

THE WAR WE FACE

Reflections

by

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[Note from the Author: These thoughts were written on October 15; some of my opinions would be revised if I were writing today.]

“On September 11, 2001, the world changed,” we have been assured by a chorus of commentators.

Is it true? No, it is not. The world did not change when the twin towers on Lower Manhattan and the Pentagon were attacked with horrible loss of life. What changed was our perception of the world. The attacks have laid bare in the most spectacular and painful fashion some of the illusions that have lurked behind American policy and confused the American public over the past dozen years.

The attacks on Black Tuesday may shock us into a better understanding of the world today and America’s place in it. But understanding does not come easily or automatically, particularly when the immediate task requires a unity that could be undermined by back-biting and divisive finger-pointing.

So Far, So Good

The American government, for the most part, has acted judiciously and appropriately up to now. For some, including myself, this has come as a pleasant surprise. Much of the President’s rhetoric during his first months in office, as well as the political thrust of his early actions, did not inspire confidence that he fully understood the world today and America’s place in it.

Nevertheless, since September 11, he seems to have it right, at least in his foreign policy. He has defined the struggle we face as a war against terrorism, and made it clear that it is not a war against Islam or Muslims. (It is not a clash of civilizations but a defense of Civilization.) He has stated that military action is only part, indeed a relatively small part, of the effort we must undertake. Although many Americans fear further terrorist attacks, there has been no unreasonable assault on our civil liberties. The strikes against Afghanistan have been directed, to the degree humanly possible, against the Taliban regime and terrorist bases, not the suffering Afghan people who are literally facing starvation under Taliban misrule.

Furthermore, the President has moved judiciously to assemble a broad international coalition, without whose help the struggle against terrorism could not be

won. He also has recognized that we need to do what we can to alleviate the suffering of Afghanistan's civilian population, by supplying food, medicine, and relief supplies where we can.

Why Call It a War?

Some are concerned with the term "war." Are we right to use it, or does speaking of war imply that what we face is primarily a military conflict?

Obviously, if "war" means an armed conflict between states, it would be a mistake to call the struggle against terrorism a war. That would be not merely a misnomer, but a misleading indication of the way the struggle must be waged. We cannot conquer terrorism by means of a military victory, though some military actions may be required.

Nevertheless, the habit has grown of using "war" to describe not only conflict but also peaceful confrontation and competition, along with opposition to abstract concepts. We might recall Lyndon Johnson's: "war on poverty;" the "war on drugs," or Jimmy Carter's reference to coping with a petroleum shortage as the "moral equivalent of war." The Cold War denoted a struggle that was fundamentally political and ideological. It did not involve direct military combat between the principal antagonists. (We wouldn't be on the planet today if it had been an all-out military struggle.)

More and more, American political leaders have used "war" to denote a campaign that is long lasting and requires unity, sacrifice, and commitment. In this sense, the effort to combat terrorism deserves to be called a war. Any other term would be misleading regarding the duration of the struggle and the degree of commitment it will require.

A War Against What?

Obviously, the United States is directing its attention initially to those who planned, supported and conducted the September 11 attacks. Apprehending or eliminating them and preventing further outrages by them or others has first priority.

Our government has talked of a broader war, against terrorism itself. I believe that it will be necessary to fight against this more widespread and elusive enemy, subject to two qualifications: (1) that we define the concept of terrorism properly; and (2) that we make clear that conducting a war against terrorism does not require the use of American military force against any and all terrorists.

In the first instance I would suggest—tentatively, since the matter requires careful thought—that terrorism be defined as the systematic use of lethal violence by individuals or groups to achieve a political purpose. (Michael Walzer's classic *Just and Unjust Wars* defines terrorism as "revolutionary violence," but this definition does not fit the sort of

terrorism that inspired the attack on the United States. The suicidal terrorists and their mentors did not have a revolution in mind.)

There has been a widespread tendency to condone, even sometimes to approve, terrorist acts against regimes or institutions the observer finds distasteful. This is not “terrorism” it is argued: the perpetrators of violence are “freedom fighters” trying to throw off foreign occupiers or domestic tyrants. (This is an argument used recently by the Lebanese Ambassador to the United States when asked about the activities of Hezbollah.)¹

There are several powerful reasons why this distinction should not be made. Violence against a state or government’s instruments of compulsion (that is, police and military personnel) threatens the lives of individuals who may well be innocent of any criminal culpability. Also, it quickly develops into violence against civilians, either inadvertently as “collateral damage” or in calculated fashion, in order to weaken support for the authorities or to provoke more violence that would discredit the governing regime. When revolutionaries come to power by violence, they typically impose on their societies an even more oppressive regime than the one they fought to replace. Having come to power by shedding blood they do not hesitate to continue the practice in order to keep that power.

Some recognize that this is true but nevertheless argue that we must distinguish between terrorism that is directed at a single country’s political system or policies and “international terrorism.” It is only the latter that threatens the United States, they argue, therefore the United States should confine its opposition to that most threatening form.

Every country, of course, will likely give priority to combating those forms of terrorism that threaten it most directly. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the use of violence inevitably attracts practitioners in other countries. Terrorist groups rarely confine their activity to a single country; they tend to cooperate in many ways with groups elsewhere, often *ad hoc* and without any formal organizational ties. The military wing of the Irish Republican Army used training bases in Libya, and there is recent evidence of its ties to the drug cartels in Colombia. Many groups have a symbiotic relationship to international criminal organizations. It would be a mistake, therefore, to assume that a group that commits violent acts primarily in a single country is not in fact a part of a loose and constantly changing international network of support, training, inspiration, and funding.

There is also a very practical reason for not limiting the war on terrorism to those groups that, in effect, have declared war on the United States. This war will require the cooperation of as many countries as possible. The United States can hardly expect other governments to support it fully in this struggle unless the United States helps them combat those forms of terrorism most threatening to them.

¹ Interview on National Public Radio, October 10, 2001.

The United States and the world community must reject terrorism as an acceptable method of political struggle, regardless of the aims the terrorists proclaim.

Should we forget that regimes in power can be oppressive, indeed can use the instruments of state power to terrorize their own people? No, certainly not. But convincing governments to reform, democratize, and protect human rights requires tools and policies quite different from those appropriate and necessary in the war against terrorism. Cooperating with other governments, even undemocratic ones, to combat terrorism will be a prerequisite to convincing them that they need in their own interest to change some of their practices. Regimes that are not threatened by terrorism internally are more likely to treat their citizens in civilized fashion than are those subject to terrorist attack.

What About States That Support Terrorists?

The President and other members of his administration have made it clear that we can no longer tolerate states that support terrorism. Except for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, however, which has refused to extradite or expel bin Laden and his associates, we have not threatened to attack governments that support terrorist groups. Indeed, the President has suggested that it is never too late for them to cut their ties to terrorists.²

This is wise. We should, if at all possible, provide those governments strong reasons to terminate their support of terrorist organizations. This will usually require some positive inducements and avoidance of overt, direct threats. We need to engage some governments more than we have in the past, and to look for “openings” consistent with their and our national interests. Iran, an opponent of both Iraq and the Taliban, offers an opportunity for effective diplomacy that the U.S. has neglected up to now.

We must stop refusing to talk to other governments until all terrorist activity subject to their influence ends. If we had followed this practice in regard to the Soviet Union during the Cold War (as some advised), the Cold War might not have ended. As it was, our engagement with the Soviet leaders in the 1980s brought about a termination of their support for terrorism, along with many other changes favorable to our interests. Under Gorbachev, the Soviet leaders came to understand that they had much more to gain from cooperation with the United States than they possibly could from the destruction violent protégés could inflict.

In short, our objective should be to wean governments from resort to terrorism to achieve their foreign policy goals, not to make war against the governments. To do the latter would simply create fertile soil for new terrorist growths.

² Press conference of October 11, 2001.

What Does It Mean to “Win”?

We have been assured that this is a war the United States is determined to win. We haven't been told, however, how we would define victory. Bringing the perpetrators of Black Tuesday and their protectors to justice is obviously necessary, but not in itself sufficient. Extirpating the *al Qa'eda* network and those of its close allies is also required, but also not enough. It will avail us little in the long run if other terrorist groups arise in their place, perhaps mutated into even more deadly forms.

In fact it is very difficult to define our ultimate objective, and we probably should not press the Administration at this time to be more specific than it has been lest it set impossible goals. There can be no outcome as clear-cut as the unconditional surrender by Germany and Japan that ended World War II. We shall have to learn to live with some uncertainty and to exercise for a long time an unaccustomed degree of vigilance.

Ultimately, winning this war will depend importantly on success in **de-legitimizing the use of terror in the societies where it arises**. This can only be the product of a gradual process. It does not require solving all the social and economic ills of these societies—an impossible task. But it does require convincing the broader public that terrorists are not champions of their interests but a threat to the fulfillment of their legitimate desires. Outsiders like ourselves cannot be very effective advocates in a direct sense. Indirectly, however, we can provide both positive and negative incentives for a community's leadership to undermine the appeal of those who advocate violence.

In dealing with the threat from abroad we also must not forget that we can lose the war at home even if we successfully defend our country against further terrorist attacks. We would lose if the war effort caused us to undermine our civil liberties, or to so burden our economy with security measures that we intensify and prolong the current recession. Security, while necessary, is a non-productive expense. It must be sufficient to reassure the public and to provide reasonable guarantees of safety but not so costly and suffocating as to drag us into a decade or more of stagflation—or worse.

There seems little real danger that our civil liberties will be importantly circumscribed. We have not seen a recurrence of past mistakes, such as the internment of Japanese citizens after Pearl Harbor, or of the rise of pernicious demagogues like the late Senator Joseph McCarthy. Some hate crimes against persons of Middle Eastern appearance have occurred, but these have been denounced by federal and local authorities and it appears that genuine efforts are under way to bring the perpetrators to justice. We have indeed learned some things from experience.

One cannot say the same about the danger that the U.S. economy will be burdened with unnecessary expenses in the name of security. Given the attitudes our current

administration brought to office about taxes, the budget, the role of government, and military spending, it will be difficult to escape the economic trap the terrorists set for us on September 11: to lure us into undermining the sources of our prosperity in an effort to protect ourselves.

What Went Wrong?

On September 11, the federal government failed to perform one of its most fundamental functions, to protect the country from physical attack by foreign forces. It is the most egregious failure of our defense and law-enforcement institutions in our entire history. This has happened not when the country was weak or divided, but when it seemed to be at the apex of its power.

We do not need scapegoats, but we do need to ask ourselves what happened to make us vulnerable to Black Tuesday's carnage. Identifying mistakes in no way mitigates the iniquity of terrorist acts on our cities and people. (The comment that "America had it coming," uttered by some on our political fringes, is simply beneath contempt.) But we must understand clearly the failures of our political leadership over the past dozen years, not to excuse acts that are inexcusable, but for guidance in the future.

First of all, we must face the painful fact that failure to prevent the attacks that have occurred was a failure of political leadership, a failure to which the leaders of both our major political parties have contributed. Unless the mistakes of judgment are corrected in practice, the United States will not be able to prevail in the unprecedented war we now face. Public support will quickly erode if the steps the U.S. takes do not rapidly restore a feeling of security and normality to our lives. If we, in our justified anger and our sincere devotion to unity, avoid a clear-headed look at what went wrong, we will shirk our first duty to the innocent victims we mourn.

Fundamental Mistakes

Some mistakes are fundamental; others are derivative. Let's take the fundamental ones first:

1. The Cold War ended definitively in 1990, and in spirit even earlier. Nevertheless, not a single American administration since that time has drawn the proper conclusions from this fact. We have continued to apply an entirely disproportionate share of our resources, whether military, intelligence, financial, or political, to activities that were important during the Cold War but of little relevance since. Leaving our diplomatic, intelligence and defense structures essentially in a Cold War mode rather than adapting them to the new threats is an important root cause of our failures on September 11, 2001. Furthermore, outmoded Cold War stereotypes have hampered building the sort of alliances we need to meet the threat of organized terrorism.

It should not have required the hindsight of the tragic events of Black Tuesday to see that the primary threat to American security was no longer from other states, since none is capable of attacking us without risking annihilation, but from non-state criminal organizations acting with or without the connivance and support of states. The world, in other words, was not a geopolitical chessboard but an arena for a much more confusing mixture of non-state, quasi-state, state, and international actors.

2. Misunderstanding the changes that had altered the primary threat to American security, political leaders of both our major parties began to act as if the United States were invulnerable—or to persist in stressing vulnerabilities that were little more than theoretical. Their assumption seems to have been that our overwhelming military power insured our security at home, just at a time when traditional military power was clearly inadequate to that task.

3. It was not just our political leaders who failed to do what we elected them to do; the failure was more general. Which political campaign since 1990 featured a serious debate on any foreign policy issue? (Those who shouted, “It’s the economy, stupid” prevailed among the public. Who provided what should have been the retort, “Only the economy? Stupid!?”) Which candidate, in any election since 1990, has called on the nation for sacrifice or even talked about what the duties of citizenship are? Instead we have gotten debates about which candidate will cut taxes more or provide more material benefits to influential groups of voters.

Well, we took care of the economy very well for a while, and that success seems to have gone to our head. Our political leaders, of the left, right, and center, went into a paroxysm of unilateral actions, withholding dues from the United Nations, insisting allies do things our way or not at all, treating governments we needed for the fight against terrorism (and who had a vital interest in fighting it) as if they were enemies or potential enemies, threatening to break solemn treaties if we could not get the changes we want.

Our rhetoric indirectly served our enemies. “We’re Number One!” “The American Century,” “The Indispensable Nation!” All right, all of these boasts were probably correct in some sense, but even if they were, it was for others to say so, not for our leaders to mouth them, verbally swaggering as if they were prize fighters who think they can intimidate potential opponents. The boasts, coupled with inappropriate use of military power, led people throughout the world with a grievance to blame the United States for not correcting it. “If America is so powerful and does nothing to make my life better, it must be because it wants to keep me down,” seemed persuasive logic to many.

But don’t blame the politicians alone. Successful ones avoid slogans that don’t work. The fact is that such boasts helped win elections. We Americans like to think of ourselves as strong but just, compassionate and generous to a fault, willing to hear both sides of an argument, ready to compromise on non-essentials. And, by and large, with relatively few exceptions, we exhibit to a remarkable degree all of these characteristics. But if so, why do we let our leaders make political capital out of slogans and stances that give the opposite impression? Who likes even a benign giant who insists on striding

through the world telling all and sundry how they must live? This was never our intent, but even our best friends had begun to think that something had to be done to diminish the arrogance and hubris key American officials exhibited

4. Equally insidious has been the growing tendency in some circles to look at “government” (sometimes “federal government,” sometimes “government” in general) as a threat rather than a fundamental prerequisite of a secure, let alone prosperous and civilized, nation. Of course we need appropriate controls to make sure our taxes are used honestly in accord with approved legislation (and we have them in abundance), but there is something deeply disturbing in the argument made in support of the President’s tax reduction proposal: “It’s your money and you know how to use it better than the government.” As for “your money,” we might ask the businesses that had offices in the World Trade Center or our insurance companies or our airlines how much they can make if the government’s protection from wanton violence is ineffective. “You know better how to use it,” is an utter cop-out. What do we elect and pay a President to do if not to let us (and Congress) know the cost of providing essential services? How many people are going to make money, or keep what they have made, if the government is unable to ensure a safe transportation system and protect our lives and property from terrorists?

What We Should Have Done

The end of the Cold War gave the United States the opportunity to adapt its alliances and international commitments to a new reality. The world was no longer divided between Communist-ruled states and everyone else. The United States was no longer required to confront the Soviet Union and the “allies” it controlled. Indeed, the successor states of the Soviet Union and former members of the Warsaw Pact vied with each other for close ties with the United States and its friends in Western Europe. China, though still ruled by a Communist party, had fostered capitalist firms and institutions that restored growth and dynamism to its economy. The United States became its most important economic partner, which brought new frictions to the relationship--but the unavoidable ones were not those of the Cold War.

This did not mean that the United States should have retreated into a modern version of isolationism. Given its worldwide interests and the global nature of the threats to its well being, America could not have withdrawn behind defensive shields, whether military or trade-protectionist. It could, however, have acted systematically and methodically to avoid military involvement in local and regional conflict, acting to convert Cold War alliances into organizations that promoted regional security and were aimed at the sort of threats that were growing. The goal should have been to pull back militarily even as economic and political engagement grew, reserving U.S. military capability to ensure that no regional bully could try to dominate an entire continent (and thus eventually threaten the U.S.), and to limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In short, if the United States wished to retain its status as a military superpower when there were no others (and there were many reasons that this was desirable, not just in the American interest, but in that of all civilized countries), it could do so only by carefully avoiding acting as the world policeman. Policemen who do not come from a society itself are always suspect. States must learn to police themselves, and if they cannot, their immediate neighbors bear the primary responsibility of helping them.

At the same time, the United States should have been very careful to cultivate an image in the world community as a willing team player. Obstructionism and vetoes are weapons of the weak; when used by the strong they antagonize. Time after time, the United States pulled out of negotiations, rejected treaties, or levied unilateral sanctions. That is not the way to build coalitions or to convince other countries that one will use one's power to the common benefit. The U.S. Congress was particularly prone to impose sanctions, responding to small but determined pressure groups who often were misguided regarding the real interests of the communities they purported to represent.

Some Examples

1. Our policy in Europe from 1991 should have been to encourage our European allies to prepare to secure their continent themselves. The U.S. should have stayed in NATO in order to ensure that no European country could again attempt to dominate the continent, but should have encouraged the development of a continent-wide security structure that included Russia. We should have encouraged, not discouraged, the development of a European military capability (such as the West European Union) that could act within Europe independently of the United States. Maintaining civility and stability in the Balkans should have been, and ultimately must be, the responsibility of a Europe that includes Russia.

Such a policy would have helped us avoid the most egregious political errors we made in Europe in the 1990s: the expansion of NATO eastward against Russian objections (which encouraged Russia to be uncooperative as troubles developed in the Balkans), the rejection of the Vance-Owen plan that might have stabilized Bosnia-Herzegovina without the bloodshed and atrocities that preceded the agreements in Dayton, the effective exclusion of Russia—despite its membership in the “contact group”—from the attempt to avoid ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, the de facto espousal of terrorist (KLA) aims in the ultimatum to Yugoslavia issued at Rambouillet, and making war against another country without Security Council sanction. (Those who feel that the bombing was necessary given Serbian atrocities in Kosovo forget that the most serious of these outrages took place *after* the bombing started, not before.)

2. A strategy of gradual military disengagement while encouraging regional self-reliance, coupled with diplomatic, political, and economic engagement, should have been applied to other areas. The number of military bases abroad should have been

reduced even more than it was. (Why did we keep troops in Saudi Arabia after the Gulf War? Are they really necessary on Okinawa?)

The specifics vary in each region and it is important to honor previous agreements and commitments, but the U.S. should have avoided becoming a party to local disputes unless these had a direct and demonstrable relevance to U.S. national security—not to something vague like “U.S. interests” (highly subjective), or “to maintain U.S. influence” (attempting to police an area will reduce it in the long run, not enhance it!).

3. Support for human rights should have been, and should always be, an important component of U.S. foreign policy. But it was a fundamental mistake to try to protect human rights in another country by bombing it into submission. Ultimately, human rights can be protected only by the societies in which human beings live. Governments must be convinced that they gain more from protecting the rights of their citizens than they lose. This requires a patient diplomacy that gives other governments concrete incentives to act decently but avoids the impression that treating one’s citizens with respect is a favor to some foreign power.

In the 1980s, the United States and its allies in Europe achieved one of the most notable advances in human rights in history when the Soviet leaders decided to enforce the human rights principles that had been agreed at Helsinki in 1975. This occurred when the military confrontation was receding. How could we ignore or forget the lessons of that experience so soon? Isn’t there wisdom, even today, in John Quincy Adams’ advice that America should be the friend of liberty everywhere, but the guarantor only of its own?

4. If our war is against terrorism in general (as it must be if it is to be successful) then we must oppose it in all its forms, wherever it occurs. We must adopt the position that there is no valid excuse for terrorism period. This means that we do not condone terrorism against regimes we do not like. We must never again allow ourselves to become the de facto allies of terrorists, as we did in our effort to protect the Albanian residents of Kosovo.

Opposing terrorism does not require approval of inappropriate methods to defeat it. Governments subjected to terrorism, which often has roots in a disenfranchised group, typically overreact, attacking innocent civilians along with the terrorists. Terrorists, like guerilla fighters, mingle with the civilian population and are sometimes protected by them. The United States is more likely to influence threatened governments to avoid gross abuses of human rights if it recognizes the nature of the terrorist threat they face, the difficulty of dealing with it by normal police methods, and offers political and (when appropriate) economic support for appropriate measures to contain it.

After all, the United States itself has frequently used military force against countries and groups it suspects of committing terrorist acts against Americans. It seldom happens that these strikes produce no civilian casualties, however carefully they may be

planned to avoid them. Accusing other governments of gross violations of human rights when they use the same methods but are less careful—a distressingly common practice recently—leaves the impression on beleaguered governments of hypocrisy at best and malevolence at worst.

5. Heavy as the impact of Black Tuesday has been, it could have been worse, and worse may yet come if terrorists gain control of weapons of mass destruction. If they had a nuclear weapon they would not do us the favor of putting it on a ballistic missile. We would know instantly where it came from and our retaliation would be swift and sure. While terrorist leaders may make use of brainwashed suicide squads to do their bidding, they are not suicidal themselves, nor are the governments of countries that harbor them.

No, if terrorists get nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, they will deploy them in surreptitious, low-tech ways. This means that we must step up our efforts to control access to these substances. Our government has long known of the danger, but has never given this problem the priority attention it requires, and has often pursued policies that undercut efforts to reduce nuclear weaponry and protect nuclear materials. Funds for the Nunn-Lugar program to dismantle ex-Soviet nuclear weapons have been steadily cut rather than increased; we have let ill-advised actions delay implementation of START-II—and the Clinton Administration delayed negotiating lower START-III levels when an agreement might have “leapfrogged” the SALT-II treaty when it was stalled in the Russian Duma.

In this context, the most incomprehensible of all the blunders by the United States was the refusal of the U.S. Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Three factors should be obvious: (1) The U.S. has the most advanced nuclear technology in the world; we do not need further testing to devise new weapons or to keep the current ones safe; (2) Any further testing by other countries will, at best, diminish the U.S. advantage; (3) Any further proliferation of nuclear weapons technology increases the possibility of leakage to terrorist groups. Logically, putting an end to nuclear testing meets the strictest definition of a vital interest of the United States. Yet the Senate of the United States acted directly contrary to the nation’s best interest and the current Administration has announced that it does not intend to re-submit this treaty to the Senate.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, of course, cannot alone guarantee that there will be no further proliferation of nuclear weapons; no agreement can possibly do that automatically. But this treaty is an essential part of what must be a concerted and well-coordinated effort to avoid further nuclear weapons proliferation. We will be in a much better position to avert the spread of nuclear weaponry if we are party to this convention.

Russia and China also have a strong interest in avoiding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which is another powerful argument in favor of expanding our security alliances to include them

6. Given the anthrax scare and our growing concern about the possible use of biological weapons by terrorists, it is also disturbing to note that, just a few weeks before

September 11, the Bush Administration announced that it would not continue negotiations, which were well advanced, on a treaty to verify and enforce the ban on biological weapons. Unless this position is changed, how seriously will other countries take U.S. efforts to combat the threat of bioterrorism?

So What Should We Do?

The Bush Administration has done a creditable job of putting together a quasi alliance to initiate the war on terrorism. It has been lucky that some governments with which relations have been strained have seen it in their interest to back the United States in its effort to bring bin Laden to justice and to extirpate his network of terrorists. As the war continues beyond this immediate objective, however, some of the old problems, and perhaps new ones, will stress the alliance if some earlier U.S. policies are not changed.

Successful prosecution of the war against terrorism will require the cooperation not only of America's traditional allies, but also of Russia and China, and of most governments of Islamic countries. It is going to be easier to enlist Russian and Chinese support than the sustained, overt support of Moslem countries, but every effort must be made to consolidate and solidify the broader alliance. This requires a sharp turn away from Cold War thinking and Cold War practices.

Russia and China: Some Examples

(1) Chechnya had become a center of terrorist activity by forces closely allied with bin Laden (and probably under his direct control) before the war was renewed there in 1999. We should join the Russians in demanding that the Chechens holding out there must deliver up the foreign terrorists in their midst before any agreement with them is possible. We should cease issuing visas for representatives of the breakaway regime to come to the United States and under no circumstances offer further appointments with U.S. government officials. We and our NATO allies should discuss with Russia how we might help them secure and rehabilitate the area instead of simply condemning the unacceptable methods it has used up to now. With more international cooperation, Russian brutality would probably diminish, but that will require an end to Chechen military activity.

(2) NATO should not take additional members into its military structure until it has worked out a mutually beneficial security relationship with Russia. This might take the form of strengthening the NATO-Russia Founding Act, or giving the OSCE an anti-terrorist component (which would require a fundamental reform of the way the organization works), inviting Russia to prepare for full NATO membership, or establishing some new mechanism. If Russia does not become a member of NATO, consideration should be given to guaranteeing the security of applicant nations without bringing them into NATO's military structure—to which, in any event, they would have

little to contribute. The Partnership for Peace can be utilized more actively and given an anti-terrorist cast.

(3) Before proceeding with a costly and dubious project to establish an anti-missile defense in the United States, we should look first at the possibility of developing an effective “theater defense”—that is, a defense against missiles in their boost phase, which would protect us, our allies, the Russians, and everybody else from the “rogue nation” missile threat. It would be technically less challenging and substantially cheaper than attempting to intercept warheads after they have separated from their launchers. Boost-phase defenses could ideally be done cooperatively with Russia and other allies, or by extending the range of the anti-aircraft missiles on Aegis-type naval ships. Some revision of the ABM Treaty would be required, but if this is a joint or cooperative project, Russia would probably agree to them.

(4) President Bush has declared that the 1972 ABM Treaty is a Cold War artifact that should be abandoned as no longer relevant. Traditionally, both Russia and U.S. allies have considered this treaty the foundation of all nuclear arms control agreements and have opposed abandoning it. President Bush, however, has an arguable point: if the U.S. and Russian governments are determined to proceed as allies rather than adversaries or potential adversaries, the ABM Treaty becomes redundant. This however, is a big if. President Putin is already under substantial pressure from members of his military and security apparatus who feel he has gone too far in supporting an American military presence in Central Asia. He will need more than he has gotten so far to assure his public that the United States is sincere about treating Russia as an ally. Aside from the measures already mentioned, it would help if the United States would announce a very substantial cut in its nuclear arsenal, inviting Russia to follow suit. (A favorable response could be arranged through diplomatic channels in advance.) Also, additional measures could be taken by both countries to remove nuclear forces from alert status and insure against accidental launches.

(5) We should voluntarily end much (perhaps all) of the intrusive intelligence surveillance near the borders of Russia and China. The data gathered are not of critical use unless we go to war with those countries. If we want their full cooperation to end terrorism, we must begin to act as if the Cold War is over and on the assumption that we do not need to prepare for a war against Russia or China. (This does not mean that we cease all intelligence gathering in Russia and China. Satellite photography and other technical means carried out at a distance should be sufficient, however, to verify compliance with agreements, and all three countries will doubtless continue to try to recruit some agents in particularly sensitive areas in the other two.)

(6) The status of Taiwan is the most serious one for the Communist Chinese leadership. We should make clear to the Chinese government that while we could not tolerate an attempt to take the island by force, we do not encourage the Taiwanese to seek de jure independence. Our message to the government on Taiwan should be that, while we will do what we can to protect them so long as they adhere to the

principles of the Shanghai Communiqué, they will be on their own if they choose to exercise their right to declare their independence of China.

On other matters, we should be careful to consult the Chinese and to enlist their support whenever possible. (We will need their vote or their abstention on anything the Security Council authorizes.) This would apply to such matters as the composition of the future government of Afghanistan, the status of American forces in Central Asia, and U.S. relations with countries close to China. Every effort must be made to avoid seeming to play Russia off against China, or to ignore the legitimate interests of either in areas close to their borders.

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The key to obtaining Russian and Chinese cooperation in a broad anti-terrorism struggle is to take seriously their security interests. Neither are ideal democracies nor do they protect human rights in their countries as well as we would like. (Neither, however, is anything like as bad as it used to be in this respect.) Nevertheless, it is unreasonable to expect Russia and China to help us defend ourselves against terrorism unless we are willing to do the same for them.

Lasting social and political change in Russia and China can come only from within and both are struggling to find an acceptable place in a rapidly globalizing world. Further democratization is much more likely to happen if the Russian and Chinese governments view their relations with the United States as cooperative rather than competitive.

The Islamic World

Though we must change some policies and attitudes to secure optimum cooperation from Russia and China, our pressure on Arab and some other Islamic countries will require much harder choices by those governments. Many of these countries are actual or potential objects of terrorism themselves; some have been playing an unavowed double game, condemning terrorism (except that against Israel) officially, but permitting support for terrorist organizations outside as long as they did not attack targets inside their countries. This applies, to some degree, to almost all of our Muslim friends.

This, of course, does not mean that we should let the war against terrorism become a war against Islamic countries. This is what bin Laden wants, and it is vitally important that it *not* happen. The United States and its allies must enlist the aid of Middle East governments if terrorism is to be defeated and we cannot coerce this aid by military pressure alone. We must continue to deal with this issue with the utmost skill and determination (remarkably effective up to now), exerting enough pressure on and inducements to governments to persuade them to cooperate, but not so much that it pushes them into a domestic crisis that could lead to a more uncooperative or actively

hostile government. Our main lever in this instance is neither military nor economic but the fact that it is in the interest of every established government to avoid aiding a terrorist group that could some day turn against it. (They also, of course, will want to avoid provoking terrorist groups to make them a target—thus the dilemma they face.)

There should be no illusion that changing our policy toward Israel (either by giving it unqualified support or by stepping up pressure on its government to make concessions) can, in and of itself, solve the problem of terrorism. Terrorism has many roots and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is only one of them, though an important one. However, we also should not be taken in by the mistaken argument that any concession to Palestinian demands, however justified in principle, would be yielding to terrorism.

Statements that the U.S. could, under certain conditions, agree to a Palestinian state should be welcomed—though they are long overdue and it is important not to leave the impression that terrorist action produces favorable results. The Israeli-Palestinian dialogue should be renewed and the Palestinian leadership given a positive stake in curbing terrorism. It is unwise to require an absolute end to terrorism (which no single leader can totally control) as a precondition; if we had required the Soviet Union to change before we talked to its leaders (as some wished) it would probably still be in existence and the Cold War would still be on.

The “Home Front” Matters Too

The list of relevant foreign policy issues is not complete, but let us now turn to domestic issues.

1. We cannot shy away from the obvious fact that the successful conspiracy to bring down the World Trade Center and destroy much of the Pentagon, and to kill thousands of innocent people in the process, represents the most serious failure of American intelligence and law-enforcement agencies in the nation’s history. How could a conspiracy of this magnitude go undetected? Why were we not better prepared to deal with it?

It should not have taken the hindsight of a tragic event to tell those we pay to protect us that terrorist groups were planning some spectacular attacks (some were actually thwarted, of course), and that one likely method would be to commandeer a commercial aircraft and fly it into a building on a suicide mission. Knowing that, how is it that airline pilots were not instructed to keep the cockpit door locked at all times? (Even if hijackers threaten the crew and passengers and claim to have a bomb, they do not have to be given control of the aircraft!) Why do our aircraft have transponders that can be turned off? Is it technologically impossible to have a “panic button” that will instantly notify air controllers (and the Air Force) that the plane is in hostile hands? Even without that, why was there no procedure to notify air defense forces immediately when there was a major change of course of a commercial airliner? Why were there no F-15s

on alert at Andrews Air Force Base and near New York City, Washington and New York being by all odds the most likely targets of such an operation? (We can keep them on alert near Iraq and in Europe and perhaps elsewhere. Are the nation's capital and its financial hub less important?) Knowing that terrorists might well attempt to turn a commercial airliner into a deadly missile, how is it that the FBI did not take a close look at everyone who was trained to fly large commercial airliners, and check up on what they were doing? (There can't be that many.)

Maybe there are logical answers to some of these questions, but if so, I haven't heard them. What seems to be the case is that our protectors underestimated the technical competence and ruthlessness of our adversaries. But they should not bear all the blame. They must operate under the political guidelines set down by Congress and the President, and undertake all the tasks assigned them. If our political authorities have their priorities wrong—and ours assuredly have had theirs askew—then so will our defense and law-enforcement agencies. Many of our intelligence operatives were busy carrying out Cold War-type operations that in fact were no longer necessary. The military was fully committed in peacekeeping, guarding foreign bases, and delivering pin-prick strikes on two-bit dictators. They did not decide to use their assets this way; our political authorities did.

2. It is an enormous and difficult task to root out all terrorist conspiracies, but it would seem that some of the actions being taken to insure the safety of aircraft are unnecessary and go too far. Much has been said of how little security inspectors are paid and how poorly trained. But would highly trained professionals have been any better at spotting the terrorists who took over the four planes? If the knives and carton cutters they used were not prohibited, they probably would have passed any checkpoint. If they had been prohibited, the terrorists would have used something else, maybe just their belts to strangle the crew and steak knives from the first-class galley. Well-trained attackers in sufficient numbers do not need weapons to overwhelm an unarmed crew. Armed federal marshals could, however, thwart them, as could other passengers, provided they understood the terrorists' intent—as heroic passengers on the plane that crashed in Western Pennsylvania demonstrated September 11.

I am not an expert in this area, but it seems to me that it should not be difficult to prevent the misuse of a commercial airliner as a deadly missile. Preventing suicide missions to destroy airliners and passengers is doubtless a harder task. The public will accept whatever inconvenience seems required to ensure its safety, but if the measures seem unnecessarily burdensome, or if the cost of air travel rises substantially, the terrorists will have succeeded in one of their aims—to disrupt our economy and force us to live in debilitating fear. Some redundancy may be necessary to reassure a skittish public, but we should make every effort to minimize long-term impositions on economic efficiency and convenience, retaining only those security measures that are really necessary.

3. Just after September 11, both the FBI and CIA began advertising for Arabic-language speakers and translators. It was at least a dozen years too late. The

shortage of people in the federal government trained to understand the languages and cultures of the societies that have spawned the most dangerous anti-American terrorists is striking evidence of misdirected priorities. Penetration of terrorist groups by foreign intelligence agencies is doubtless extremely difficult—more difficult than counting missile silos from overhead photography—but given the right priorities, trained personnel, and workable policies, it should not have been impossible. (One impediment, very likely, was the requirement that CIA not recruit agents who had been or might be guilty of human rights abuses. Those giving such instructions apparently failed to inquire how one penetrates a criminal gang without hiring criminals.)

I have no doubt that the CIA and FBI did manage to detect or penetrate some terrorist groups—some planned actions have been thwarted—but it takes more to win a war than prevailing in a battle now and then. Obviously, more personnel, resources, and careful thought should have been given to dealing with the threat of terrorist actions on American soil. Equally obviously, the continuation of Cold War missions and a Cold War focus to intelligence gathering militated against devoting the necessary resources and ingenuity to the more pressing task.

4 Along with their fallacious assumption that we do not need the willing cooperation of other countries to protect our own security, our leaders ignored another fact that should have been obvious: protecting security in the twenty-first century requires a first-rate diplomatic establishment. Our diplomats man the front line of the fight against terrorism and recently have taken more casualties than the professional military. Nevertheless, president after president has refused to classify the State Department and our embassies and consulates abroad as “national security agencies,” which would facilitate more adequate financing and also more effective personnel management. This, and the consistent under funding of the State Department should not be blamed primarily on Congress; the White House Office of Management and Budget has consistently refused to put adequate funds in the budgets sent to Congress.

Even a well-funded, well-trained diplomatic service will avail us little if it is ignored by policy makers--as it often is when presidents make foreign policy primarily in response to domestic political pressures. U.S. diplomacy is also weakened by the continued practice of rewarding large numbers of ill-prepared political friends with embassies. The American people would not tolerate naming campaign contributors to command aircraft carriers or armies in the field. They should not tolerate continuing what has become a routine bi-partisan practice. (This is not to say that no non-professional should ever be named to head an embassy; some non-professionals are well qualified. But the criterion should be suitability for a demanding, multifaceted, and often dangerous job, not past political services.)

5. Even if we succeed in re-directing our resources to deal effectively with the terrorist threat, we will lose the war on terrorism if it leaves us an economic cripple. Congress has approved with alacrity tens of billions in additional money to deal with the

tragedy and its aftermath. More will doubtless be necessary. Given the tax cuts already voted, the new appropriations will obviously push us into a budgetary deficit, which was already looming before September 11. We should remember that the round of inflation, then stagflation, that afflicted our economy through much of the 1970s and 1980s got started with President Johnson's attempt to finance the Vietnam war without raising taxes, followed by President Reagan's military build-up after cutting taxes.

We must not make the same mistakes again. While temporary tax cuts aimed at stimulating consumer spending may be required, Congress should put on hold future permanent tax cuts until we see what the war against terrorism is going to cost. Failure to do so will cause both our allies and our adversaries to question our resolve, and in time—as the rich seem to be benefiting more financially than those less fortunate and prices begin to escalate out of control—our present unity of will could be shattered.

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In most democracies with parliamentary systems, avoidable catastrophes of lesser magnitude than Black Tuesday require the instant resignation of the government and new elections. That is not our way. Presidents are in office for a fixed term, and so far our President has handled this crisis carefully and appropriately. He deserves the strong support the American public is giving him. We should not require him to apologize for previous policies or publicly recant his campaign promises.

However, if he is to prosecute the war against terrorism successfully and maintain the full support of the American people and our allies, old and new, he must alter the priorities he brought to the office, for he faces a situation he did not anticipate. The war against terrorism will require a foreign and domestic policy that unites all people of good will in the struggle. Though he must not shirk from using military force when it is appropriate and effective, he must understand that we will not win this war by military force alone, and we will not win it if we distort unnecessarily the values of our own society. We will win it only with the help of other countries, and we will attract that help in full measure only if we take their advice and their needs and concerns into account.

Let the horror of September 11 inspire us to put aside the self-indulgent, inward-looking—indeed tawdry—politics that has dominated the national scene for the last decade. Americans and their many friends in the world deserve better. The memory of the innocent victims and the valiant rescuers who gave their lives to save others demands no less of our leaders—and of all of us.

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