

Terrorism and Anti-Americanism:
9/11 Ten Years After

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Introduction

The shocking attacks on the United States by al-Qaeda terrorists on September 11, 2001 changed the course of history. It was a cataclysmic event, like the assassination of President Kennedy or the attack on Pearl Harbor: everyone can recall exactly what they were doing when they got the news or first saw the footage on CNN. An eventful ten years have passed since then. Americans became painfully aware that they were not untouchable anymore: the myth of Fortress America collapsed in an hour of mayhem. The US launched a war on terror, attacked Afghanistan and Iraq, and warned Iran and North Korea. The Bush administration gradually lost its support, and Republicans were voted out of power in favor of America's first black president, Barack Obama in 2008. Subsequent attacks on the US were prevented, but her allies (especially Britain and Spain) proved less fortunate. Al-Qaeda was reduced to a regional, Middle Eastern terrorist organization, but anti-American sentiments continue to flourish all around the world. Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden were liquidated, but both incidents raised just as many questions about America's alliances as they answered. At home, a "9/11 truth movement" emerged, and conspiracy theories about the attacks continue to abound. Much to the amazement of the outside observer, many Americans tend to believe in fantastic and elaborate conspiracy theories¹ rather than the official findings of the 9/11 Commission, whose final report was published in 2004. What follows are: 1) a historian's take on America's rise as a European colonizer in the Middle East; 2) an explanation of how the US subsequently became the target of Middle Eastern terrorism; 3) an evaluation of anti-Americanism and well-founded criticism leveled at the United States; 4) a review of the nature and scope of 9/11 conspiracy theories; and 5) an overview of what happened in the past ten years.

The rise of the US as a European colonizer in the Middle East

The United States played a dominant role in the political, technical, social, and cultural development of the West in the twentieth century.

Before World War I, the US was but one of the handful of leading countries in the world, but after the war she became the one to follow. Between the wars, the New World set trends in music and film, in literature and transportation, and proved to be a refuge for the targets of the next European purge, Jews fleeing the impending Holocaust. Even at the time of the Great Depression, arguably the greatest economic disaster in US history, legal and illegal immigrants continued to flood to the "Promised Land." In World War II, in American mythology the last "good war" (even to critics like Howard Zinn²), the US reiterated her position as savior of the Old World, and then stood up to communism, sometimes identified as "Red Fascism,"³ in the Cold War. The United States sustained this positive role until the late 1970s. It was the twin forces of Vietnam (combined with Watergate) and American empire building in the Middle East that destroyed this positive image, cast the western superpower in a very different light in the eyes of various radical Arab/Islamist groups, and made her "fair game" for modern-day terrorists.

Vietnam is the war the US would like to forget, and yet must remember. As opposed to the "good war" before, this one was difficult to justify (regardless of the "domino theory," a divided Southeast Asian country was no national security threat), dragged on indefinitely ("America's longest war"), was televised, and brought about war crimes against civilian populations that Americans were not associated with before (My Lai). The war raised such passion in the US that unarmed, protesting students were shot dead on American campuses (Kent State and Jackson State, 1970). It developed into not a war to be won "to make the world safe for democracy," but one that no president wanted to lose. Vietnam became more and more a war of presidential ego (for both LBJ and Nixon) and the rift between official rhetoric and actual action became painfully clear to millions watching it on TV in the US and around the world, from Walter Cronkite making his famous remark on the night of the TET offensive in 1968 ("I thought we were winning this war.") to the release of the Pentagon Papers in 1972. Vietnam became the symbol of the unwinnable war and established the tradition of almost automatically questioning everything the federal government would say. By replacing France, the US acted as a substitute for a European colonizer in Southeast Asia, and duly lost the same type of colonial war of liberation that she herself had once fought against the British and still calls the "American Revolution." The televised images of Americans escaping Saigon by helicopter in chaos and panic marked the end of a beautiful dream in April 1975.⁴ To add insult to injury,

dominoes were not only NOT falling, Communist countries began to wage war against one another: in 1978 Vietnam invaded Cambodia, and in 1979 China attacked Vietnam.

The Middle East, like Vietnam, developed into a PR nightmare for the United States in three decades, between the end of World War II and 1979.⁵ The US had little influence in the region before World War II, but things changed dramatically after 1945. From the “also ran” of the 1928 Red Line Agreement, the US gradually became a key player: Washington protected Iran against Soviet takeover (1946), helped out the Greeks in the face of the communist threat (Truman Doctrine, 1947), immediately recognized the newly created state of Israel in 1948, invited Turkey to become a member of NATO (1952), and combined with the British to bring down the democratically elected government of Mohammad Mosaddegh in favor of the young shah, Reza Pahlavi (Iran, 1953). In October-November 1956, when President Eisenhower was facing the twin challenges of Hungary and Suez, Washington was already in a position to emphatically ask her allies to end the hostilities in the Middle East within the shortest possible amount of time, lest it should interfere with the impending presidential election. The US and her NATO allies armed Israel (even with nuclear weapons) and sided with her in the various open wars (the Six-Day War, 1967, and the Yom Kippur War, 1973). In the region, Washington thus gradually came to be seen as a European colonizer, as well as the open supporter of “public enemy #1” (Israel). It was but a matter of time before she would become the target of regional resistance taking some form of terrorism.

The lull before the storm came after the Yom Kippur War and the subsequent oil crisis of the mid-1970s. Both the Arab countries and Israel seemed to have taken a step back, and the US acted as peacemaker, first in the form of Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy (1973), then by President Carter mediating a key peace accord in Camp David in 1978 between Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. For a short time it appeared that Carter would be able to restore the prestige and positive role of the US, which, as has been explained above, was called into question by her conduct in Vietnam and by the Watergate scandal. But that was not to be.

At the end of the 1970s radical Islamic movements erupted with a vengeance and drove the Middle East into chaos. In 1979 the Islamic Revolution led by the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in Iran, expelled the shah, took American hostages, and demanded arms for hostages. In

1981, President Sadat, one of the architects of the 1978 peace agreements, was assassinated, and Vice-President Hosni Mubarak took over in Egypt. A war between Iraq and Iran exploded, and the US decided to support Iraqi dictator (and war criminal) Saddam Hussein in the conflict. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, also in 1979, further complicated the situation by adding a direct Cold War dimension to the problem. The US was forced to face the challenges of empire building for the first time outside the Western Hemisphere. It took decisive UN action in the First Gulf War (forcing former ally Saddam Hussein back into Iraq) to restore some semblance of order in the early 1990s.

The Iran hostage crisis of 1979 was the first time the US directly faced Islamic terrorism. Still, this was old-school terrorism, as indicated by the arms-for-hostages demands put forward by Khomeini. Yet, the new, Jihad-driven form of terrorism, which culminated in the 9/11 attacks, was also coming.

Middle Eastern terrorism targeting the United States

The new form of terrorism hit Americans for the first time on April 18, 1983, when a suicide bomber successfully targeted the US Embassy in Beirut and killed more than 60 people. Later the same year, on October 23, US and French army barracks were destroyed by truck bombers, and 241 American servicemen were killed. Eventually, the April 5, 1986 Berlin discotheque bombing, this time by terrorists funded by Muammar Gaddafi, elicited direct US response in the form of Operation El Dorado Canyon, the bombing of Libya. Interestingly, as the Cold War was winding down, the radical Arab nationalists/Islamic fundamentalists vs. US conflict in the Middle East was escalating, while the local wars in the region (the Soviet Union vs. Afghanistan, Iraq vs. Iran, civil war in Lebanon) continued.⁶ It is hardly surprising that, in his memoirs, George P. Shultz, Reagan's second secretary of state (1982-89), described terrorism, and not communism, as the number one threat facing the United States during his tenure.⁷

The conflict was taken directly to the United States in the February 23, 1993 attempt to destroy the World Trade Center with a truck bomb. Ten years after Beirut, this was a new departure, as the two masterminds of the attack, carried out in the heart of New York City, were actually educated in the West: Ramzi Yousef in England and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in the United States.⁸ A modern-day Fu Manchu was taking shape: a leader from the East educated in the East and West, driven by a relentless hatred of the white man's world. Sax Rohmer's fictitious character (described as

the “yellow peril incarnate”) was Chinese, this new version was Arabic.⁹ As the world found out more and more about al-Qaeda in the wake of repeated terrorist attacks, its leader, Osama bin Laden, became a new, mythical “avenger from the East,” so shrouded in myth that for quite some time his very existence was questioned by the American intelligence community.¹⁰ US economic interest (the undisturbed flow of oil from the Middle East) and political reality continued to clash as terrorist attacks on American targets followed one another: 1996 in Saudi Arabia (Hezbollah), the US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania (1998, al-Qaeda), and the suicide boat attack on the *USS Cole* (2000, al-Qaeda). Finally, a mere 18 years after the Beirut Embassy bombing, al-Qaeda carried out the most spectacular and most beastly attacks on September 11, 2001. Thus, 9/11 was by no means the first terrorist attack in the United States, but its scope, brutality, and irrationality set it aside from all previous incidents.

Besides home-grown American terrorism from the Ku Klux Klan through the Weather Underground to Timothy McVeigh and beyond, foreign terrorists have also been hitting domestic US targets since World War I. The 1916 German “sabotage” attack on Black Tom, a major US ammunition deposit waiting to be shipped to the Allies against German protests, was an act of terrorism, as was the abortive Operation Pastorius of 1942 or Hitler’s plan to bomb New York City during the final stages of the war.¹¹ What makes the 9/11 attacks unique is their unspeakable brutality: flying hijacked passenger aircraft into office buildings goes far beyond what anyone could have even imagined. Terrorism arrived at a new level, and it indicates a new level of hatred directed at the United States of America. This, in turn, raises an important question: Where is the dividing line between criticism of (even retaliation for) “imperialist” US action in various parts of the world and anti-Americanism, especially when it assumes such a destructive form?

Legitimate criticism vs. anti-Americanism

There is a clear-cut difference between (legitimate) criticism of American action in the world and anti-Americanism. The former is a natural response to the US becoming a superpower after World War II, while the latter is driven by an irrational hatred of the United States of America and/or of the ideas she stands for. Anti-Americanism has domestic and external sources alike, and they feed off one another.¹² Domestic anti-Americanism is the result of American society being open and open to criticism from within and without. There is considerable irony in the fact

that even the “new American studies” scholars who view America as but a narrative and nation as an “imagined community” contribute to the ongoing debate about what America stands for.¹³ Such domestic criticism of things American, however, has led many outside viewers to feel justified to make uniform and unfounded statements that amount to anti-Americanism. Internal debate, however heated it may be, still does not explain suicide attacks on passenger aircraft and office buildings. Nor does America’s conduct as a superpower since 1945.

According to Paul Hollander, anti-Americanism is the only global ideology today. It can be found in every corner of the globe, and manifests itself in various forms ranging from verbal abuse to terrorism.¹⁴ A recent analysis of Middle Eastern anti-Americanism concluded that its two main versions, radical Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, use anti-Americanism for their political advantage, but try to sell it as a response to real and imagined grievances.¹⁵ This argument is sound, yet what matters is what people want to believe as true rather than what is *de facto* true. And what is apparently true is that we saw crowds cheering in the streets in response to the 9/11 attacks in various Middle Eastern countries. Thus, whatever drives anti-Americanism, it is relentless and uncompromising, and its extreme practitioners are willing to travel halfway around the globe and die to destroy American civilians. Suicide bombers like the 9/11 terrorists clearly seek otherworldly rewards and not political gains in this world.¹⁶

There is something by nature sinister about people hating the United States deeply enough to conceive and carry out a plot like 9/11. Ramzi Youssef and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed were educated in the West, and this was their own, or their family’s, choice. Mohamed Atta, the Egyptian terrorist who flew American Airlines Flight 11 into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, studied in Germany. The recently liquidated Anwar al-Awlaqi was born and raised in the US. He was allowed to preach against his own country and post his sermons on the internet. By attacking the US, these people use the very means they were granted to learn and improve themselves in the free world to harm the country that gave them the free choices they would never grant to others in their twisted political or religious visions. In other words, the US was attacked on 9/11 not necessarily because of her conduct in the world, but because her openness to people with very different ideas made her an easy target. Even if these people hate the US for her religious and political freedoms, her success and worldwide appeal, it is still inconceivable why they would actually go there and murder civilians in the most cowardly attack in recent

history. Among other Arab and Islamic leaders, a high-ranking Saudi judicial official voiced similar concerns when he remarked,

Islam rejects such acts, since it forbids killing of civilians even during times of war, especially if they are not part of the fighting. . . . This barbaric act is not justified by any sane mindset or any logic, nor by the religion of Islam.¹⁷

It follows from the above that the Jihad-driven terrorism represented by al-Qaeda has little to do with genuine religious faith or nationalism. It is based on irrational but uncompromising hatred of America and the will to destroy her unsuspecting citizens. Most Americans, however, find this difficult to understand. And in the United States, at least since the Vietnam War, as has been pointed out, there is a general reluctance to believe what the federal government says. It is hardly surprising that a whole subculture of conspiracy theories emerged in connection with the 9/11 attacks.

The nature of 9/11 conspiracy theories

It would go far beyond the scope of the present essay to review all 9/11 conspiracy theories, but some general observations seem appropriate at this point. The most obvious one is that 9/11 conspiracy theories are being recycled predominantly in “documentary” films and on the World Wide Web. As I have explained elsewhere, the development of digital technology and the spread of the Internet brought about a new culture of documentary filmmaking. It has become easy to produce and share privately made films,¹⁸ and this is especially true of the 9/11 conspiracy subculture. In a recently completed MA thesis, Beáta Sáfrány analyzed more than 40 such films,¹⁹ and the tenth anniversary of the attacks added several items to the list. This is troubling, inasmuch as these films pose as documentaries and carry an air of authenticity, which is not always corroborated by their content or the narratives they generate.

9/11, like intelligent design or global warming, has produced documentaries and counter-documentaries: *Fahrenheit 9/11* vs. *Celsius 41.11* are a case in point.²⁰ Watching the various films related to 9/11, one is under the impression that they are rivaling narratives reading one another rather than fact-based accounts. One apparent example is the emblematic film of the “9/11 Truth Movement” (“truthers” for short), *Loose Change*, which has a first and a second edition, a final cut, and a post-final cut

version; the only difference being that refuted claims are removed from each new version.²¹ What such films have in common is that they reject the official interpretation of the events (the 9/11 Commission report) off the cuff and blame just about anyone, from Mosad through President Bush/Vice President Cheney to some secret organization that aims to achieve world domination. Even the National Geographic Channel took up the topic on the ninth anniversary of the attacks and produced a film that refuted many of the claims put forward in films refuting the findings of the 9/11 Commission.²²

The rise of the Internet, and the free and uncensored flow of ideas it guarantees, have provided new breeding grounds for conspiracy theories. Another key dimension of the 9/11 speculations is that they are woven into other, more general conspiracy narratives with surprising ease. A *New World Order/Zeitgeist/Shadow Government* narrative²³ has emerged in the past decade and half, and the 2001 terrorist attacks inside the US are being incorporated into them. Such (fake) documentaries come from independent sources (*Money Masters*²⁴) as well as the right (Alex Jones) and the left (Michael Moore), but what they share in common is a deep distrust of visible (in the case of the US, a freely elected, democratic) government. This in turn raises a puzzling question: what explains the popularity of conspiracy theories and people's willingness to accept them at face value?

The fundamental problem with conspiracy theories lies in their thinly veiled attempt to manipulate historical evidence to fit a narrative which is not clearly laid out, or, as Aaronovitch put it, conspiracy stories "are a narrative that improves upon reality itself."²⁵ Theorists focus on isolated episodes and confusing statements made under the shock of the given tragedy. They generate alternative "scientific" evidence to challenge the results of official, government-sponsored investigations.²⁶ After Vietnam and in light of the glaring gaps in the Warren Commission Report on the assassination of JFK, in the US many feel there is legitimate ground for suspicion in connection with the 9/11 Commission's final report. Yet, asking questions is easy, while assembling an alternative story that explains *every* detail is more difficult. And the danger with conspiracy theories lies therein: they challenge the findings of the official enquiry on the grounds that *every* question must be answered, but they cannot come up with a believable, cohesive, alternative explanation. There is much less evidence to support the "Bush-is-responsible" explanation than the conclusions of the 9/11 Commission. An attempt to piece together an alternative story on the basis of the most popular conspiracy theories would presuppose a large-

scale government cover-up involving various branches of the military and several thousand people, as well as the swapping of various planes, a cruise missile attack on the Pentagon, and forcing several hundred people onto United Flight 93 in a secret air base and then shooting all of them out of the sky while faking a variety of private phone calls.²⁷ The age-old medical aphorism that you should think of horses instead of zebras when you hear hoof beats applies here: the more likely explanation is more likely to be true. Still, in the early twenty-first century many people still want to believe in zebras and refuse to think of horses when they hear thundering hooves.

At the same time, it would be a mistake to underestimate the power of conspiracy theories. The two major topics dominating the popular discourse (non-mainstream media) since the terrorist attacks are: 1) 9/11 being well-deserved punishment for US action (anti-Americanism, as explained above) and 2) conspiracy theories, mostly blaming the Bush administration. The irrationality of the former argument has already been explained, while that of the latter requires only common-sense arguments to admit: yes, a lot of people were disappointed by the conclusion of the 2000 election, and Bush was quite unpopular: but no president would ever authorize such an attack on his own country, and especially not on the headquarters of its own military (the Pentagon). The supposedly postmodern attitude of questioning narratives around us may be legitimate, but it should not develop into accepting the irrational at face value against what one's government says, just because one distrusts that government or its chief executive. Identifying the reasons of such conduct requires further research: not primarily from historians, but from psychologists, sociologists, and media experts.

The ten years since 9/11

Ten years have passed since the terrorist attacks inside the United States of America. An official commission examined all the evidence available and offered its conclusions. As far as we know, the chief architects of the attacks have been identified and liquidated. US intelligence gathering was reorganized, border security was stepped up, and a new Department of Homeland Security was established. Fortress America may be gone, but the US is safer today than she has ever been. Al-Qaeda, with the free flow of its funds cut off, has been reduced to a regional, Middle Eastern organization. On the other hand, there is a seemingly endless "war on terror" going on, the Bush administration wasted international sympathy and support by fabricating evidence against Saddam Hussein (alleged weapons of mass

destruction), the US continues to act as a European colonizer in the Middle East (wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, repeated threats directed at Iran, military interference in the "Arab spring"), and war crimes were committed again (Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo). One wonders if there is a better way of tackling this new type of terrorism.

There is no denying that the United States had to take action: if al-Qaeda is fighting a Jihad against American civilians inside the United States, Washington has to respond. This is no old-school warfare (we have had none of that since 1945 anyway²⁸), so new methods of gathering information had to be invented or deployed. It led to legal quibbling on the part of the Bush administration when it tried to justify deporting suspected terrorists to Guantanamo (a US military base in Cuba, of all places) and then waterboarding them: the new "legal" term for holding people hostage without due process was "enemy combatants" and simulated drowning (torture) became an "enhanced interrogation technique." The fact that no successful attack followed 9/11 inside the United States indicates that these measures actually did work. But some other actions of the Bush administration turned into a PR nightmare.

There was (and perhaps still is) considerable international support for the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, but the war in Iraq (the "Second Gulf War") resulted in the Bush administration losing much of its credibility. Very few people would have believed in late September 2001 that Saddam Hussein would be toppled and executed years before the US would take out Osama bin Laden, who assumed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. Reservations about the USA PATRIOT Act²⁹ and attacks on critics of the "war on terror" (from Neil Young and the Dixie Chicks through Michael Moore to outing an active CIA agent, Valerie Plame, in retaliation for her husband not being willing to back up the official line³⁰) as well as the sexual abuse of male Arab prisoners (Abu Ghraib) have seriously undermined the US war effort. US credibility suffered additional setbacks when America's allies were hit in repeated terrorist attacks around the world from Bali (2002) through Madrid (2004) to London (2005). The Bush Doctrine of preemptive strikes against "rogue states" that may represent a future threat to the United States³¹ further fueled anti-American sentiments and suspicions.

Despite the "new virulence and popularity" of anti-Americanism at home and abroad, the American Dream returned with a bang in 2008, with the election of Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States of America. Anti-American sentiments were curbed and expectations were riding irrationally high: the Nobel Peace Prize Committee decided to honor

the new president even before he took office. Ironically, in the two years since the award, Obama has proved himself a rather effective *war* president. In one of the TV-debates he promised to go after bin Laden, even into Pakistan, if need be. This he did, and the al-Qaeda leader was finally “hunted down” (Bush’s original terminology on the day of the attacks) in May 2011. Still, the news of bin Laden’s death directed attention to America’s battered alliances. In the 1980s, the US supported the Taliban and other “holy warriors” against Soviet invasion, but now, back in Afghanistan, she had to face the very people she had armed. The US supported Saddam Hussein in the Iraq-Iran war of the 1980s, but now she felt compelled to bring down the very same Iraqi dictator because he had (supposedly) turned against Washington. Although Pakistan received billions of dollars in American aid in the war on terror, President Pervez Musharraf sustained a semi-military dictatorship and harbored bin Laden for years. Washington has to learn to manage her alliances in a more effective way and put up with constant comparison to Vietnam.³²

The conduct of some of the mainstream American media also raises awkward questions. Three arbitrarily selected cases in point are 1) “embedded journalism” from the invasion of Iraq, 2) the Internet song titled “I Love Osama,” and 3) the way Fox’s 24 TV series treats the credibility of government and justifies torture. All three have contributed to anti-American sentiments at home and abroad.

“Embedded journalism” was invented for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and constitutes a major case of sell-out by the news media. Embedded journalists signed contracts with the military to report pre-approved material only: thus trading independent war reporting for being on the spot on arrival. This is not necessarily government propaganda, but neither is it war correspondence as it should be. The credibility gap that emerged in the wake of embedded journalism has clearly contributed to the general reluctance to believe what the federal government says about the war on terror in general and al-Qaeda in particular.

The Internet song “I Love Osama” is a distasteful take on the 9/11 tragedy. It surfaced (without crediting its author) in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. It still enjoys surprisingly great popularity on YouTube, an American application on the Internet, the medium that the US made available to everyone to support the free exchange of ideas.³³ The comments posted for different versions of the song testify to the persistence of anti-American sentiments around the world. It became a sort of anti-American anthem and rallying cry, and you can have it as a ringtone on your phone.

Still, in terms of mixed messages, Fox's immensely successful, critically acclaimed, multi-award winning series, *24*, takes the lead. Eight seasons have been shot and aired since November 2001. Jack Bauer, its main character, is a modern-day superhero who fights for justice and is willing to torture suspected terrorists and bring down corrupt presidents. Season 4 aired in 2005. It addressed the twin issues of Middle Eastern terrorism in the United States and torture. In light of the Abu Ghraib abuses, to many it seemed an ominous attempt to justify "enhanced interrogation techniques" employed by the Bush administration.³⁴ Equally troubling was the series' portrayal of government-level conspiracy and/or secret organizations trying to liquidate the elected president. President David Palmer of seasons 2 and 3 is shot dead in season 4; John Keeler becomes the target of a terrorist attack while flying Air Force One and is incapacitated (probably killed) in season 4; Charles Logan (seasons 4 and 5) is removed from office on charges of obstruction of justice; and Allison Taylor (seasons 7 and 8) plans to resign from office in the final episode. Given its popularity and success, it is fair to say that *24* greatly contributed to the blossoming of conspiracy theories in the United States.

By way of conclusion we may say that although 9/11 was a major tragedy, the US took successful steps to come to terms with it. Within a few days of the attacks commercial aviation was resumed, and the Baseball World Series was held. The new security measures introduced along the border and at airports made the country safer without sacrificing her "Promised Land" image in the longer run. Mainstream popular media repeatedly remind Americans of the possible threat of terrorist attacks,³⁵ but the fear mongering of the immediate post-attack times is gone and life has returned to "business as usual." The self-regenerating capacity of American culture was on display on the eve of the ninth anniversary when Florida pastor Terry Jones's proposed Koran burning session and the fate of the Ground Zero Mosque were settled in a civilized manner. The tenth anniversary passed without any such (domestic) incidents, while in October 2011 an Iranian-sponsored terrorist attack in the District of Columbia was averted. 9/11 was an unnecessary tragedy imposed upon the United States of America by people driven by fanatical and irrational hatred of what America stands for, but, judging from the first ten years, the world's only active superpower has handled the challenge with consummate dignity.

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Notes

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¹ According to a 2006 survey, 36% of Americans believe in some explanation other than the official 9/11 commission report. See: Lev Grossman: "Why the 9/11 Conspiracies Won't Go Away," *Time* September 3, 2006. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1531304-1,00.html> (accessed 10/14/2011).

² Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present*. Rev. updated ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995), 398-417. See also the documentary on Zinn's life: *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train* (dir. Deb Ellis and Dennis Mueller, 2004).

³ The founding study of how the concept of "Red Fascism" was created is Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism. The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930s–1950s," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 75, No. 4 (April 1970), 1046-64.

⁴ The best single-volume summary is: George C. Herring, *America's Longest War. The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*. 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001).

⁵ The following summary of US empire building in the Middle East is based on: Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*. 2nd ed. (London and New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

⁶ For a European or American observer, this is perhaps the most striking aspect of the problem. We tend to focus on the end of the Cold War and not on what was happening in the Middle East. Even Samuel P. Huntington's seminal essay ("The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993) came out only *after* the Cold War had ended, while the conflict between East and West was continuously unfolding in the Middle East. Mainstream history writing must explain that these conflicts are not sequential but simultaneous.

⁷ George P. Shultz: *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power, and the Victory of the American Ideal* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 643-88.

⁸ On the background of the terrorists involved see a three-part documentary: *Inside 9/11* (National Geographic, 2005-2011); hereafter: *Inside 9/11*. In print see the 9/11 Commission Report: *9/11 Commission Report: The Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (London and New York, 2004).

⁹ The Fu Manchu phenomenon is yet to be treated to a scholarly account. An interesting website is operated by fans and scholars at <http://www.njedge.net/~knapp/FuFrames.htm> (accessed 10/14/2011). It has the original quote on Fu Manchu's physical appearance cited here.

¹⁰ *Inside 9/11*, Episode 1.

¹¹ Jules Witcover, *Sabotage at Black Tom: Imperial Germany's Secret War in America, 1914-1917* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 1989) and Michael Dobbs, *Saboteurs: The Nazi Raid on America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004). The History Channel ran a documentary on the bombing plans: *History Undercover: The Nazi Plan to Bomb New York* (2003).

¹² Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Irrational & Rational*. Rev. pb. ed. (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1995). This is the standard text on the subject.

¹³ Alan Wolfe, "Anti-American Studies," *The New Republic*, February 20, 2003. This is a thoughtful review of some of the "new American Studies" texts.

¹⁴ Paul Hollander, ed., *Understanding Anti-Americanism: Its Origins and Impact at Home and Abroad* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004): see Hollander's introduction, "The New Virulence and Popularity" (3-42) for details. Hereafter: Hollander, *Understanding Anti-Americanism* and "New Virulence."

¹⁵ Patrick Clawson and Barry Rubin, "Anti-Americanism in the Middle East," Hollander, *Understanding Anti-Americanism*, 124-43. Hereafter: Clawson and Rubin, "Middle East." A different argument comes from Bernard Lewis, who claims that it is the rejection of modernity that went wrong in the world of Islam: *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003) and *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Modern Library, 2003).

¹⁶ Hollander, "New Virulence," 20.

¹⁷ Salih bin Muhammad al-Luheidan quoted in Clawson and Rubin, "Middle East," 126.

¹⁸ Tibor Glant, "56/50: American Documentaries of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1956," *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring 2011), 39-43. See also: "How Real Is the Reality in Documentary Film? Jill Godmilow in Conversation with Ann-Louise Shapiro," *History and Theory* Vol. 36, No. 4 (December 1997), 80-101.

¹⁹ Beáta Sáfrány, *9/11 Conspiracy Theories* (MA diss. Debrecen, 2011).

²⁰ *Fahrenheit 9/11* (dir. Michael Moore, 2004) and *Celsius 41.11: The Temperature at which the Brain... Begins to Die* (dir. Kevin Knoblock, 2004). A similar debate was conducted between Al Gore's Oscar winning documentary and its counterpart: *An Inconvenient Truth* (dir. Davis Guggenheim, 2006) and *The Great Global Warming Swindle* (dir. Martin Durkin, 2007).

²¹ The website is at <http://www.911truth.org/> (accessed 10/14/2011); the films in order were released in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2009. The most recent version is titled *Loose Change 9/11: An American Coup* (dir. Dylan Avery, 2009). The movement became the target of ridicule in a *South Park* episode (season 10, episode 9, October 11, 2006): in it, the "truthers" themselves are blamed for the attacks, while the government accepts the blame because it makes Washington look all-powerful.

²² *9/11 Science and Conspiracy* (National Geographic, 2009). Hereafter cited as: *9/11 Science and Conspiracy*.

²³ *Zeitgeist* (dir. Peter Joseph, 2007), *New World Order* (dir. Luke Meyer and Andrew Neel, 2009), and *Shadow Government* (dir. Grant R. Jeffrey, 2010). The Zeitgeist movement also has its own website: <http://www.thezeitgeistmovement.com/>.

²⁴ *The Money Masters* (dir. William T. Still, 1995) and its reworked version speeding virally on the internet: *The Money Masters: How International Bankers Gained Control of America* (2008). Jones and Moore are more "established" institutions on the documentary market.

²⁵ *9/11 Science and Conspiracy*.

²⁶ David Aaronovitch, *Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009) is the best recent evaluation of such theories.

²⁷ *9/11 Science and Conspiracy*.

²⁸ Most of the wars waged after 1945 were undeclared and did not end in conventional peace treaties. These were called "limited wars" in the Cold War.

²⁹ See, for example, the ACLU criticism of the act at <http://www.aclu.org/national-security/aclu-releases-comprehensive-report-patriot-act-abuses> (accessed 10/14/2011).

³⁰ Plame is the wife of former US Ambassador to Niger, Joseph C. Wilson IV. Ambassador Wilson refused to corroborate the Bush administration accusations that Saddam Hussein was trying to acquire nuclear material for a dirty bomb from Africa. In retaliation, his wife's CIA links were leaked to *Washington Post* journalist Robert Nowak, who promptly published the information. Plame became a living symbol of government abuse, and the way she was treated added fuel to the conspiracy speculations. The 2010 movie, *Fair Game*, with Naomi Watts and Sean Penn, told the Wilson-Plame side of the story.

³¹ For an insightful Hungarian take on the Bush Doctrine in Hungarian see: István Balogh, "A Bush-doktrína és 'a fekete hattyúk átka'" [The Bush Doctrine and "the curse of the Black Swans"] in *Nemzet és Biztonság: Biztonságpolitikai Szemle* Vol. 4, No. 7 (September 2011). This is the special 9/11 commemorative issue of a key Hungarian national security journal.

³² On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Taliban fighters attacked the US Embassy at Kabul. It was repeatedly, but inaccurately, compared to the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam in the news media, blogs and comments.

³³ A counter-song glorifying then Secretary of State Colin Powell, "Mr. Taliban," was released soon after: this is an adaptation of Harry Belafonte's "Banana Boat Song" which, in turn, can be interpreted as a protest song against US empire building in Latin America in the 1950s.

³⁴ Dahlia Lithwick, "The Fiction behind Torture Policy," *Newsweek* July 25, 2008. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/07/25/the-fiction-behind-torture-policy.html> (accessed 10/14/2011).

³⁵ Nuclear terrorism targeting the US is a popular theme in post-9/11 American TV drama series, including, among many others, *CSI Miami* (season 5, episode 9) and *Castle* (season 3, episodes 16-17).