

Occasional Paper 17

The War against Terrorism:
The Quest for Justice and Peace

By Kevin P. Clements December 2002

Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University

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About the Speaker

Dr. Kevin P. Clements is secretary general of International Alert, one of the world's leading conflict resolution nongovernmental organizations. Prior to joining International Alert, Dr. Clements was the Vernon and Minnie Lynch Chair of Conflict Resolution at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University and the director of the institute from 1994 to 1999.

Dr. Clements' career has made significant contributions to both the scholarly and practice agendas of conflict analysis and resolution. He served as director of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and the head of the Peace Research Centre at Australian National University. In addition to teaching at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, he has held university posts at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. He was president of the International Peace Research Association from 1994 to 1998.

Dr. Clements has published numerous books and papers on conflict transformation, peace building, preventive diplomacy and development. Among his publications are: From Right to Left in Development Theory: An Analysis of the Political Implications of Different Models of Development; Back from the Brink: The Creation of a Nuclear Free New Zealand; Peace, Culture and Society: Trans National Research Perspectives; Peace and Security in the Asia Pacific Region; and Building International Community.

About the Lectures

Friends of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and prominent Virginians Edwin and Helen Lynch made a substantial gift to George Mason University in 1987 to establish a chair, first held by the late Dr. James H. Laue, then by former director Dr. Kevin P. Clements, and currently held by Dr. Daniel Druckman, in the name of Mr. Lynch's parents, Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch. Mr. and Mrs. Lynch have continued to provide invaluable support, both material and spiritual, to the institute. In 2000, Mr. and Mrs. Lynch made another substantial gift in the form of a property on Mason Neck along the Potomac River. The institute plans to use the gift to create a conference and retreat center for conflict resolution.

In order to bring the idea and theory of conflict analysis and resolution to the entire university community, and in gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Lynch, the institute established the annual Lynch Lectures. Previous lecturers have been James H. Laue (1987), John W. Burton (1989), Kenneth Boulding and Elise Boulding (1990), Richard E. Rubenstein (1991), Ambassador Samuel E. Lewis (1992), Roger Wilkins (1993), Deborah M. Kolb (1994), Rajmohan Gandhi (1995), Johan Galtung (1996), Anatol Rapoport (1997), Donald W. Shriver (1998), Ronald J. Fisher (1999), Daniel Garcia-Peña (2000), and Dr. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (2001).

The Lynch Lectures are published as Occasional Papers by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and, along with other publications of the institute, are available from the George Mason University bookstore.

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About the Institute

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, has as its principal mission to advance the understanding and resolution of significant and persistent conflicts among individuals, communities, identity groups, and nations.

In the fulfillment of its mission, the institute conducts a wide range of programs and outreach. Among these are its graduate programs offering the Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, clinical consultancy services offered by individual members of the faculty, and public programs and education that include the annual Vernon M. and Minnie I. Lynch Lecture Series.

The institute's major research interests include the study of conflict and its resolution, the exploration and analysis of conditions attracting parties in conflict to the negotiating table, the role of third parties in dispute resolution, and the application of conflict resolution methodologies in local, national, and international settings. The institute's Applied Practice and Theory Program develops teams of faculty, students, and allied practitioners to analyze and address topics such as conflict in schools and other community institutions, crime and violence, jurisdictional conflicts between local agencies of government, and international conflicts.

For more information, please call (703) 993-1300 or check the institute's web page at www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR/.

Foreword

The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution is pleased to present Dr. Kevin P. Clements' paper, "The War against Terrorism: The Quest for Justice and Peace." This paper, based on Dr. Clements' presentation on the occasion of the 2002 Lynch Lecture, demonstrates the importance of the topic and the challenges that face the conflict analysis and resolution community.

Clements' lecture addressed the issue that has engrossed many of us since the horrifying events of September 11, 2001. We at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution know that terrible events such as this have their beginnings in histories of suffering, polarized relationships, and problematic interactions, and that such events are part of a conflict cycle that, while we may not be able to predict precisely, have well-recognized basic patterns.

The period immediately after September 11 was a time of mourning and grief over the loss of life, over our loss of a sense of security, over the loss of innocence. Kevin Clements' lecture and this paper challenge us to reflect upon whether we are moving toward another phase where we must find ways to center our attention on gaps in our theories and practices that, if addressed, might help us develop policy and design interventions that could produce a qualitative shift in the relational patterns of interaction presently marked by hatred, fear, and reciprocal violence.

As Clements says in this paper, a crisis, even one as appalling as the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, is also a challenge and an opportunity. This lecture challenges us to seek to understand both the attacks and our reactions and thereby encourages reflection regarding ways to better conceptualize peaceful and secure alternatives for the future.

Sara Cobb Director Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution George Mason University

Lynch Lecture 2002 The War against Terrorism: The Quest for Justice and Peace

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Prologue

When I was the Vernon and Minnie Lynch Chair of Conflict Resolution and director of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution I never managed to present an inaugural lecture (as is the custom in most British universities). I would like to thank my colleagues at ICAR, therefore, for inviting me to give a valedictory Lynch lecture and for the wisdom and insights that they shared so willingly with me over the four years I was director and over the six years I held the Lynch Chair.

This occasion also gives me another chance to thank Edwin and Helen Lynch and the wider Lynch family for their confidence and belief in this strange beast we call "conflict resolution." Their belief in the superiority of nonviolent solutions to problems and their willingness to invest in this belief—here at George Mason University and in so many other venues—encourages all of us to continue working for peace even when the forces of terror and violence seem in the ascendancy. The generous Lynch family bequest of the property on Mason Neck to ICAR will mean that the peaceful home and woodland they have established there will continue to be a space dedicated to the quest for peace and justice well into the 21st century and beyond.

So, my deepest thanks to all of you—the Lynch family and all my friends, colleagues, students, and comrades who have dedicated your lives to the long and arduous struggle for justice and peace.

Introduction

If I have a text for tonight it comes from that American exponent of nonviolence, Martin Luther King Jr. It was he who said: "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows." The challenge facing all of us tonight is to determine what sort of chisel the "war against terrorism" is in relation to carving stable peaceful relationships, respect for the international rule of law, and economic, social, and political justice. What problems is this war against terrorism aimed at solving, and are there any viable alternatives?

The appalling terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were a salutary reminder that there are no absolutely secure states and that the pursuit of such security is an illusion. They also highlighted that individuals and groups who do not have their needs and interests acknowledged, or worse, individuals and groups who feel marginalized, demonized, and dehumanized, will resort to any means to secure recognition, reduce uncertainty, and try and gain a measure of control over their own lives.

These acts of terror have now expanded the possible boundaries for those committed to violence. The unthinkable was thought, the undoable was done, and the most powerful nation on earth was reminded of its own vulnerabilities. Six months on, I extend my deepest sympathy to all those who continue to grieve and experience deep anger at the loss of loved ones. There was and is no excuse for the killing of innocent civilians in the United States or anywhere else in the world.

I think it is important, however, to place this specific tragedy in a global context. Many of the people with whom we work in Africa, in the Caucasus, and the Middle East feel that U.S. policy makers and media have given and are giving more attention to this tragedy than they have ever given to similar disasters in other parts of the world. While this is understandable given the direct impact and devastating effects of 9/11, it is a little disconcerting from outside of America to see this tragedy harnessed to divine partiality as well. As President George W. Bush said in his September 20th address to Congress, "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them." Such statements, while useful in terms of establishing that the eter-

nal does not support fear and cruelty, have been used within the United States to justify a wide range of policies that in other circumstances might be considered by many unacceptable and are now being used to justify a range of international practices (for example, unilateral "regime change") that are inconsistent with international law.

There should be no privileging of one nation's pain or tragedy over that of another. Each individual tragedy and all innocent deaths diminish us equally and challenge all of us to search for ways and means of ensuring that such events do not take place in the future. Coupling 9/11 with U.S. manifest destiny and God's will certainly "ups the ante" for those wishing to place this particular tragedy in a wider global context and who might want to think of diverse options for responding to it.

Like all crises, this most recent one is both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to take the time to grieve at yet another example of man's inhumanity to man. The opportunity is to start asking the deeper, more fundamental questions about the development of new and creative ways of dealing with violence and ensuring—wherever possible—that violence is contained and only ever considered when all nonviolent options have been exhausted in the management and settlement of conflict.

The 9/11 events have changed the ways in which we all view our world. They have resulted in dramatic challenges to civil liberties and conceptions of national and individual security.

We have some stark choices before us. Will the actions of good people prevail over those committed to evil? Is it an act of faith or a good working proposition that virtuous cycles will eventually replace vicious ones? How can we bring those responsible for wreaking havoc on innocent civilians to justice without wreaking vengeance and precipitating more problems later on? How do we begin placing some new options on the table, and what are some of the goals that might guide this work?

In the first place, it is difficult to know what is changing and what is not. It is clear that there are many subtle and not-so-subtle changes to our culture, politics, and lifestyles—especially in the United States. It is possible,

therefore, to think of 9/11 as a hinge event in the cultural, political, and military realms. The world will not be the same ever again, yet it is still too early to know exactly how these diverse changes are going to affect our lives, security, well-being and the prospects for stable peace. It is still too early to know whether our children and grandchildren will be living in a more or less peaceful world at the end of this century. What is clear is that the events of 9/11 represent a third generation of conflicts. The first was classical interstate wars. The second was intrastate. The third represents conflicts generated by transnational terrorist and criminal networks.

So what is this contemporary war against terrorism? Is it simply a beefing up of old responses to terrorists and terrorist activity, or is it something qualitatively different?

Terrorism

The first thing that has to be stated is that terror and terrorism are not new phenomena. In fact, the use of terror to achieve different objectives dates back to antiquity. Between 66 and 73 A.D., for example, the Jewish zealots used terrorist violence to fight the Romans in occupied Judea. They assassinated individuals, poisoned wells and food stores, and sabotaged Jerusalem's water supply.² Between 1090 and 1272 A.D., a Muslim Shi'a group called the Assassins attacked Christian crusaders throughout the Middle East. "If an assassin lost his life during an operation he was promised an immediate ascent to heaven, a promise still used by the leaders of some Muslim terrorist groups to encourage martyrdom in suicidal attacks."

The words terror and terrorism assumed popular currency during the French Revolution. In this context, terrorism referred to state-sponsored, top-down efforts to rule and govern through terror. It is important to remember this original understanding of terrorism—states can and do terrorize their own citizens and those of other nations when it suits them to do so. President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe is an egregious example of this in recent years.

Terrorism can also be an effective political instrument of the weak and oppressed as well. The state of Israel, for example, was brought into existence largely because of the Jewish Stern and Irgun organizations. Two well-known Israeli terrorists (at least they were terrorists to the British—the Israelis called them freedom fighters), Yitzhak Shamir and Menachim Begin, both became Israeli prime ministers. President Nelson Mandela of South Africa was imprisoned as a terrorist as was President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya. One could go on.

There are high levels of subjectivity in the definition of who is a terrorist or what is a terrorist act, and many of the attempts to define this term have been made in the context of groups that specific governments consider politically threatening rather than in terms of clearly defined or specific terrorist acts. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a terrorist as

Anyone who attempts to further his views by a system of coercive intimidation as a member of a clandestine or expatriate organization aiming to coerce an established government by acts of violence against it or its subjects

The FBI regards terrorism as

The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.

Paul Wilkinson, in his 1986 book on the subject, says

What distinguishes terrorism from other forms of violence is the deliberate and systematic use of coercive intimidation.⁵

The British government, in its attempt to define terrorism officially in the British Terrorism Act 2000, defines terrorism as

The use or threat of action where the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause. Action falls within the Act if it involves serious violence against a person, involves serious damage to property, endangers a person's life other than that of the person committing the action, creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.⁶

ICAR's own expert on terrorism, Richard Rubenstein, defines it as follows:

Terrorism is violence by small groups claiming to represent massive constituencies and seeking by "heroic" provocative attacks to awaken the masses, redeem their honor, and generate an enemy overreaction that will intensify and expand the struggle.⁷

As Ambassador Philip C. Wilcox put it:

This problem of a definition masks a deeper problem of the need to resolve the grave conflicts that give rise to terrorism. We need an international consensus on definition in order to isolate and eliminate all sympathy and support for terrorism but we can't reach this definition unless we work harder to deal with the underlying conflicts. Let's face reality. So as long as there are weak, oppressed and aggrieved people and groups who can find no redress, there will be terrorism, and what for one man is a terrorist, will continue to be another's freedom fighter. Of course, there will always be terrorists whose causes have no merit and who must be defeated. I do not recommend, however, that we give up trying to win a consensus that terrorism is an unacceptable political weapon under any circumstances. In the search for a more peaceful, humane and civilized world, we need to keep trying to absolutely delegitimize terrorism in favor of more civilized forms of political action.8

Definitional differences aside, the main point is that terrorists and terrorism are not recent phenomena. On the contrary, in recent history throughout the 1970s and through much of the 1980s, the United States dealt with terrorist attacks from a number of sources in different parts of the world. For example, there were a number of U.S. ambassadors killed in the early 1970s (e.g., in the Sudan and Lebanon). The Iranian hostage crisis occurred in 1979, and that same year the American ambassador to Kabul in Afghanistan was kidnapped and murdered. The U.S. Embassy in Beirut was blown up in 1983, followed by the bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks at Beirut airport that killed 241 men, and the attacks on French troops. There were bombings of U.S. installations in Saudi Arabia (June 25, 1996), followed by the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. At the same time, there were numerous instances of terrorist acts in Northern Ireland, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and then the systematic top-down and bottom-up terrorism that became genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, where hundreds of thousands died. There have been a variety of diplomatic and military actions taken in response to each of these events but nothing that could be called a sustained war on terrorism.

While horrific, these earlier events did not have the visceral immediacy of 9/11 because they took place abroad and were not filmed in real time by most of the world's media. It is a source of some grievance to those who experienced these other acts of terrorism that they did not receive the same recognition and global acknowledgement as 9/11. On the contrary, there is a sense of inequality in sensitivity to global pain, especially for others who have experienced tragedies as calamitous as those that afflicted New York and Washington six months ago.

Commentators and observers of these past acts of terrorism feel that there was nothing new in the 9/11 events that had not in some way or other been anticipated in earlier terrorist incidents both against the United States and against a wide variety of other targets in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The novelty of the 9/11 terrorist acts lies in their combination, their lethality, and the fact that they occurred on U.S. soil. As Niall Ferguson put it, "Apart from its kamikaze character, it was essentially a multiple hijacking."

The 9/11 attacks, however, galvanized the international community in ways in which earlier terrorist action did not. The U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1377 authorized U.N. member states to take action against terrorism and permitted the United States to use authorized force against both Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. These resolutions represent an opportunity to take advantage of the 9/11 tragedy in ways which will delegitimize terrorist acts against innocent civilians once and for all. This delegitimation can take many forms. The use of force in self-defense was clearly sanctioned. At the same time, it represents an opportunity to think of a wide variety of alternative noncoercive ways of generating more safety and security. The International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Customs Union, Europol, Interpol and others, for example, started developing new mechanisms for making a repeat of 9/11 unlikely. The police and security forces in most countries of the world have been revisiting their procedures as well.

The "War against Terrorism"

Instead of quietly building on the multilateral consensus that was generated against international terrorism and incorporating all the key players in the development of a clear and consistent international strategy combining intelligence services, police, regional and multilateral authorities as well as a variety of civil society groups and movements, President Bush (assisted energetically by Prime Minister Blair on the other side of the Atlantic, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and all countries that were drafted into the "Coalition against Terrorism") declared a War against Terrorism.

Bush did so under the congressional "Use of Force Resolution" that gives the president very broad discretion to use all "necessary and appropriate force" against all entities, whether foreign or domestic, so long as he determines that they planned, authorized, committed, or aided the September 11th attacks and so long as his action is in order to prevent future attacks." These resolutions have resulted in an unprecedented mobilization of all the formidable power of the U.S. military machine. They also explain why every new expansion of U.S. military interests is made in terms of combating al Qaeda and the Taliban. The United States then moved to mobilize the United Kingdom and as many other countries as possible within the Coalition against Terrorism. To quote President Bush again,

Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.¹²

These sorts of statements are intended to unite the forces of good against the forces of evil. The result is a Manichean division of the world, a gross oversimplification of complex global realities, and a justification for coercive rather than persuasive diplomacy. On the plus side, the war strategy worked with dramatic effectiveness in the removal of the Taliban regime. Whether it will work as effectively for the much more difficult task of building a new nation from the ruins of the Taliban regime is a moot point.

From the other side of the Atlantic, there is increasing anxiety that the United States has no real interest in addressing the root causes of terrorism

and in nurturing the processes most likely to prevent future 9/11s. Rhetoric and symbols are not a substitute for the much more difficult work of analyzing the global, regional, and national dynamics that make terrorism an attractive option; of negotiating and agreeing on consistent and coherent strategies in response to the problems identified; for strengthening regional and multilateral capacities for responding to these problems and then implementing and monitoring progress against agreed and negotiated objectives. I am sure that from a U.S. perspective there is a sense that there is no time for these luxuries, or as President Bush put it in relation to Iraq, "no room for inaction." From a conflict resolution/problem solvers perspective, however, a case can be made for taking the time necessary to do the right diagnostics/analyses, to build and sustain the right relationships, and to develop strategies that have a reasonable chance of long-term success in defeating those who choose violence instead of nonviolence.

Because U.S. time horizons are so short and because the United States insists that it is at war, there is growing disquiet within the United Kingdom (that most loyal of allies) and certainly within the rest of Europe and in other parts of the world at the ways in which the U.S. administration decides, announces, and defends new tactics and strategies in this war. Decisions are made, without consultation, sometimes with and sometimes without the support of allies. This unilateral military impulse reflects the overwhelming dominance of the U.S. Department of Defense in defining the agenda of the War against Terrorism.

United States military might is now greater in terms of scope and lethality than that available to any other military power in world history. The U.S. defense budget is \$379 billion after a recent rise of 14 percent. This is the biggest rise in 20 years. The defense budget is larger than the combined total of the next nine biggest defense spenders. The United States is responsible for about 40 percent of the world's military spending.¹³ It is little wonder, therefore, that there is a temptation to go it alone when friends and allies get squeamish or anxious about the wisdom of military responses to complex problems. The unilateral impulse is buttressed, therefore, by formidable power and confirms Thucydides' basic maxim that the powerful do as they will and the weak do as they must.

The concern about U.S. unilateralism has become more pronounced since the State of the Union address. President Bush's statement, that "there is an 'axis of evil' which threatens the peace of the world," may serve to galvanize U.S. public opinion, but it is a dangerous oversimplification of international political and military realities. In the first place, the fundamental differences between Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are greater than the similarities. Second, when nations are named and blamed in this way there is a natural tendency for the citizens of those nations to rally around their leaders—no matter how odious—in order to defend their national reputation and identity. Third, this statement was very badly timed, coming as it did when the United Kingdom and other European nations have been trying to develop more positive relations with Iran in order to strengthen the hand of moderate elements seeking to expand democratic space in Iran. Fourth, there was no indication in Bush's statement about how the United States intended dealing with this so-called "axis of evil." It was high on rhetoric and low on substance. It has in fact made many people formerly sympathetic to 9/11 and the U.S. response rather more critical.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that there is a growing difference of opinion between Europe (the United Kingdom notwithstanding) and the United States on the best ways of dealing with terrorists and terrorism. This accounts for Chris Patten's (the European Union Commissioner in charge of External Relations) scathing attack on American foreign policy. On February 7th he accused the Bush administration of a dangerously "absolutist and simplistic" stance towards the rest of the world. Similarly, the then French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, warned the United States "not to give in to the strong temptation of unilateralism." What seems to have upset both of these policy makers is the way in which the rhetorical gesture from Washington has undermined years of painstaking European effort to develop more constructive engagement with Iranian moderates and the North Korean regime.¹⁴

While the United States seems committed to a unilateral assertion of its own power, interests and military reach, Europe is committed to identifying ways and means of solving world problems by more peaceful, regional, and multilateral means. There are, thus, two very different paradigms at work here. The first is the U.S. reliance on Realpolitik (which seems much better

suited to an old bipolar world rather than the new interdependent global community that is evolving), and the second is an assertion of what the conflict resolution community and the European Union think of as a more collaborative approach to problem solving. This new approach is aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence as much as its symptoms. In this paradigm, terrorism (as horrific as it is in terms of its brutal consequences) is a symptom of some very basic and unresolved problems within national regional and global political systems. It is these that need to be identified and addressed in ways that satisfy the needs, interests, fears, and concerns of all the relevant parties.

In this view of the world there is as much effort devoted to the development of regional and multilateral institutions to provide a political framework for the security dimension of globalization as there is to the development of national, unilateral capabilities. The challenge is how to politicize the world's security problems so that they can be addressed nonviolently (wherever possible) rather than to view each one of them as a military problem demanding military solutions.

To address the symptoms without tackling the root causes will not make the world a safer place.

The U.S. administration's request for a \$48 billion increase in defense spending is the same amount as the whole world spends on development assistance each year. Europe supplies 55 percent of the world's development assistance. European policy makers, therefore, do not wish to see these proactive development and peace building initiatives challenged or undermined by a U.S. assertion of the primacy of military solutions. One thing that European integration has taught politicians on the other side of the Atlantic is the primacy of the political over the military in the long term and sustainable resolution of economic, social, and political conflicts.

There is a growing gulf between Europe and the United States in relation to development assistance (bilateral, regional, and global) and in their willingness to exhaust all nonviolent political options. There are also some fundamental differences emerging between the United States and Europe in relation to respect for the international rule of law and the nurturing of global

institutions. Many nations (most particularly within Europe) are distressed at what is seen as U.S. a la carte multilateralism, that is, using U.N. and regional institutions when it suits and undermining them when it does not.

These growing and rather fundamental differences between Europe and North America are epitomized by John Bolton, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. He has condemned multilateralism (and by extension, regionalism) as a threat to American sovereignty. It was he who withdrew from talks on a convention limiting light weapons and small arms because it would have "undermined Americans' constitutional right to carry arms." When his comments are added to low levels of U.S. development assistance, American opposition to the International Criminal Court (most particularly the current U.S. demarche to all nations to provide the United States with exemptions from the major provisions of the Court) and the global ban on antipersonnel land mines, American inaction against biological weapons, and the subversion of the comprehensive test ban treaty and the Kyoto treaty on climate change it is clear that there is a growing ideological gulf between the ways in which the United States and most European governments seek to achieve and maintain their security.

The question that we need to ask ourselves, therefore, is whether rampant unilateralism and the huge amount of military power (including the threatened use of weapons of mass destruction) available to the United States are appropriate for a war against terrorism. Will it deliver more or less security? Will it really deal with actual terrorist threats? Is it possible that it is delivering the illusion of effective action while leaving the sources and causes of terrorism intact? Is the war rhetoric appropriate or seriously dangerous?

In international law and treaty, wars are generally understood to be armed conflicts fought between finite political entities. They normally end in a clear outcome: victory, defeat, or compromise. In dealing with terrorism (irrespective of whatever definition is employed) none of these results can be expected. The dictionary definition of war underlines this. There are diverse views of war ranging from "confusion, discord, and strife" to "hostile contention by means of armed forces carried on between nations, states or rulers, or between parties in the same nation or state; the employment of armed forces against a foreign power, or against an opposing party in the state." 15

Thus, the first issue is whether it is appropriate to use the term "war" at all for what is going on against terrorist groups and networks. What we are dealing with are exceptionally dangerous transnational networks of political/religious conspirators who employ terrorism as a strategy. It is difficult to fight a war against an abstract noun, terrorism, or to fight a war against a strategy. Terrorists strike at nonmilitary civilian targets to gain publicity for their cause, to demoralize and discredit governments, and to gain popular support by provoking the authorities into overreaction. These are the classic tactics of the weak, not the strong. It could be argued, therefore, that by employing the formidable power of the U.S. military machine and that of its allies against these groups, the terrorists have succeeded in provoking an overreaction. The temptation now is for these same groups to lure the United States and its allies into situations where the power of weakness/military asymmetry can be demonstrated again.

The second issue that needs to be raised is whether this so-called war against terrorism is best waged by the military or by intelligence services and police, backed where necessary by specialist paramilitary forces. Afghanistan notwithstanding, regular military forces should be the last instrument in the war against terrorism. Unless one is talking about state sponsored terrorism-which represents direct state or state sponsored terrorist activity—most of the world's current terrorist groups are by and large nonstate actors, organized into secret cells, and accustomed to drawing a veil of secrecy over their activities. It is unlikely, therefore, that the wider reaches of these networks will be touched by bombing raids, or the deployment of special services in full military kit. Terrorist sleepers exist in the suburbs of London, Frankfurt, New York, and Washington. It would not be considered appropriate to bomb houses in these cities. If a state offers protection to these groups as Afghanistan did under the Taliban then some regular military action might be defensible and have some limited utility. By and large, however, effective action against clandestine terrorist groups is more likely to come from intelligence and police organizations. The important point is to bring terrorists to account as criminals and deprive them of the recognition that they get by describing their activities as military and heroic. Despite the huge resources available to the U.S. military, for example, when the State Department and the Pentagon were asked just what human intelligence they had about al Qaeda or the Taliban, the answer was

very little. There was not a single Pashtun- or Farsi-speaking operative in the CIA.

Third, it is important to ask whether there is an inverse relationship between levels of American patriotism and global security. For example, the new nuclear posture, the possibility of three or four new fronts opening up in the war against terrorism (in the Philippines, in Georgia, in Somalia, and in Iraq), U.S. tariffs on steel imports, and the strong suspicion that Dick Cheney is asking European and Middle Eastern allies to have forces on standby for a potential invasion of Iraq all generate considerable anti-American sentiment. There is a strong sense that the administration is losing the plot. While there was admiration for the focused war in Afghanistan and the overthrow of the odious Taliban regime, there is considerable disquiet throughout the Arab world, in Africa, and Asia about the wisdom of more recent dimensions of U.S. policy. Wal-Mart may have sold three million U.S. flags, but Israel and Palestine remain in a mortal embrace, and there is no obvious sign of commitment to the long and arduous process of sustainable peace building.

Fourth, it is absolutely vital that the "war against terrorism" is fought according to and under the rule of law—both domestic and international. Trading liberty for security is a Faustian deal that will certainly generate its own backlash, especially if racial profiling and other more dubious methods are employed. In the United Kingdom, for example, 100 people were arrested under the new antiterrorism act under suspicion of being members of al Qaeda. Most were released for lack of evidence. The dubious jurisdictional status of the prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay also generates concern. The distinction between lawful and unlawful combatants is important. Article 5 of the 1949 Geneva Convention III provides that in cases of doubt, prisoners shall be treated as prisoners of war "until such time as their status has been determined by a competent tribunal." This quote comes from the U.S. Army's own regulatory manual.

Nothing will lose the war for the hearts and minds of people faster than contempt for the law, the rules of war, or noncompliance with normal standards of civility.

Most of all, it is important that coercive agencies develop proportionate and acceptable responses to problems. Donald Rumsfeld's comments on this were extremely discomforting. When asked at a press conference about whether the suppression of the prison revolt at Mazar-e-Sharif had been proportionate, Rumsfeld indicated bafflement.

Now, the word "proportion"-"proportionate" is interesting. And I don't know that it's appropriate. And I don't know that I could define it. But it might be said—and I wouldn't say it—(laughter)—but it might be said by some that to quickly and aggressively repress a prison riot in one location may help dissuade people in other locations from engaging in prison riots and breaking out of prison and killing more people. I don't know that that's true. It might also persuade the people who are still in there with weapons, killing each other and killing other people, to stop doing it.... Your question's too tough for me. I don't know what 'proportionate' would be.¹⁷

Folksy though this comment may be within the United States, it does not generate high levels of confidence outside. If there is one word that a secretary of defense does need to understand it is proportionate. Without this word the likelihood of any military action being just is very slight indeed. All just war theory is based on the proportionate use of military force. Disproportionate force renders the war unjust.

Another area in which normal judicial, evidentiary standards are not being complied with is in relation to the compilation of international terrorist organization and individual lists (by the United States and other intelligence agencies). These lists are beginning to generate considerable anxiety among different policy makers and are already being challenged at the European Court of Justice by three Swedish Somalis. These persons appeared on a U.S. initiated list. They had their assets and bank accounts frozen by Swedish authorities at the request of the United States (operating under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373) and they have no international legal recourse. They feel that their basic rights have been infringed and that they have been presumed guilty by whoever put their names on the list. The criteria for inclusion on these lists are fuzzy. The rules of evidence are not

being applied systematically or rigorously, and there are few, if any, appeal procedures for innocent persons added to them.

Having said that, it is clear that some of the persons who have been arrested in Rome, Singapore, Somalia, and Pakistan are members of terrorist groups and were plotting mayhem. The critical question is how to ensure that the compilation of organizational and individual lists does not result in something comparable to international McCarthyism, where the presumption of innocence is waived in favor of a presumption of guilt, and all sorts of dubious agencies are developed which act in ways that subvert rather than reinforce the rule of law.

I hope that I have said sufficient to indicate that the war on terrorism is somewhat oxymoronic and misleading. War as defined above and the main treaties relating to the conduct of international armed conflict are formally only applicable to antiterrorist military operations when those operations have an interstate character. In addition, it is much more important (post-Afghanistan) to direct energy and attention to strengthening respect for the international rule of law and ensuring that counterterrorist operations are led by national and international law enforcement and intelligence agencies rather than by the military. This would mean that military operations are reserved for those situations where states themselves are committing terrorist acts or providing safe havens for global terrorist operations. Furthermore, expanding the fronts of the war against terrorism (to Georgia, the Philippines, Somalia, and, most worryingly, Iraq) is seriously destabilizing international relations because it confuses domestic and global agendas and, in the case of Iraq, may be based on spurious evidence.

There is certainly no evidence, for example, that Iraq gave any support to al Qaeda or the Taliban. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence of Iraqi opposition to both movements. Similarly, the evidence that Iraq has made significant progress on developing or acquiring new weapons of mass destruction since the end of the Gulf War may be overstated.

The challenges are clear. First, 9/11 highlighted some of the unique vulnerabilities of complex and interdependent societies to terrorist attack. If the perpetrators had had nuclear or biological weapons at their disposal, the casualties would have been much more than 3,000. If they had hit a number of nations at the same time and linked their attacks to a deliberate and simultaneous disruption of global computer and energy networks, the damage would have been awesome. Second, the motivation of these terrorists is rather different from that of old style freedom fighters. They did not engage in these acts to bring about an independent Palestine. They engaged in these acts to demonstrate a visceral hatred for Western capitalism, democracy, and civilization, particularly American foreign policy and its support for authoritarian regimes in Saudi Arabia and Israel. They were also underlining concerns about the benefits of globalization in the absence of institutions and regimes capable of taming its more negative features. They were also sending strong signals to corrupt, compromised regimes in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

Developing a Conflict Resolution Perspective on the Current Crisis

The question that we in the conflict resolution community have to ask is what can we contribute from our tool box to make this open, vulnerable, interdependent world more secure and resilient? What will remove the root causes of terrorist violence, and how can we do this so that 9/11 becomes an opportunity to develop institutions and processes that will help people address their deepest concerns and solve their problems without recourse to suicide and violence? Listening to intelligence agencies talk about their best and worst case assessments of terrorist threat, it is clear that there is a need to think in terms of a wide range of direct and indirect strategies if we are going to deal with terrorism at its source.

Here I would like to make a clear distinction between the confusion that surrounds war (with all its short-term aims, objectives, and inevitable confusions) and the clarity that should be guiding what I call the much more problematic, long-term, painstaking task of the quest for justice and peace. I am using the term quest deliberately in order to direct attention to that painstaking task of gathering facts and their assessment (better known as an inquest) and the idea of an uncertain and risky journey in collaboration with others in search of the holy grail of peace, justice, truth, and compassion or what some think of as that place called "reconciliation." How do we

ensure that the quest for truth, justice, peace, and compassion dispels the fog of war and generates some realistic alternatives to the apocalyptic promise of war, famine, pestilence, and death? How do we respond to and deal with the underlying causes of terror and terrorism as well as its symptoms, and how do we ensure that individuals, groups, and movements who feel that their basic human needs, for security, identity, and welfare, are not being met do not respond to this loss through violence.

Euripides, way back in antiquity, stated that "reason can wrestle and overthrow terror." So the first thing that has to be said, therefore, is that there is no way in which the quest for peace and justice can be engaged and terrorist threat diminished unless there is a willingness to apply the best, the most creative, and the most empathetic intelligence to the task of diagnosing and analyzing the real nature of the problems generating concern. This means acknowledging that sometimes inaction can be positive; it means reminding politicians with short-term time horizons of the importance of thinking in terms of what Elise Boulding calls a "two-hundred-year present." This means learning from the wisdom of those centenarians who are still alive today and making wise and reversible decisions on behalf of those born today since these babies have a reasonable chance of living a hundred years from now. There is a human obligation not to make damaging, short-term irreversible decisions that may prejudice the future of the newly born. In addition to the morality of this, thinking long term helps contextualize contemporary problems and challenges. It also helps us understand something of the cycles of violence and nonviolence and when it is most appropriate and inappropriate to intervene.

The second challenge is for political and military leaders to articulate and share their visions for the future since there is no quest without a vision, and as the Bible reminds us, "without vision the people perish." I do not have any clear sense of what vision the United States leadership adheres to at the moment, nor, for that matter, do I have a clear sense of what vision Tony Blair adheres to either. When Prime Minister Blair was asked to define his political philosophy in the House of Commons in early 2002, he was flummoxed. He was not able to articulate what it was that guided his political decision-making. I would like to quote from a former U.S. presi-

dent, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to illustrate the difference between presidential and prime ministerial visions in 1953 and now.

The way chosen by the United States was plainly marked by a few clear precepts, which govern its conduct in world affairs. First: no people on earth can be held, as a people, to be an enemy, for all humanity shares the common hunger for peace and fellowship and justice. Second: no nation's security and well being can be lastingly achieved in isolation but only in effective cooperation with fellow nations. Third: any nation's right to a form of government and an economic system of its own choosing is inalienable. Fourth: any nation's attempt to dictate other nations their form of government is indefensible. And fifth: a nation's hope of lasting peace cannot be firmly based upon any race in armaments but rather upon just relations and honest understanding with all other nations.

In the light of these principles the citizens of the United States defined the way they proposed to follow, through the aftermath of war toward true peace. This was faithful to the spirit that inspired the United Nations: to prohibit strife, to relieve tensions, to banish fears. This way was to control and to reduce armaments. This way was to allow all nations to devote their energies and resources to the great and good tasks of healing the war's wounds, of clothing and feeding and housing the needy, of perfecting a just political life, of enjoying the fruits of their own free toil.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. The cost of one modern heavy bomber is this: a modern brick school in more than 30 cities. It is two electric power plants, each serving a town of 60,000 population. It is two fine, fully equipped hospitals. It is some 50 miles of concrete highway. We pay for a single fighter with a half million bushels of wheat. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed more than 8,000 people.

This, I repeat, is the best way of life to be found on the road the world has been taking. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.¹⁸

Third, the quest for peace and justice needs to begin with the interests and needs of the weakest and most vulnerable. It is these persons who are often most severely damaged by violent conflict and the insecurity that flows from it. Too much of the war against terrorism is being articulated by privileged elites for their purposes rather than for and on behalf of impoverished people who experience daily existential terror at being unable to satisfy their basic human needs. It is important, therefore, to ask how and in what ways the current war against terrorism is going to help or is currently helping the weak and the vulnerable. Where are the consultations and discussions with the dispossessed, the internally displaced, the refugees, and those who are suffering in a variety of extreme political and economic environments? Starting with the most vulnerable populations and incorporating them into the analysis/diagnosis of the sources of terrorism is critical to legitimating the quest for peace and justice. This orientation contrasts very strongly with top-down decision-making based on Solomon's trap of nonconsultative decision, announcement, and defense.

Fourth, given the shadowy nature of terrorist violence, it is difficult identifying who the key stakeholders/parties are and who has an ability to prevent violence against innocent civilians. Those interested in long-term conflict prevention, therefore, need to spend time trying to discern the specific parameters of terrorist violence and which actors and issues are most likely to choose or trigger terrorist options. This is a very serious problem for our field since there is a strong disinclination on the part of most terrorists to engage in conversations with "do-gooder" problem solvers. On the other hand, we do not have much evidence that these individuals and organizations are interested in talking to those who are applying military solutions either. So we need to spend time and energy on mapping the contours of terrorist activity and identifying who does and who does not wish to converse about the dynamics propelling them into extreme terrorist activity—suicide and violence. This is clearly not a job for the fainthearted and cowardly, but it needs to be done if we are interested in discovering who may be

able to represent the interests of those who are willing to engage in violent acts to advance their cause. Gaining access to terrorist, guerrilla, or rebel organizations is extremely difficult, however, and requires a lot of patience and a slow movement from outer to inner circles. Someone has to do this, though, if we are to move beyond armchair theorizing to try and identify the needs and motivations of terrorist groups. To do this properly will require a very sophisticated understanding of what sorts of incentives might induce such groups and individuals into discussions. In particular, there is a need to understand how amnesties and other inducements might be applied to begin engaging these individuals and groups.¹⁹ This is all long-term and difficult work in very taxing environments.

Fifth, if we manage to make contact, it is important that there be flexibility about process and a willingness on the part of the external intervening parties to let the terrorist groups set the initial agendas and determine whom they might wish to converse with and to what end. Conflict resolvers need to assume the role of ethnographer/anthropological analyst rather than problem solver in the first instance. This is going to be very difficult because there will be little or no inclination on the part of the terrorist group to extend trust to those who might be acting for intelligence agencies or foreign powers. Once trust and confidence have been developed it might be possible to think of more normal problem solving roles. It is particularly important, however, that considerable attention be devoted to such issues as not appearing or actually offering impunity to such persons because most of the evidence suggests that terrorists appreciate "firmness" and clarity of boundaries rather than softness, concessions, and inconsistency.²⁰

Sixth, as can be seen from the first five challenges, the quest for peace and justice requires considerable courage. It is not a task for those seeking a quiet and tranquil life. This courage requires a new look at the concept of "heroism." The Roman poet Martial, for example, stated that "My hero is he who wins praise without bloodshed." As A.C Grayling noted in an insightful little essay on this subject, while "heroism" manifests itself both in self-defense against malign aggression and in the interests of principle, all other fighting and killing, squabbling, and destroying never does.

On the contrary, heroism is first and foremost the property of peacemakers. It takes infinitely greater courage to salvage a people or an epoch from a conflict than to start or continue it. The outstanding figures of our time, among whom Nelson Mandela is the exemplar, are those who seek reconciliation, forgiveness—very milksop notions, no doubt in the view of people who think it cleverer to let their guns do their thinking and talking.²²

The problem is that when reason gives way to frenzy or calm reflective judgment gives way to revenge it becomes difficult to hear those who espouse alternative perspectives. Where are the voices against the war in the United States right now?

The mediaeval Muslim sage Sa'di wrote "even if you could tear the head off an elephant, if you are without humanity you are no hero." That is the key. There is a quiet but not so small heroism of the moral life that is crucial here. It is very much easier to be intolerant, angry, jealous, and resentful than it is to be generous, patient, kind, and considerate. Without question it takes far more thought, and far more work, to treat others from the standpoint of these virtues than from that of those vices, which is why the latter are so prevalent.

Each of the world's current conflicts needs just two individuals, leaders on opposing sides, to stand up, meet, talk, keep clearly in view some image—a child blinded or limbless because of bombing, say, and to agree a fixed determination not to use large scale murder as a way of managing differences. On that basis, real hope can enter the picture. This is, of course a really hard thing to achieve; but it is why such individuals, if they were to appear would be very great heroes indeed.²³

The seventh challenge has to do with the right sharing of the world's resources. Even if we can find courageous heroes on all sides of the terrorist/nonterrorist, violence/nonviolence divide we still have some deep-rooted, intractable structural violence to contend with. Globalization has generated more rather than fewer inequalities and it has cursed us with something that earlier generations did not have to contend with, namely, an ability to see the suffering of others in real time and across vast distances and yet a terrible inability to respond to that need directly and in the same real time. In

the past, if we were made aware of the need and suffering of others we could do something about it directly—give alms, develop welfare systems, and so forth. Now we see the suffering and then respond indirectly—if at all. There is no collective ability to act globally and no global institutions yet capable of redistributing goods and services when and as needed. This is why the achievement of global poverty reduction targets by 2015 is so critical.

The eighth challenge has to do with the promotion of democracy, human rights, and good governance. Al Qaeda, for example, had no interest in these things. They were much more interested in the re-emergence of the caliphate and the imposition of Islamic theocratic rule. Equally, however, regimes which they oppose (e.g., the House of Saud, the Egyptian and Iraqi governments, and some of the Gulf States) are not interested in more inclusive, participatory government either. Similarly, throughout Africa (if the Zimbabwe elections are a guide) there is a willingness to sit lightly on issues of good governance. The challenge facing conflict resolvers is how to put these issues—and associated issues of corruption, transparency, and clean as well as inclusive government-on the table without appearing to impose or actually imposing a Western agenda. Here it is important that there be groups and organizations working with those regimes that are trying to move in more democratic directions. (The Jordanian government, for example, has tried to institute steps towards democracy where all sections of the population-moderates and extremists-can run as long as they agree not to limit the rights of others.) These experiments need to be encouraged and nurtured by conflict resolvers so that there are a variety of political options for states, nonstate actors, and citizens to consider.

Ninth, the small amount of research that has been done on the psychology, sociology, and politics of terrorist activity suggests the need for more understanding of what combination of positive and negative incentive will yield changes in terrorist behavior and a willingness to think about alternative nonviolent processes for dealing with their personal and political problems. The war against terrorism is notoriously unclear about its objectives. In the Philippines, for example, there are 600 advisors for, at the very most, 150 Abu Sayef guerrillas/terrorists. What is the plan here—to eliminate them or to arrest and charge them? When I asked the president of the Philippines this question, there was no clear answer forthcoming. There is a

need, therefore, for much greater clarity about objectives. My preference is to see terrorists as criminals, subject to intensive police action rather than military search-and-destroy action. On the other hand, they need to know, and certainly any state system foolish enough to act as the Taliban did needs to know, that if soft measures do not work, if addressing the root causes of terrorist does not work, then coercive agency remains a possibility after all nonviolent strategies have been exhausted.

Tenth and finally, it is vital that the United States does not personalize terrorism as a U.S. problem and that the U.S. administration and people do not see the war against terrorism as America's war alone. In the days immediately after 9/11 there was genuine international outpouring of support for the United States in its condemnation of terrorism and terrorist activity—which explains why so many countries vowed support for its elimination. The U.S. administration in pushing unilateral solutions is in danger of spoiling this opportunity to mold a better world in collaboration with others. This opportunity will require sustained national, regional, and multilateral effort. It requires the United Nations and it requires all individuals everywhere renouncing violence in general and terrorist violence in particular as unacceptable strategies for promoting political purposes.

Conclusion

Now that the Taliban and al Qaeda have been crushed in Afghanistan, it is an opportune time for the United States to think very deeply and critically about whether it wishes to establish three new military fronts in the war against terrorism.

It is certainly vital that there be no military adventurism in relation to Iraq. This is the moment to get U.N. inspectors back into the country, not to use U.N. weapons inspectors as a pretext for another U.S. war in the Middle East. If the United States and its allies do not back off a war in Iraq at this moment, they will generate accusations of international double standards at work, namely, that it is all right for the United States to apply its military might in pursuit of its national interests but not all right for other countries. This will generate all sorts of awesome and unacceptable consequences in return, not least of which will be an accelerated recourse to asymmetrical

warfare on the part of America's enemies. This will mean heightened vulnerability for the United States rather than heightened security.

This is the time for the United States in collaboration with others to accelerate peace initiatives in Palestine and Israel (a heroic quest demanding courageous leadership). This is the time for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and this is the time for making sure that more resources are directed towards sustainable development everywhere in the world. This is the time to begin addressing terrorist activity through national police services and Interpol and to keep military power in the background.

The elimination of terrorism at its roots requires a much more courageous quest for peace and justice than opening up three new military fronts. It requires the enunciation of carefully calibrated nonviolent steps, options to generate better understanding between the Middle East and the West (since 90 percent of the world's terrorist groups are located there). It requires a willingness to suspend but not abandon military options. On the contrary, these coercive options should be kept firmly in the background as a last resort should all other less violent efforts and initiatives fail.

This is a big task for conflict resolvers, but it is a noble one. Our object is not cathartic. It is not to exact revenge for 9/11 and feel good in the process. (This is not the Wild West, thank goodness.) Rather, the task is to bring terrorists to justice for the crimes that they have committed; to hear these cases in internationally acceptable courts; and to work to ensure that the root causes of terrorism and terrorists are eliminated. This is a never ending quest rather than a short airborne war or the violent overthrow of odious regimes.

Notes

- 1. President George W. Bush address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, Washington, D.C., 20 September 2001.
- 2. See Frank Barnaby, *The New Terrorism: A 21st Century Biological, Chemical and Nuclear Threat* (Oxford: Oxford Research Group), 12.
- 3. Ibid.
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- 5. Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: MacMillan, 1986), quoted in ibid.
- 6 The Stationary Office, *Terrorism Act 2000*, (London: The Stationary Office, 2000).
- 7. Richard Rubenstein, unpublished talk to George Mason University on 11 September 2001.
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- 9. Niall Ferguson, "Clashing Civilisations or Mad Mullahs: The United States between Informal and Formal Empire" in *The Age of Terror:*America and the World after September 11, Strobe Talbott and Nayan Chanda, eds. (Perseus Press, 2001), 117.
- 10. See Security Council Release SC/7207, 12 November 2001, 1.
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- 12. President George W. Bush address to Congress and the American People, op. cit.
- 13. The Observer, "9/11 Six Months On," 10 March 2002.
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- 17. Donald Rumsfeld, News Briefing with Gen. Peter Pace, Washington, D.C., 30 November 2001, www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2001/.
- 18. *The Guardian*, "A U.S. President Writes (Not, Unfortunately, the Current One)," 15 February 2002.

- 19. See Richard E. Hayes, "Negotiations with Terrorists," in *International Negotiation*, Victor Kremenyuk, ed., (Oxford: Jossey Bass, 1991), 364–376.
- 20. Ibid, 373.
- 21. A.C. Grayling, "The Last Word on Heroism," *The Guardian*, 9 March 2002.
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