The Attacks of September 11 in Three Temporalities*

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INTRODUCTION

A central point of world systems analysis is that present-day events are illuminated by adopting a long-term perspective. Doing so allows us to discern their historical significance better than if one gets caught up in recording the ups and downs of contemporary mood swings or class struggles. Thus, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein repeatedly downplays the significance of contemporary 'neo-liberalism', which has preoccupied many commentators on the left (Wallerstein 2001). In a longer-term perspective, he sees trends which have impaired the ability of capitalism to thrive as basically continuing to advance, or at least not having been significantly set back. He has consistently emphasized identifying the direction of long-term trends, rather than making hasty judgments based on recent events.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 sorely test this approach. They seemed to foster considerable change practically overnight, and, indeed, phrases like 'the day that changed the world' abound in media coverage. A president whose very legitimacy as president was routinely mocked by liberals suddenly found himself with the approval of the vast majority of citizens. The US found itself engaged in an open-ended war against terrorism, and its economy in freefall. A mayor in moral and political disgrace was compared to Churchill in his ability to offer strength and hope through tough times. A patriotic mood engulfed some of the most improbable sectors of American society, such as rock stars and Manhattan residents. New models of masculinity, epitomized by nerdy dot.com innovators,

ABSTRACT

The attacks of September 11 are explored from the perspective of three temporalities—that of US hegemony (roughly the last 50 years), that of the history of modernity (roughly the last three hundred and fifty years) and that of the 'clash' between Western and non–Western civilizations (roughly the last one thousand years). The attacks are symptomatic of the emergence of regional, networked actors that the US is not well prepared to address and which disrupt the national–developmental world order organized under US hegemony. By demonstrating one of the unintended consequences of modernity—the democratization of means of destruction—the attacks mark another nail in the coffin of the idea that progress can be attained through technological breakthroughs and the rational organization of the world (which we call hegemonic rationalistic modernity). The attempt to galvanize the Islamic community through an assault on its perceived rivals parallels the strategy of the Christian crusades 1000 years ago. The attacks mark a moment in the declining ability of the West to control the non–Western world. In conclusion, world order is likely to be reconstructed only if there is a move beyond US hegemony, rationalistic modernity, and the presumption of Western supremacy that characterize the contemporary world.

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were replaced by old models of heroic firefighters and police. Security displaced traditional concerns with civil liberties in the US.

Still, with a few months distance, it is clear that in none of these cases was there a complete shift on the morning of September 11. The establishment press had been trying to bolster the legitimacy of the Bush presidency since his inauguration.[1] The war between Bin Laden's Al Qaeda network and the US can be dated to the bombing of the embassies in Africa, or Clinton's bombing of the drug factory in Sudan (mistakenly believed to be owned by someone with links to Bin Laden) or his tossing cruise missiles at Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan. Well before November, the US was involved in negotiations with the Northern Alliance (Abromovici 2002). The US economy was also showing clear signs of weakness before September 11.

While the mayor of New York was able to retire triumphantly, the next mayor (who had received Giulliani's endorsement) has quickly moved to distance himself from the style of his predecessor (Steinhauer 2002). Foreign visitors have noted the exceptionally patriotic quality of the US long before September 11. Old-fashioned forms of masculinity were being revived well before September 11 (see, for example, Mitchell 2000)[2]. And while the exceptional security measures for the 2002 Super Bowl received considerable coverage, the 2001 Super Bowl was also characterized by heightened security (New York Times Editorial Board, 2001). The September 11 attacks may well have accelerated many of these trends (and, in the case of Giuliani, reversed his stature), but they did not create them.

What follows will be concerned with larger trends than those that have absorbed the interest of the US media. In particular, I want to locate the events of September 11 within three time frames, of increasing duration. The first, the frame of US hegemony, concerns the last fifty-seven years, which can be divided into periods when US hegemony was relatively secure (until roughly 1970) and a period when it has been increasingly challenged (1970 to the present). The second, the frame of the ideology of modernity, can also be divided between periods when this ideology was ascendant (between roughly 1650 and 1945) and a

period when it has increasingly been challenged (roughly 1914 to the present). As befits a complex process such as the rise and demise of an ideology, these periods overlap. Finally, the largest time frame involves the clash between western and non-western civilizations. Here the most relevant time frame involves a period of increasing power for the west dating from 1000 to 1900, and a period of rising power of non-western civilizations dating from 1900. Although we will analyze each of these time frames separately, they clearly interrelate. Thus US hegemony will likely appear to be the last great effort (ironically, in some ways also the first) to organize the world according to the modern ideology, and also the first effort to create a global order that conceded ground to non-western people. In each of these perspectives, the September 11 attacks were not trivial; however, their significance can be more clearly grasped by understanding how they are embedded in processes that have been unfolding much more slowly.

TEMPORALITY 1: US HEGEMONY

When discussing hegemony, world systems analysts are simultaneously referring to the exceptional power of particular states or coalitions of classes—a capacity to deploy economic and military power that is so much greater than any other actor in the system that they seem the natural candidate for world leadership—and the world order those states organize. Hegemonies emerge out of periods of systemic chaos. Exhausted by war and social unrest, rulers and key elements of classes in struggle are willing to cede to the hegemon, with its exceptional capacities, the power to institute a new framework for the world political/economy (see Arrighi 1994: 27–73, Wallerstein 2000b—the perspective here relies more on Arrighi). There then follow cyclical phases. First, what might be called a 'defensive' phase, or 'high' hegemony, in which the hegemon relies on territorial rulers to secure order. This is followed by a 'euphoric' or 'late' phase, in which the dwindling capacity of the hegemon—or any other actor—to maintain world order is obscured by cosmopolitan complacency of the ruling classes of the system.[3] Such cosmopolitanism is encouraged by the 'financial withdrawal'

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2.   He argues that by claiming women really want more sensitive men, "'What Women Want' feels out of touch. Nick's steak-and-Scotch persona is now back in vogue in the ad world, which makes the listen-to-your-inner-voice Nike commercial Nick and Darcy put together seem like an artifact from the Jurassic Park Gift Shop."

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3.   I here depart somewhat from the framework of Arrighi and Wallerstein, who do not use the terms 'high' or 'late' to modify hegemony. In his description of systemic cycles of capital accumulation, Arrighi notes a pattern in which a 'signal' crisis precedes by several decades a 'terminal' crisis marking the end of a regime of capital accumulation. The 'signal' crisis marks a time when the capitalist power at the heart of the cycle turns to finance, since capital can no longer be invested profitably in trade and production (See Arrighi 1994). Periods of what I am calling 'late' hegemony roughly correspond to the period between the 'terminal' and 'signal' crises.

enacted by the capitalist class of the leading state; searching for customers for loans, they adopt a more global perspective. Economic integration encouraged by such cosmopolitanism—'free trade,' the rationalization of empires—strains the capacities of subaltern classes, who begin to revolt. Furthermore the declining status of the hegemon encourages an acceleration of interstate competition.

All of this leads to chaotic wars, initiating a return to the beginning of the cycle. Typically, the hegemon is displaced not by its primary challenger, but by a 'junior partner' which now needs to be called in to maintain the former hegemon's wealth, if not its power and status. This junior partner has historically been less vulnerable to destruction during interstate conflict than the declining hegemon. For example, the US suffered only an attacks on two colonies (Hawaii and the Philippines) during World War II. By contrast, Britain (the declining hegemon) was bombed, while the physical stock of Germany was virtually destroyed.

As it emerges as hegemon, the new power creates a 'new deal' for subaltern classes, including some in the new order as a way of defusing intense social conflict (Silver and Slater 1999). Hegemonic decline thus entails change in both aspects of hegemony. It indicates a decline in the exceptional capacities of the hegemonic state, and a decline in the strength of the world order over which it presides.

Writers who look at hegemonies comparatively and historically tend to argue that US hegemony is in decline. This may seem surprising, given the consensus among many writers on numerous points on the political spectrum that US power is greater than ever, that it is dematerializing into a generalized power throughout the world (Anderson 2002, Nye 1990, Friedman 2000, Hardt and Negri 2000). Such writers, however, tend to rely primarily on extrapolating trends from the mid-nineties indefinitely into the future, and do not base their conclusions on careful historical investigation as to whether the trends they identify are characteristic of the consolidation of global power or its decline. To take just two examples—the interpentration of US and East Asian capital, and the immense popularity of US consumer culture—are both routinely cited as evidence of US strength. But both, in a historical perspective, are characteristic of trends as a power begins to decline.[4] Furthermore, these writers tend to con-

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4. On the first point, Karl Marx, writing in the late-nineteenth century wrote "By the beginning of the 18th century…Holland had ceased to be the nation preponderant in commerce and industry. One of its main lines of business, therefore, [became] the lending out of enormous amonts of capital, especially to its great rival England. [And the] same thing is going on today between England and the United States." (quoted in

flate the exercise of economic and military coercion with power,[5] ignoring the Gramscian insight that power is greatest when dominant classes secure their leadership over subalterns through consent and ideology. As the US economy stumbles, and the Euro emerges as a rival to the dollar, this perspective already seems dated—triumphalist on the right, bathetic on the left. Here however, I will not address the economic order in great detail, but focus on the significance of the September 11 attacks for understanding the evolution of US hegemony and the hegemonic cycle.

First of all, September 11 poses a new sort of military challenge to the US. It is worth considering the military strategies the US has pursued since becoming hegemonic to understand its significance in this light. Although hegemony is based on consent (in the US case, the consent of 'core' ruling and working classes and post-colonial national elites), it always also contains an element of force.

US hegemony has internally (to the US) been predicated on an almost continuous mood of military confrontation and panic. Although US hegemony involved a much more extensive deployment of 'soft' forms of power—cultural and scientific networks, foreign aid, etc—than previous hegemons, the US coercive force has also been more pervasive around the world than any earlier military power.

During the period of 'high' hegemony, 1945–1970, US coercive power took three forms. First, the cold war confrontation with the Soviet Union locked Western Europe into a dependent position in relation to the US. It also maintained a degree of stability in relation to weapons of mass destruction, as the two powers that had most of these (the US and USSR) were terrified of entering a war with each other. Secondly, the CIA supported local forces through the deployment of intelligence, money, 'dirty tricks' etc to maintain US allies in power or overthrow perceived enemies. Third, if this failed, the US employed its regular military to intervene to prevent radical forces from coming to power in third world nations (Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic).

By the early seventies, this entire strategy was in crisis. Euro–communists raised the spectre of Western European nations charting an independent course. The US military's intervention in Vietnam resulted in domestic unrest and a mutinous army. The blowback from the defeat in Vietnam was twofold: the

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Arrighi 1994:13). On the latter point, Fernand Braudel, in his study of the popularity of Italian culture in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, notes that cultural efflorescence, like Hegel's owl of wisdom, tends to take flight as power recedes (Braudel 1991).

5. Some writers conflate the expansion of the US military and its armaments with US power, which compounds the error.

US could not muster the will to intervene to stop revolutionaries from attaining power in Southern Africa and Central America, and domestic reformers empowered by the anti-war mood tied the hands of the CIA. Furthermore, the US tie with Israel (following the 1967 war) hurt US credibility worldwide. These developments led to a triumphalist belief on the left that US power was collapsing (elsewhere on the political spectrum a similar view was held, albeit with a different emotional cadence).

However, over the next twenty years, the US succeeded in developing a new strategy. Reagan pulled Europe back into the fold in the context of a 'second cold war', greatly aided by the Soviet handling of crises in Poland and Afghanistan. Third world revolutions were stymied by the sponsorship of local, proxy forces ('low intensity conflict' in Southern Africa and Central America) and egregious penalizing of revolutionary governments (Vietnam, Cuba). In Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Panama, the US demonstrated its capacity to rain down devastation and terror sufficient to accomplish objectives (forcing Iraq to leave Kuwait, causing 'regime change' in Panama and Yugoslavia) while taking few casualties of its own. Furthermore, the IMF became an instrument of economic coercion to force third world economies into a mold preferred by the US.

By the mid–90s, these strategies seemed remarkably successful. The USSR had collapsed. Revolutionary forces had mostly sought negotiated settlements on terms acceptable to the US. 'Democratization' seemed to have consolidated the rule of neoliberals in many parts of the former 'second' and 'third world.' US military capacity had been demonstrated in the gulf and the Balkans, and the stage was set for yet another transition in post–Vietnam military doctrine and practice away from 'low intensity conflicts' toward the direct assertion of overwhelming US military power, especially using ultramodern weapons that strike from the air with near impunity, complemented by smaller, more mobile ground forces. Even the Israeli/Palestinian situation was being resolved in a way that was defusing anti–US hostility.

However, at least three new military strategies have challenged the US. First, the Zapatistas engaged in a minimal level of military activity, but in the context of a large international network of supporters mobilized through the internet. As a result, the Mexican government (allied with the US) has not been able to crush them in a fashion comparable to what the Guatemalan military did in the eighties. Furthermore, the Zapatistas have not sought to attain state power, which would leave them vulnerable to embargo etc. Instead, they have sought to encroach on the prerogatives of the Mexican government in a portion of territory.

Secondly, 'rogue states' (i.e. states which do not share the geostrategic/economic agenda of the US) such as North Korea and Iraq have sought to attain

weapons of mass destruction. Should they do so, it would be much more difficult to threaten them with new 'gulf wars.' They could respond to efforts at 'regime change' by threatening to detonate such weapons.

Thirdly, there is terrorism of the Al-Qaeda sort. With no explicit demands, and a willingness for combatants to sacrifice their lives in action, it is impossible to control through co-optation. Lacking a state, but dispersed among many (and in particular, exploiting the dissapearance of the modern nation-state in a number of peripheral areas), it is difficult to simply crush or completely eliminate them (or even their leadership) through the use of overwhelming high tech air power and mobile ground forces. And, as we will return to in the next temporality, it can reap the weapons of mass destruction and chaos produced by normal processes of the modern world.

Above all, the Al Qaeda strategy has proven its ability to strike a devastating blow in the 'homeland' of the hegemon. Its symbolic import in demonstrating US vulnerability should not be underestimated. In the short term, the US population has rallied behind US policies of responding militarily to a threat (a response entirely predictable from a Weberian theory of legitimacy, in which the state is conceptualized as the defender of the population). But what are the long-term consequences if another attack is pulled off? The stakes seem exceptionally high. As Rand institute analyst John Arquilla comments, "If al-Qaida acquires nuclear weapons, it will win this war. One detonation would end any sense of American superpower, or world leadership in America and around the world."[6] (Pisani 2002)

How has the US responded to these challenges? To date, it has encouraged a war of attrition against the Zapatistas, slowly sapping their energy while avoiding a bloodbath. It is contemplating a war to oust the regime in Iraq, although the US military appears skeptical of the wisdom of this path (Ricks 2002). Related to this, it has declared a new doctrine of 'pre-emptive' strikes; in other words, the US reserves for itself the right to attack any country it perceives as a future threat. It is much too early to see exactly how this doctrine will play itself out; in the short term, it has greatly exacerbated tensions between the US and the European Union. While cold-war tensions pulled Europe under the US umbrella, the standoff with Iraq seems to be doing the opposite, fracturing the alliance between the US and Europe. Furthermore, China, a 'rogue state' (by its

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6. Furthermore, internally, the US state has experienced a steady decline in legitimacy, temporarily reversed by hopes that it will crush Al Quaeda, but susceptible to being triggered again.

independence) if ever there was one, cannot be challenged militarily by the US,[7] and is likely to add to its stock of weapons of mass destruction.

Finally, the US has sought to stop Al Qaeda by a bombing campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. This promptly brought a regime change, but it is not clear that it crushed Al Qaeda. According to the New York Times, "Classified investigations of the Qaeda threat now under way at the F.B.I. and C.I.A. have concluded that the war in Afghanistan failed to diminish the threat to the United States….Instead, the war might have complicated counterterrorism efforts by dispersing potential attackers across a wider geographic area." (Johnston, Van Natta, and Miller 2002) Furthermore, as will be elaborated below, the implosion of nation-states that facilitates networks like Al-Qaeda also poses exceptional challenges not yet addressed by the US. To date, the US has not come up with an effective strategy for dealing with 'rogue states' or Al Qaeda style terrorism, and its efforts to do so have not strengthened its credibility worldwide.

But the US' new vulnerability is not the only way in which the attacks mark a signal moment in the decline of the US as hegemonic power. As noted above, periods of cosmopolitan complacency typically give way to chaotic interstate struggle. The last twenty years have been just such a period of 'cosmopolitan complacency', quite comparable to both pre-French revolution Europe and the 'belle epoque' of the early twentieth century in the enthusiasm for trade as the great integrator of humanity and the belief that shared consumption norms among elites (and, in this case, a fraction of the masses) pave the way for a pacific, unified humanity.[8] The US has had a special role to play in this moment—the most vigorous (although not the most consistent) advocate for free trade, it is also a key destination of worldwide migration, and the generator of many global consumption norms (particularly for the masses). The question is, will such an attitude survive the September 11 attacks? Escalating security costs can produce a significant drag on international trade. Both popular and governmental suspicion of immigrants might erode the current situation allowing for relatively large,

legally ill-defined numbers of immigrants. At the same time, the US is heavily dependent on immigrants for cheap labor in both the manufacturing and service sectors. One possible way out of this would be for the US to refocus on Latin America as its periphery of choice, one the US seems destined to be involved with, and one where, to date, ideological disagreements have not taken the form of terrorist movements against the US. However, the US cannot easily extricate itself from the Middle East, given both its dependence on cheap oil, and its historic and emotional ties to Israel. Furthermore, after ending gold convertibility in the early seventies, the US depends on oil transactions being carried out in dollars to maintain the centrality of its currency globally (Makhijani 2002). The global reach of the US seems both necessary and an unworkable burden.[9]

Viewed in the context of hegemonic transitions, the attack does not have implications only for the US. A hegemonic regime involves both a hegemon and a world order it produces and attempts to maintain. September 11 is indicative of a transformation of the world order the US has traditionally presided over. The US–led order can be summarized with the phrase 'national development.' 'National', in the sense that everywhere in the world, territory was divided into nation-states, each supposedly representing a distinct 'people' and 'economy', all of smaller scale economically than the US itself. 'Development', in that the US fostered hope that each nation could prosper and grow economically, and thus solve the bracing social problems they were faced with. They would grow by combining traditional elements of their relationship with the world economy—supplying raw materials, openness to foreign investment—with efforts to industrialize. They would enjoy independence politically, although armed might was concentrated in the hands of superpowers (and, when the Soviet Union collapsed, in the hands of the US).

During the period of 'high' US hegemony (1945–1970), the US was overwhelmingly concerned with the prospect that nation-states might violate these principles, primarily by the state swallowing the entire economy, closing the door on foreign investors, and eventually joining the Soviet bloc. To prevent this

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7.   China's huge population, as well as its tight economic integration with the US, makes a military confrontation improbable. However, some right wing analysts have advocated 'regime change' for China. How exactly this would be carried out, particularly given China's nuclear weapons, is unclear.

8.   Thomas Friedman is the proud author of the thesis that no two nations with McDonald's outlets have fought a war. Actually, in 1990, the US invaded Panama (which had McDonald's) to depose Manuel Noriega.

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9.   In this context, it is worth noting that even before September 11, Bush indicated that he wished to move away from the globalism of Clinton, and instead focus on integrating the economies of Latin America with the US in order to keep up with Europe. It should also be noted that Europe has vigorously moved into Latin America, purchasing industries during the 'privatization' period in the nineties, and, more recently, concluding a free trade treaty with Chile. The consequences of the shift to the left in Latin American politics are beyond the scope of this paper.

prospect, the US on several occasions directly intervened, and, on many more, indirectly sought to tilt the balance of internal political forces. *The important thing here is that the US fought these battles state by state*. In a sense, the last great moment in this phase came with the fall of the Soviet Union; over the objections of its European allies, the US succeeded in insisting that each Eastern European state cuts its own deal with the IMF and the World Bank (Gowan 1999:187–192).

Although these battles were intense, and undoubtedly much of the hysteria expressed by US policy makers in the period was genuine, the US was ultimately able to resolve this dynamic in its favor. The terrible fear of contagion, in which a revolutionary state would inspire or export similar experimentation in its neighbors, rarely came to pass. Delinked from the dominant flows of the world economy, those states in which revolutionary regimes succeeded in consolidating themselves were unable to become models for the rest of the periphery.

However, the 'national development' order is nonetheless eroding in ways that pose serious challenges to US power. During the period of US 'high hegemony', the concept that peoples should band together over the limits of national borders enjoyed a rhetorical vitality (Africa must unite! Nassar's Pan–Arabism) but little real world salience. That has changed. First of all, the European Union is consolidating itself, and is likely to soon emerge as the largest economic actor in the world. With the Soviet Union gone, it is not clear how far east the EU will advance, particularly as the glow of pro–US diplomacy wears off in the former Warsaw Pact countries. The prospect of the largely social democratic core states of Western Europe fusing together administratively has so excited some that there are claims that Europe may emerge as the hegemon of a new world socialist order (Boswell and Chase Dunn 2000:218–19). If so, it would mark a notable departure from previous hegemonic cycles. The most ambitious state-makers, the 'administrative overachievers'—France (in the 18th century), Germany (in the 19th) and even the Habsburg Empire of Charles V—have never become hegemons. In retrospect, it appears that in each of those cases, ambitious state-making activity compensated for serious economic and social limitations.

Instead, the hegemons, i.e. the United Provinces, the UK, and US, all produced societal cohesion through markets, with only slapdash and haphazard administration and pronounced anti–centralizing ideologies. From this perspective, the emergence of a Pacific Rim economy, involving many states integrated by the Chinese diaspora and Japanese capital, may be of more significance. This economic complex has become the productive and financial center of the world, even while possessing minimum political integration and, indeed, not really possessing many nation-states of the conventional sort (Arrighi 1996). The region has been integrated both through the transnational investment of Japanese and US capital, and the integrative work of the Chinese diaspora. The latter has wedded the pre-modern technique of minimizing transaction costs by relying on trust fostered through kinship networks to a set of post-developmental, export-oriented states.

In our view, both the European Union unifying politically and East Asia integrating as a sort of micro-world economy represent the emergence of actors who are far more difficult for the US to lead than the nation-states of twenty five years ago. The US no longer possesses an edge in terms of economic scale. Its clout as a center of finance, production, and as a market is much less pronounced.

In terms of conceiving of this period as one of hegemonic transition, it seems unlikely that either the European Union or the East Asian world economy will enter into a deliberate competition for world leadership with the US, particularly in the military realm. Indeed, both regions have largely avoided engaging in arms build-ups, even as they have steadily displaced the US as major donors of foreign aid (aid being a classic example of the principle that 'a gift' is usually an exercise of power). However, should the US prove unable to contain the new military strategies described above, we are likely to see alternative strategies fashioned by these new power centers. Reigning in chaos is clearly in the interests of all the world's elites (who require both physical and economic security), and the US will only continue to be given carte blanche in this area if it can credibly claim that it is doing so.

What is the relationship between Al Qaeda and the emergence of regional political-economic actors? Although the Middle East, conceived of as either the Arab world (an identity more relevant before the mid 70s) or the center of the Islamic world, has failed to unify either politically or economy, it has provided terrain for struggles that have repeatedly exceeded the boundaries of nation-states. The first two examples of this, the emergence of OPEC, and the deterritorialization of the Palestinian struggle, proved less threatening than they first appeared. The former, seemingly the vanguard of a broader effort by third world nations to unify and raise the price of the basic commodities they export, ultimately proved little more than a tool for US hegemony. Europe and Japan are even more dependent than the US on foreign oil. Furthermore, oil profits were recycled as loans to the Newly Industrializing Countries, laying the groundwork for the debt crisis. The Palestinian strategy involved taking the struggle to the spaces of international air travel, but it remained in the service of a conventional nationalism.[10] Were the Palestinians not being oppressed by a nation with powerful cultural

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[10]. The US' closest ally in the region, Israel, has also refused to stay within recognized international boundaries. However, as an ally of the US, this has not been destabilizing of US hegemony.

and emotional ties to the US, their demands could likely be incorporated in the existing framework of US hegemony.

The Iranian revolution represented a more radical vision. While occurring in the context of a nation-space, the Iranian revolution trampled on the rules of the interstate system and called on a pan-Islamic community for support. However, the prosaic realities of state management have overwhelmed this transnationalist vision. Then Iraq violated the rules of the interstate system when it invaded Kuwait, as part of a Bismarkian effort to unite the bulk of the major oil producers through force. The Iraqi army was driven back to within its borders by a US-led UN force, and has remained penned in through blockade ever since. In this context, Bin Laden appears to be the latest revival of the transnationalist dream, employing Islam and hostility to the West to unite a network drawn from dozens of countries.[11] In a sense, his is a region-building project, attempting to achieve through almost theatrical struggle what Europe has been able to achieve politically and what East Asia has achieved through the activities of a trade diaspora. Drawing on the religious identity that links people from Nigeria to Indonesia, he seems to be suggesting that they share a common enemy, and a common desire to inflict pain on that enemy. He has taken the amorphous hostility towards the US to weld together a transnational network. He also appears to be trying to provoke the US into intervening more directly in the Middle East as a way to discredit moderate regimes. If this is his strategy, it appears to be working.

Symptomatic of this move toward supra-national regionalism is the contrast between the major media stories of the gulf war and 9–11. The gulf war concentrated a great deal of attention on the global impact of CNN. CNN broadcast the war live throughout the world, creating the illusion of a unitary discourse about what was transpiring in the conflict between the US–led UN coalition and Saddam Hussein (Friedland 2000). This reinforced the rhetoric of 'globalization' becoming fashionable at the time. By contrast, since 9–11, the most dramatic media development has been the capacity of the Arab satellite channel Al-Jazeera to scoop Western media complexes, bringing tapes of Bin Laden into the homes of millions. The triumphs of Al-Jazeera have highlighted the fact that this network takes a very different view of the actors in the Middle East than the Western media. Whereas twelve years ago it seemed as if the new media (epitomized by satellite TV) were unifying the world under Western discourse, today

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[11]. "[Bin Laden] was above all the man who revived pan-Islamism, a coalition builder working to bring together Sunnis and Shiis" (Jacquard 2002: 99).

it is more obvious how these media can be used to carve out space for other voices and perspectives. A similar phenomenon is visible on the internet, where the most striking development since 9–11 has been the inability of the US to contain and discredit rumours of Mossad or CIA involvement in the attacks. If the foundation of European unity is a political consensus among elites, and East Asian unity is facilitated by dense cross-border economic ties, Middle Eastern regional unity is largely an ideological-cultural project, driven as much by sentiment from below as from the 'top down.'

The Chinese Diaspora and the Al Qaeda network[12] can be understood as the two most important examples of a much more widespread phenomenon: the emergence of southern, non-liberal transnational networks. These networks have emerged in the South (the 'peripheral' part of the world economy) in response to both the challenges and opportunities of the present period. The challenges involve the demise of national development and the general retreat of foreign capital from Southern countries; opportunities, on the other hand, have been created both by relatively easy migration and access to global communication networks. They are non-liberal in the sense that, unlike northern-dominated transnational economic and ideological networks (multinational corporations and NGOs respectively), they make no claim to transparency, and do not seek to explain themselves to a global audience (they thus, in contrast to these northern networks, provide little pressure for the expansion of quasi-world state institutions).[13] The northern networks claim that anyone is welcome—in the case of transnational capital, if one has the money, in the case of NGOs, simply if one supports goals of universal human rights, etc. By contrast, entrance to Southern networks is defined by ethnicity, kinship, religion, etc (it is true that religions often have a universalistic component—but in a world dominated by post-enlightenment thought, they have a particularistic quality). Other examples

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[12]. Here it should be noted that there is no official 'Chinese diaspora network'— only a series of ties between globally dispersed members of an ethnic group. And while it apparently is clearer who is and who is not a member of the Al Quaeda network, it is embedded in a much more amorphous community unified by a militant version of Islam and anger at the West. The Al Quaeda network could be destroyed without necessarily weakening this community's capacity to act in the world.

[13]. Does it need to be stated here that the claims to transparency of Northern networks of capital and NGOs does not make them inherently morally superior? As numerous writers, most notably Foucalt have emphasized, enlightenment ideologies of universalism, transparency, etc. produce their own forms of domination and exclusion.

of these networks include redistributive networks of immigrants returning remittances to their homelands, and networks of arms dealers, drug traffickers, immigrant smugglers, etc. Although the Chinese diaspora gains its cohesiveness through capitalist enterprise, and Al Qaeda through anti-western militance, this should not obscure some of their commonalities—like all social networks, they engage in a variety of information and resource sharing activities for their members. They (and other, smaller networks) enter into complex relationships with the remaining structures of developmental states, accessing opportunities, resources and protection through their contacts in them.

These networks have primarily come to the attention of northern states in the context of breakdowns of state order, i.e. the 'complex political emergencies' that the NGO community focuses much of their energy on (Sudan, Kosovo, etc). These 'emergencies' occur because one or another network is able to rally what remains of some state apparatus to the side of its ethnicity. They are dangerous far beyond their borders because the chaos facilitates the use of territory as launching ground for drug lords, armed groups, etc (Kaldor 1999). The response promoted by NGOs involves the 'radicalisation' of development discourse, in the sense that, along with calling in the force of US–led arms to eliminate armed forces stigmatized as deviant, it is believed that only comprehensive nation-building[14] can prevent recurrent emergencies (the previous paragraph owes a great deal to the Duffield 2001. He briefly notes that the East Asian development states bear some resemblance to his 'emergent political complexes').

Such a discourse has quickly been assimilated to the US struggle against Al-Qaeda. There is already talk about the importance of nation building in Afghanistan and Somolia to prevent them becoming breeding places for Al Qaeda. If the US carries through such a program, it would mark an expanded (indeed, quasi-colonial) relationship to these states compared to the program of post-colonial developmentalism pursued in the fifties and sixties. It is not clear how long such a list of countries is going to grow, nor how many resources the US is ready to devote to such projects, nor how the US would effectively navigate the social and cultural relations involved—NGOs have themselves had serious difficulties with more modest programs of delivering aid (Again, see Duffield

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14. 'Nation building' is the geopolitical correlate of the classic social worker's belief that if his or her clients can be remade as middle class citizens, their problems will be solved. As in the sub-national case of the social worker, the rhetoric of 'nation-building' takes account of neither the power relations that successful nations depend on, nor the ways in which the 'deviant' behavior of 'failed states' may be productive for some actors.

2001:202–254). On the other hand, if the US does not involve itself in such a project, what is to stop these territories from relapsing into chaos, and thus creating new safe havens for terrorist networks?

From another optic, these transnational non–liberal networks can be seen as part of the undoing of the US hegemonic order. Arrighi has identified an alternating pattern of cosmopolitan, privatized capitalism and bureaucratic corporate capitalism over the last eight hundred years (Arrighi 1994:144–158). The US epitomizes the latter. Bureaucracies typically face contradictions that as they try to control more and more through formal rules, more and more spaces open up for informal forms of social organization (Scott 1998, Lomnitz 1988). Such a dynamic is often cited in explaining the economic problems of the USSR (see, for example, the work of Alec Nove 1986). Arrighi uses it to explain the transition from vertically integrated American corporations to subcontracting patterns characteristic of East Asian capital. But it also seems to have more widespread application. US hegemony entailed trying to survey and bureaucratically organize the space and practices of the world (through the UN, GATT/WTO, the production of nation-states, NGOs, USAID, etc). The transnational ethnic and religious networks have responded to the failure of this system to adequately sustain people's basic needs. *In this sense, the 'Empire', conceptualized as a global, deterritorialized bureaucratic form of control, is in the process of being deconstructed, rather than emerging.*[15] The expansion of informal networks represents a decline in the legitimacy invested in the formalized global bureaucracy the US has promoted. The 'explain-nothing' policies of these networks (the abandonment of the pretense that their actions should be approved by an imagined global audience) may represent the future, rather than peripheral noise, should bureaucratic control continue to decay. In other words, as efforts to control the world—either as a space of capitalism, or as a space of human rights, sustainable development, etc progressively implode, northern networks may begin to take on more of the aspects of these southern networks, abandoning the pretense that they can effectively survey and control the totality of global social relations (on the other hand, Southern networks may take on some of the characteristics of Northern ones, seeking to explain and justify their behavior as a way to protect themselves).

To summarize: from the perspective of the temporality of US hegemony,

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15. The previous sentence is referencing *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000) which argues that a decentered world empire is emerging. Their text is highly north-centric, and fails altogether to anticipate the developing split between the European Union and the US.

September 11 demonstrates a new vulnerability on the part of the US, which will likely lead to diminished enthusiasm for one-worldism as currently practiced. The Al Qaeda network is part of a trend involving the emergence of regional actors difficult for the US to control. It also draws attention to the emergence of new Southern transnational forces the US is not experienced addressing, and which mark a breakdown of the 'national development' world order instituted by the US following WWII.

TEMPORALITY 2: MODERN IDEOLOGY

The September 11 attacks are likely to also have implications in the realm of ideology. One possible narrative context is provided by John Gray's comment that the fall of communism is merely a predecessor to the collapse of Western liberalism. We have noted above that emergent Southern forces are generally illiberal, and this parallels his analysis in *False Dawn*. He emphasizes the emergence of culturally specific forms of capitalism, as the belief that Western modernity embodies universal features disintegrates.

Wallerstein has also argued that Western liberalism is in a crisis, having been repudiated in the world revolution of 1968. Liberalism is a difficult term to define. But if we think of it as the effort to advance a universal agenda of rights in the context of moderate, elite leadership, it might appear to have taken a major blow on September 11.

The US, the major global advocate (and enforcer) of liberalism was thrown on the defensive. Torture and racial profiling were both advocated in the US liberal media. Human rights rhetoric was shelved in favor of declarations of an open-ended "war on terrorism." However, it is difficult to disentangle this from cyclical patterns of US politics; it should not be forgotten that Bush, during the election, mocked Clinton's liberal commitments in Africa and the Caribbean, and, before September 11, defiantly stonewalled the international community on accords around the environment and arms control. Furthermore, liberalism is somewhat safeguarded now by the transnational NGO community, whose culture is epitomized in UN conferences on women, population control, aging, racism, development, etc.[16]

Declaring September 11 to be a landmark date in the decline of liberalism

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16. This transnational NGO community may yet prove to be an obstacle to the reproduction of US hegemony, largely through empowering the global professional classes to advocate a substantive rationality in contrast to the economic rationality singlemindedly advocated by the US.

strikes us as premature. In a sense, hegemonic transitions are always periods of a crisis of liberalism. The old standard bearer of liberalism (the declining hegemon) is overwhelmed, while a new formulation cannot yet be born. The liberal prospect for the world fades until the new hegemon is able to reformulate the liberal promise in a more contemporary fashion.

What does seem threatened with further decline by the attacks of September 11 is the promise of hegemonic rationalistic modernity. By hegemonic rationalistic modernity, we mean the promise that order, efficiency and predictability can be brought to the world through the universal application of quantitative, reductive science. Such a promise does not encompass all of modern thought; from the sixteenth century on, an undercurrent has emphasized the unpredictable, historical, and fragmentary nature of reality (Toulmin 1990, Hardt and Negri 2000). However, hegemonic rationalistic modernity has ascended in prominence from its philosophical formulation by Descartes onwards. With the onset of US hegemony, it became the dominant mode of thinking for global elites (spurred in this direction, in good part, by the challenge of the Soviet revolution).

Earlier, British hegemony included an historical, conservative tendency that responded to the perceived French revolutionary appropriation of rationalistic modernity by promoting the value of putatively 'ancient' institutions. This conservative tendency found its fullest fruition in the British colonial empire (Cannadine 2001, see also Wood 1992). Perhaps inevitably, when the colonies attained their independence around the Second World War, the embrace of science seemed a genuine alternative to the situation they had been living under. 'Developmentalism' was the name given to this application of rationalistic modernity (see Escobar 1994). By applying rationalistic modernity to the peoples and places of the 'developing world', it was hoped that it could be transformed into something like the modern West.

Challenges to the promise of hegemonic rationalistic modernity began somewhat earlier. In World War I, the most 'advanced' nations slaughtered a generation of young men with their technology. Far from consolidating human progress, modernity facilitated the mass murder capabilities of armies. Many thinkers could not reconcile such an event with the promise of modernity (Eksteins 1989). The Nazi holocaust added further doubts. Bureaucracy—the organizational form of hegemonic rationalistic modernity—was employed for unprecedented horrors, rendering genocide itself predictable and orderly (Bauman 1989). Finally, the renewed faith in hegemonic modernity produced by de-colonization and US hegemony was sapped by awareness of environmental devastation, the creation of 'one dimensional man', the failure of developmentalism to deliver prosperity to the post-colonial world, and the capacity of poorly armed Vietnamese peasants to defeat US technological military might (Carson

1962, Marcuse 1964, Rahneema and Bawtree 1997, Gibson 1986).

September 11 further highlighted unforeseen weaknesses of hegemonic modernity. Commercial jets were turned into bombs; office towers were turned into tombs. Put another way, concentrations of energy and concentrations of people were revealed to be dangerous weapons and traps that a small group could turn against society. But these concentrations (more or less what is known as industrialization and urbanization) were what modernists had always advocated as central tasks in bringing about progress. The blow was all the more dramatic coming in New York City, the heartland of chaotic, cosmopolitan, disturbing modernity, subject in the last ten years to a makeover as a fortress of security, predictability and fun by Mayor Guiliani (Davis 2001). In short order, it was also recognized that chemistry and the concentration of information also left society vulnerable (respectively, to biological and cyber-terrorism). *Regardless of the roots of Al Qaeda, regardless of the US' success or failure in subduing it, the knowledge of the potential of these weapons has now entered the collective consciousness of humanity.* Until September 11, destructiveness on this scale—roughly 3,000 dead—had only been committed by states. Now, apparently, the process of modernity has 'democraticized' the capacity for destruction to much smaller groups willing to take a disciplined approach to ascertaining society's vulnerable points (it should be noted here that while much of the American media has focused on 'Islamic rage', 'anger at the US', etc., the attacks were clearly planned and carried out through the disciplined maintenance of routine and observation, in other words, in a highly modern manner).[17] It is presently difficult to imagine altogether securing society against their use, by a political force or even by some cult of death generated in the interstices of modern society. In one of the central paradoxes of modernity, the means that have increased the security and predictability of society seem to also accelerate insecurity and unpredictability.

Previous doubts about hegemonic modernity have frequently generated nihilistic, aesthetic cults—Dadaism and postmodernism,[18] for example. Such responses are relatively uninteresting, because of their limited capacity to offer insight into how to act in society, beyond poking holes in the ordering aspirations of others. But the search for an alternative (post) modernism—one that

seeks to provide ideas about how to act even while accepting the impossibility of the complete rationality and predictability of the modernist dream—is likely to accelerate. In any case, it was already well under way since the post–1968 refurbishment of non-modernist forms of liberation theory. Certainly the limits of hegemonic rationalistic modernity have not been recognized by everyone equally, indeed, learning from September 11 has been deferred while attempts are made to control the problem through war. But raising these limits after September 11 is an altogether different task than doing so before.

As noted above, in his study of the trajectory of historical capitalism, Arrighi emphasizes a retrogressive aspect (Arrighi 1994). That is, each cycle of capitalism in some ways resembles the one that came before its predecessor more than its predecessor. Perhaps ideological cycles are similar. In other words, perhaps the ideology of the twenty-first century will more resemble that of the nineteenth than of the twentieth century. While the US (and the Soviet Union) emphasized the possibility for modernist technology to propel newly independent states to a bright future (and themselves to the moon, the 'space race' being a perfect symbol of ahistorical, rationalistic modernity), the British, as noted above, tended to emphasize historical continuity and the particularity of national cultures. Awareness of the ways that ambitious modernist schemes can create time-bombs in the midst of society may accelerate an already emergent return to history and particularity. This return is most visible in the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences and history, which emphasize the centrality of particular constructions of meaning and identity, as opposed to the deep seated material structures emphasized by modernists (see, for example, Hunt 1989). Equally relevant is the turn to 'local knowledge' among many development theorists (see, passim, Rahnema and Bawtree 1997).

Some who argue that the September 11 attacks were actually the last gasp of militant Islamism, suggest intellectuals of the Islamic world will 'return home' to Islam to reconnect with the masses.[19] This too, would mark a move away from modernist rationality and towards the integration of a 'local' framework into

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[17]   And the ability of the terrorists to reuse everyday aspects of contemporary society (boxcutters, planes, office buildings) to carry out the attacks can be considered almost postmodern in its recycling of existing elements for other purposes.

[18]   I'm using this term here to refer to the school of French philosophers and their multinational followers who gained international notoriety during the eighties with their emphasis on the impossibility of making sense of reality.

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[19]   Worth quoting at length: "Although Maudoodi and Qutb were not serious thinkers, they could, at least offer a coherent ideology based on a narrow reading of the Islamic texts. Their ideas, distilled down to Bin Laden, became mere slogans designed to incite zealots to murder.

People like Maudoodi and Qutb could catch the ball and run largely because most Muslim intellectuals did not deem it necessary to continue the work of Muslim philosophers. Modern Muslim intellectuals, seduced by fashionable Western ideologies, left the new urban masses of Islams teeming cities exposed to the half-baked ideas that

political and economic thought. In this context, the September 11 attacks (along with the more general phenomenon of militant Islam) are a demonstration of the consequences of an intelligentsia detaching itself from the culture it is embedded in in its pursuit of universals.

TEMPORALITY THREE: THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATION TEMPORALITY

The term "The Clash of Civilizations" is associated with Samuel Huntington, who asserted that, following the decline of the ideological clash of the cold war, clashes between civilizations would characterize global conflict. He specifically argued that, as a result of the policies of the IMF, the form the clash would take would pit 'the west' against 'the rest' (Huntington 2000). "The Clash" was subject to extensive criticism in the American Academia. Huntington's category of 'civilization' was poorly thought out, arbitrary and essentialist. Some argued that the clash argument obscured the emergent consensus around western values. The clash fails to take into account intra-civilizational struggles between those upholding patriarchal, fundamentalist values and forces associated with multi-culturalism. A number of authors argue that the present day world is characterized by a single global culture (Meyer et al, Hardt and Negri 2000). Wallerstein argues that the entire world has been incorporated into a five hundred year system, thus obviating the need for civilizational analysis (Wallerstein 2000a: 157).

On the other hand, Giovanni Arrighi et al have argued that the clash has been a significant part of the history of the modern world system. They begin their account in the 1680s, emphasizing that at this point, and for another hundred years, Europeans self-identity was not one of confident superiority over other civilizations. They trace an arc, from this beginning, to a point of maximum European strength (around 1900) to a situation of increasing equality between Western and East (and South) Asian civilizations (Arrighi, Ahmad and Shih 1999). From this perspective, the embrace of hegemonic rationalistic modernity

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Maudoodi and Qutb peddled. In time, Maudoodo-Qutbism provided the ideological topos in which Bin Ladenism could grow.

Now, however, many Muslim intellectuals are returning home, so to speak. They are rediscovering Islam's philosophical heritage and beginning to continue the work started by pioneers of Islamic political thought over 1,000 years ago. Paradoxically, it is Maudoodo-Qutbism that is now being exposed as a pseudo-Islamic version of Western totalitarian ideologies." (Taheeri 2002)

by non–Western leaders circa 1945–1960 can be seen as one phase in the gathering strength of non–Western forces. Having learned from, and incorporated valuable principles of the West, they may now begin the process of synthesizing this knowledge with other traditions to produce new visions of (post) modernity.

This strikes us as a useful way to analyze 'the clash of civilizations.'[20] However, to incorporate the present-day situation in the Middle East, an even longer framework is needed. In a sense, the clash between 'the West and the rest' began 1000 years ago, with the first crusades. The crusades were crucial, both as one model of how the West would relate to other civilizations, given the opportunity, and in constituting a Europe–wide identity. "The Crusades concentrated and focused European consciousness and made it aware of its geocultural identity: They inaugurated 'Europe'.… What set the Crusades apart from (traditional European holy wars) was, aside from their scope and magnitude, they were joint efforts which combined the forces of many local princes and that, instead of being aimed at 'barbarian heathens' in Europe, the Crusades were directed against infidels of superior civilization outside of Europe.…European jealousies of the rich, cultivated, urbanized Byzantines, Levantines, and Moslems played their part in the Crusades." (Nederveen Pieterse 1989:92–95) The crusaders gathered a transnational army of violent men to launch eastward, driven by their faith that they possessed the only legitimate relationship with God. They succeeded both in defining an expansionary agenda for the west, and securing an expanded arena for (Venetian dominated) trade networks (Tilly 1990:145).

Still, the crusades did not mark the superiority of the West over the East in terms of civilizational achievements (such as levels of economic growth, urbanization, military strength, etc). For hundreds of years, the West's most fruitful relationship with the Islamic world was that of a student with a tutor. From

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20.   Huntington goes awry in two other significant respects. First, he argues that civilizations are deep rooted structures. Instead, we would argue that they are merely identities, albeit transtatal ones, reconstructed from local cultural materials, no more or less deep seated than ethnicity, religion, nationality, or any other construction of identity. Secondly, he presumes 'clash' is the most characteristic relationship between civilizations, whereas a variety of interactions are possible—trade and learning, for example. Nevertheless, allowing for the possibility of the global culture fissuring into relatively separate civilizations strikes us as a richer way of understanding the present than the modernist belief that a global culture of modernity has superseded localized practices. In fact, many localized practices represent the detritus of earlier fissurings of global culture.

Islam the West drew the math that rationalistic modernity would eventually be based on (i.e. algebra). The replacement of the warrior ethic with the performance of status through the consumption of luxury goods was also shaped by Islamic models. Finally, the West's tentative steps toward the sobriety that had long shaped Islam were helped along by the importation from the East of coffee (Schivelbusch 1993:3–22). The influence of Islamic civilization is overwhelmingly apparent in the architecture of Venice, the most prosperous European state of the time.[21]

Nevertheless, when Western expansion began in earnest in the 1500s, the legacy of the crusades weighed powerfully. Figures such as Henry the Navigator and Charles V imagined themselves as the inheritors of the crusaders mantle (see Arrighi 1994, 118). The most dramatic thrusts of these crusaders, and their children, were to the west (the Americas), and later to the East (South Asia) and South (Africa) of the Islamic world, although the expulsion of Islam from the Iberian Peninsula was a contemporaneous element of European expansion. Even as European capitalist–warriors became confident and expansive, Islam remained a military competitor. It did not in fact peak in this respect until the middle of the seventeenth century. Although in a geographic sense a part of 'Europe', during the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was assimilated to a framework of Oriental Despotism said to characterize non–Western civilizations (Said 1978). Like all other non–European areas of the world, it fell behind technologically and economically in the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire was partially colonized, and broken up.

After WWII, nationalist efforts to catch up and 'develop' throughout the Middle East were of a piece with those attempted elsewhere in the non–European world.[22] As was true in Latin America and Africa, the US often opposed those progressive nationalist forces whose politics seemed, on the surface, to be closest to the US' own. The tendency to ally with reactionaries took a particularly dramatic form in the Middle East, as some (especially Saudi Arabia) showed only

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21. William McNeill called his study of Venice "The Hinge of Europe" to capture its significance as a crossroads of Islam, the Latin West, and the Orthodox East (McNeill 1974).

22. Although the sponsorship of Zionism by various Western powers gave post-World War II Middle Eastern politics a unique character. Elsewhere the West largely abandoned settlement, and insisted it was leading the construction of a post-racial world. In the Middle East, Israel became (and remains to this day) a touchstone of the distinction between the 'west' and the 'rest.'

the most perfunctory interest in the institutions and culture of modernity. Seen from another optic, anti-modern religious reactionaries in the Middle East were able to survive and strengthen themselves through manipulation of a great power struggle peripheral to their own concerns (as demonstrated by the willingness of Bin Laden's forces to readily move from opposing the Soviet Union [with US assistance] to opposing the US).[23]

Since the national developmental project 'unravelled' in the middle of the 70s (McMichael 1996:79–144), there has been a notable divergence in the cultures of the 'third world.' In both the East Asian and Islamic world, civilizational discourses have proven popular, and compete for popular allegiance with cultural models drawn from the repertoire of Western dominated modernity.[24] It is not at all apparent that they refer to deep structural beliefs, as Huntington indicates. But they provide a reference point to connect with the past and regional locality, and to ground action in ways besides the 'world culture' models propagated in the north. Appadurai has noted that Western discourses of democracy and rights have circulated transnationally and been adopted by a variety of actors for their own purposes, Dirlik has noted something similar about the discourse of 'the third world' (Appadurai 1996:36, Dirlik 1998b). Here I am suggesting that Orientalist discourses of 'civilization' may also be employed by actors for purposes different than those for which they were originally developed (also see Dirlik 1998a).

Among East Asians, Huntington's article has actually proven quite popular (Ong 1999:226). Bin Laden, meanwhile, makes his arguments in terms quite similar to those outlined by Huntington. In the East Asian case, cohesion is produced through economic development in the Pacific Rim arena. In the Islamic world, economic forms of cohesion are much more fragile, and one-way to produce that unity is through the production of a militant cause. In the East Asian case, civilizational discourse legitimizes alternative political/economic arrangements and values from those advocated by Western (especially US) leaders; in the Islamic case it legitimizes the creation of an umma that facilitates revolt against the West. These distinctions may, in some cases, reference 'real' cultural

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23. This raises questions about whether similar dynamics have obtained in other times and places. Has it been a frequent practice of empires to strengthen 'backward' forces in the periphery, only to have them redound on the empire itself?

24. The rhetoric of civilizational uniqueness, as well as the rhetoric of a coherent 'West' or even 'American culture' does considerable violence to the hybrid reality of all contemporary culture. This does not render it politically irrelevant, however.

differences, while in others they may entail specious exaggeration. The point is that if difference is constantly asserted (and if the political climate allows it to prevail), it eventually becomes reality, as it privileges certain forms of authority over others.[25]

From a long term, civilizational perspective, the significance of September 11 is twofold: first, it represents an ability of a non-western civilization to hurt the West in one of its centers, an event virtually unprecedented in hundreds of years of intercivilizational struggle.[26] Secondly, Bin Laden's Al Qaeda network revives the strategy of the crusades themselves. In other words, he uses religious fury to forge a transnational army, notable for its willingness to attack infidels beyond the Middle East. Befitting the more contemporary period, its members are dispersed in networks rather than marching together. Also befitting the contemporary period, these crusaders have been pulled together not by a coalition of princes, but by a holy warrior with no formal legitimation. In a sense, the ability to produce a crusade has been 'democratized.'

As a result, *the West can no longer take as self-evident that wars concerning the 'third world' will remain there*. Indeed, one can date all the way back to the crusades an effort to resolve the violence endemic to the European world by exporting it elsewhere. For a long time, the impact of this strategy in Europe, which was almost continually at war with itself, was not visible. This strategy first bore fruit by bringing much of the non-Western world under the control of European powers. By the nineteenth century, it seemed an actual success. Most of the wars European powers conducted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were fought far from Western Europe. The center of Western power remained largely peaceful. Despite breaking down in World Wars I and II, this policy was continued during the era of US hegemony. Even as the non-Western world sought to incorporate many of the technologies of the modernist west into anti-colonial struggle and the effort of 'development', armed struggles remained in the 'third world.' Now the fights the Westerners have picked have failed to stay

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[25.] Post 9/11 politics also seem to be intensifying another civilizational distinction: that between the US and Western Europe. The former increasingly sees itself as non-secular, and willing to engage in military action. The latter also appears to be increasingly distancing itself from 'American' values. The borders of 'Western' Civilization are no more fixed and non-divisible than any others.

[26.] This, undoubtedly, is why the attacks were applauded by many throughout the non-Western world, despite American liberals' 'politically correct' claims to the contrary. For an anecdotal survey of non-Western responses, see Ali 2002.

put in the non-western world.

And now a non-Western civilization has adapted the policy of exporting its violence elsewhere. Looked at as a renewal of the crusading strategy, Bin Laden's campaign should not be judged in terms of its ideology or its short-term success or failure. The Western crusades were most notable for their impact on the self-identity of Europe and their creation of an expanded domain for Venetian trade. Bin Laden's crusade may produce similar effects, in the sense that they may generate lasting networks devoted to other purposes besides jihad.

CONCLUSION

Seen in these three temporalities, the attacks of September 11 can be understood as part of longer-term trends. US hegemony has been eroded by the emergence of supra-national political (EU) and economic (East Asian world economy) actors; it now faces supra-national military campaigns. The plausibility of the modernist promise of security and prosperity through the application of rationality had already lost much ground; on September 11 Al Qaeda attacked it in one of the remaining bastions of modernist optimism. Finally, western power had been eroding for some time before non-western actors were able to take its crusade to Western soil.

These temporalities also allow us to see what sort of challenges need to be confronted in order to reconstruct world order. First, the United States is dwarfed by emergent forces, and cannot be counted on to restore order. Presently, numerous commentators of the right and center debate exactly what the United States should do to impose order on the world. Indeed, it is the only core state willing and ready to act militarily. But a realistic view is that the era of national states, in which the US stood as *primus inter pares* (and the Soviet Union acting as a second-rate version of the same) is over. The US lacks the power to either coerce or convince the new supra and trans-state actors to do what it wishes, and failure to understand this, or to be misled by US triumphs over minor forces such as the Taliban or Milosevic, is likely to exacerbate the chaos. The US could probably slow (although not arrest) its decline by tightening alliances with other core and major semi-peripheral powers, and doing everything in its power to demonstrate its ideological vision of universalist liberalism. However, strong tendencies within the US militate against the likelihood that this path will be chosen.

Secondly, technological strategies built around accelerating the concentration of energy, chemicals, information, etc are likely to also deepen the chaos as these solutions now appear to be booby traps, bombs which can be detonated rather than pillars of order. This lesson will be particularly difficult to learn, as it goes against the most common practice of the scientistic professional classes

devoted to solving social problems through the enhancement of technological power. These classes are well entrenched in or near the centers of state power nearly everywhere.

Finally, the possibility that non-Western civilizational identities will be consolidated and deepened in East Asia, South Asia and the Islamic world cannot be ruled out. Such identities would cover sufficiently large demographic and geographic regions that substantial divergencies from late modernity as produced in North America and Europe are a real possibility. They pose challenges different from earlier anti-colonial movements, in that they are being developed by groups with experience with modernity. And they pose challenges different than those of 'multiculturalism' within Western society. The challenges they pose of coexistence are all the more pressing, because, as should be obvious, they can no longer be geographically contained. The prospect of reconstructing world order on terms in which Western leadership is taken for granted appear poorer than ever.

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