrorism. Modernity is failing in too many places around the world, and the

dominant models of neoliberal economics and politics are not blameless in this outcome. President Bush's new hot-and-cold war against terrorism still could prove to be a unilateral gambit for recharging modern notions of territory, sovereignty, and nationality for the U.S. against a few of today's postmodern geopolitical tendencies. Yet, to conclude, its ultimate prospects for success remain to be seen.

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