



9/11: Ten Years Later

Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations



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9/11: India, Still Waiting for Peace

Neelam Deo, Director, Gateway House,
& Akshay Mathur, Head of Research, Gateway House

On September 12, 2001, a day after 9/11, the Times of India published a story titled, “India hopes U.S. will now pressurise Pak.” At the time, this relayed a common national sentiment – India may finally get the United States to become a close ally against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, and help India in eradicating terrorism.

Ten years hence, neither has the U.S. taken a position against Pakistan, nor has India prepared itself better to fight terrorism and insurgency on its home ground. A massive explosion at the Delhi High Court this week left at least 14 dead and some 60 injured. It served as a horrific reminder that India continues to be at the receiving end of terrorism. This is the third major terrorist attack in Delhi since 9/11, following the one on Parliament on December 2001 and another at the Sarojini Nagar Market in October 2005. Mumbai has seen similar attacks with the serial blasts in March 1993, train bombings in July 2006, the 26/11 attacks of November 2008 and coordinate attacks of July 2011. Many more such incidents have taken place across the country in smaller cities like Jaipur and Pune.

Yet, rather than designing and executing ways to secure our borders, we remain enamored with the effects of 9/11 and anniversaries of attacks in London, Madrid, and elsewhere. The government’s response is the same – they had some intelligence, law enforcement was in a state of alert, but there was no actionable intelligence, and of course, somewhere along the chain of command between the Home Minister and the constable on the street, our counter-terrorism strategy was never converted into skills or systems that would prove useful. The usually communicative, media-friendly politicians have no comment to give, reflecting only their incapability or worse, indifference. The media gives it due importance for 24 hours, then in the absence of any new information from the government or the public, moves on to other news-worthy items.

While 9/11 did not get the US to change their position, it did force them to change their rhetoric. Having become a victim of the international terror network, it no longer described India’s terrorism as a response to domestic events – the tearing down of the Babri Masjid, unresolved problems of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, the Godhra outrage – all of which were used emphatically in the earlier decades. Of course, a position against Pakistan is still unlikely given the reality of U.S. objectives in the region. But considering that the U.S. is leaving the Afghan-Pak region even more militant than before 2001 with direct implications for India, the refusal to acknowledge the role of the state in organizing terrorist incidents across the border is egregiously insulting.

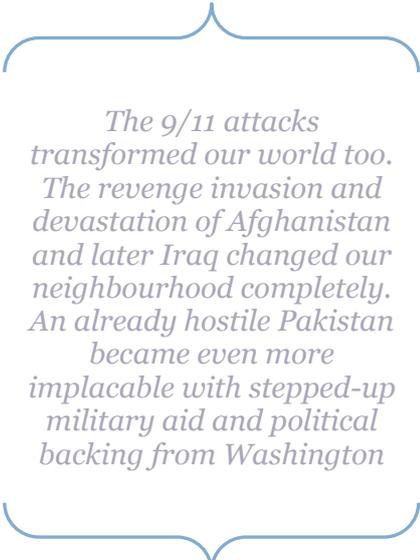
Where India has had over 15 attacks in the last five years, most of which remain unresolved, the U.S. has managed to protect its homeland and not allow a single terrorist attack on its soil since 9/11. One planned for New York in 2010 was foiled successfully by the law enforcement agencies reflecting the swift and effective response by the anti-terrorism units. The Washington Post reported last year that more than 1,200 hundred government organizations and almost 2,000 companies were working on programmes related to counter-intelligence, homeland security and intelligence in the U.S. These are mostly geared to preventing outsiders coming into the US and undertaking terrorist attacks in pursuance of political objectives overseas.

Do we even need anything comparable when many of our incidents are perpetrated by our own people indoctrinated and trained usually in Pakistan? Even if by some miracle we were to

attain such organizational structures, our poor coordination abilities would derive us no benefit.

That explains one part of our failure. We still seem to think that hi-tech gadgets, such as CCTV's will somehow hide the lack of coordination and training that has seeped through our system. Our Home Minister is often in Washington and continues to look for coordination with the U.S.'s Homeland Security department. But imitating American-style security by purchasing sophisticated equipment won't work without the security apparatus and training that goes with it.

The other part is the denial that terrorism has increasingly become a home-grown issue and that there is little political will to fight this battle across the three-tier legislative system of central, state and community governments. Groups such as the Indian Mujahideen and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) have become entrenched in the criminal and undercover terror network, and we don't have a deep counter-intelligence team that can camouflage themselves within communities to pick up alerts at the design stage or swift teams that can foil attacks before the bombs go off. The dangerous political polarity, a paralysed ruling coalition, a fractured opposition, a popular distaste for a corrupt polity and complicit bureaucracy, and a slowing economy, has handicapped any progress towards this issue. If the terrorists are more agile, sophisticated and meticulous in their planning now, and Indian forces remain under-trained, ill-equipped and tactical, then, unfortunately, we are simply worse off than we were in 2001 by sheer relativity.



The 9/11 attacks transformed our world too. The revenge invasion and devastation of Afghanistan and later Iraq changed our neighbourhood completely. An already hostile Pakistan became even more implacable with stepped-up military aid and political backing from Washington

The 9/11 attacks transformed our world too. The revenge invasion and devastation of Afghanistan and later Iraq changed our neighbourhood completely. An already hostile Pakistan became even more implacable with stepped-up military aid and political backing from Washington. Although now the West is coming to terms with the duplicity of Pakistan, it is still not able to get off that tiger. When the West leaves Afghanistan and Iraq, according to its own political timetable and as dictated by its economically straitened circumstances, India will have to deal with the consequences.

Are we prepared? Look at what's around us: an economically weakened U.S. and E.U. but militarily aggressive NATO, a much-strengthened and aggressive China, a dangerously weakened and unstable Pakistan, the risk of the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and heightened Shia-Sunni strife in the Gulf. These are playing out simultaneously and close by.

As this article goes to print, the National Integration Council is meeting for the 15th time since it was first established in 1962 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to fight the evils of communalism, casteism, regionalism, linguism and narrow-mindedness. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's public statement that India must strengthen its investigative agencies and intelligence apparatus is clear. But with the dangerous developments in world affairs and lack of progress at home, his statements just don't seem reassuring.

America: Ten Years After 9/11

Bob Dowling, International Journalist & Advisor to Gateway House

When the first plane hit the World Trade Center at 8:46 A.M. on September 11, 2001, it looked, from the 39th floor of a Rockefeller Center office building, like a small single flight went off course. When the second plane struck Tower II at 9:03 A.M., someone said “Oh my God, a press plane must have come too close”. Except we all knew the press used helicopters not planes.

When the South Tower collapsed at 9:59 A.M. a young woman whispered: “All of those people just died.” When the North Tower collapsed at 10:28 A.M., we were working on a new magazine that would go to press the next night.

Great tragedy can paralyze or motivate. There’s not a lot of middle ground. As editors watching the Twin Towers turn to rubble, our job was to make the best sense we could of what happened in time for a magazine deadline the following night. Colleagues blown out of their newsroom at the Wall Street Journal by the attack produced a newspaper from a remote location for the following morning. Wall Street bosses from firms where dozens were killed pulled together staffers to reopen within days. Police, firemen, medics and those who surged into the smoking rubble at the Pentagon in Washington, as well as in New York to dig out buried victims, were the true heroes. In a pasture 80 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, Pa. first responders removed 44 bodies from crashed United Airlines Flight 93, the plane where the passengers had overpowered the hijackers.

On Sunday Sept. 11, a decade after the fateful 9/11, politicians, dignitaries and selected survivors from families who lost a dad, mother, son, daughter or relative will assemble by invitation at Ground Zero to honor the dead and mark a nation’s resilience.

Time heals. Memories fade some. Children who lost parents have grown up with a keepsake photo, ring or earring and moved on. But like a fault in the earth’s crust, a deep fissure from that attack remains just beneath the nation’s surface.

The line was etched just 15 days after the attack. “Either you are with us or against us in the fight against terror,” President George W. Bush declared in a joint press conference with French President Jacques Chirac. There is no neutrality, Bush had decreed, evoking the raw emotions of 9/11 itself: “All nations, if they want to fight terror, must do something.” He formalized this policy in a U.N. speech a few days later and soon after declared America’s right to launch a first strike against a potential terrorist nation, known as the doctrine of pre-emption.

From that day on, the U.S. has wrestled with some hard lessons about itself and the world. Polls show Americans value their independent superpower status as much as ever. But they wonder whom to trust at home and abroad.

Their concerns:

Big Security Failure: In the 9/11 Commission report, the public found out that Washington had failed to protect the people despite repeated warnings. Agencies from the CIA, the FBI, the White House and the Defense Department dismissed impassioned pleas from their ranks about the mission of Osama Bin Laden from Afghanistan and the hijackers while they were living in the U.S.

Big Economic Failure: Six years after 9/11, the lesson that an expensive big government can fail hugely was repeated with the global sub-prime economic crash. Investigations have documented that the Federal Reserve, the Securities and Exchange Commission, bank regulatory agencies, independent ratings agencies like Standard & Poors and Moodys and mortgage buyers like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac opened the gates for Wall Street bank abuses. Having been hit twice in a decade, voters' distrust of Washington and big government failure to protect is now the core issue in next year's Presidential election.

In the region that President Clinton had called "the most dangerous nuclear flashpoint in the world," - India and Pakistan - nukes were out and terrorism was in

New International Alliances: A year after 9/11, President George W. Bush was lining up a "coalition of the willing" for his war in Iraq. There were not many prominent signers except for Britain. But Bush also had his coalition against terrorism, in which China, Russia and many lesser states willing to crack down on possible terrorists were given free rein. On the other side was Bush's "axis of evil" with Iran, Iraq and North Korea as charter members. China initiated a crackdown on Muslim Uighur leaders in its western provinces and ramped up sanctions on the press and dissents everywhere that is increasing to this day.

In the region that President Clinton had called "the most dangerous nuclear flashpoint in the world," - India and Pakistan - nukes were out and terrorism was in. In 2005, Bush announced that the U.S. would back India's arrival as a new world power, through a civilian nuclear deal. In the same year, when Pakistan's President Musharraf expressed concern about backing the U.S. in Afghanistan, reports said Bush replied with the "either you are with us or you are against us" doctrine and got swift approval.

Personal Privacy: Mass murderer Osama Bin Laden would never make a government list of those who have greatly changed the world, but every time you give up a tube of tooth paste, strip for guards or have a laptop stolen off an airport scanner belt anywhere in the world it's hard not to see his pernicious influence. Telecom companies turn over personal phone records to police in a blink, government surveillance of personal calls is routine and corporations require personal ID before a pass to enter their premises is issued. Jacqueline Leo, an online editor, added up the U.S. cost from Bin Laden from security spending to ordinary life: \$3 trillion.

Today's U.S politics all but requires that parties and candidates look and act dramatically different, otherwise why vote for a choice? But a decade after 9/11 Bush and Obama look far more aligned on international policy than at odds.

Bush's rhetoric and personality was hot. President Barrack Obama softened the tone and draped his presidency in friendlier international garb –especially in opposing torture– but to some scholars his policy is more Bush with a veil than a new American tack. The Guantanamo detention center for terrorist suspects – heatedly denounced during the campaign – which Obama promised to close, looks as secure as ever. Obama is conducting three Middle Eastern wars – Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan, and his military budget is at \$800 billion versus Bush's highest of \$650 billion. Some scholars see clear parallels.

In the Middle East, the "Bush-Obama agenda marches on" says historian Russell Walter Mead of the Council of Foreign Relations:

"President Obama is pushing a democracy agenda in the Middle East that is as aggressive as President Bush's; he adopts regime change by violence if necessary as a core component of his regional approach and, to put it mildly, he is not afraid to bomb."

A pro-Obama commentator, Peter Beinart asserts that with the killing of Osama Bin Laden and his successors, the President has eviscerated Al Qaeda to the point where jihadism “is sliding into irrelevance” and that the real threat ahead will be the rise of authoritarian capitalism from China. To most Americans a huge downgrade in a terrorist threat to the U.S. would be glorious news, but what they see each day is war from the Arab Spring advancing across the Middle East. That may mean good news for the next leaders of Libya, but who will they be? The Syrian president is still in power and killing his people. The military seems back in control in Egypt, which may be good or bad, and few outside of specialists can predict which nation might launch the next Arab Spring campaign.

The polarization of the world into “for or against” remains as relevant as ever. But now there is also a huge economic and political cost with it that wasn't there in the years after Ground Zero when the public signed on to eliminate terrorists. With a \$1.3 trillion budget deficit, 24 million Americans searching for jobs, a debt downgrade and a housing crisis without an end in sight, the dire economic outlook vastly outweighs any foreign policy credits ten years after 9/11.

Instead, what the world sees is two leaders trading places on a blood smeared canvas.

Bush attacked the Taliban in Afghanistan and initiated a preemptive war with Iraq, a nation not part of the 9/11 plot, over weapons of mass destruction. Obama declared the unpopular Iraq war a failure, and began using drones to attack the Taliban returning to Afghanistan, where he blamed Bush for failing to win a stable peace.

U.S. troops are now leaving Iraq with an indefinite but far better chance for stability than a strife torn, unmanageable Afghanistan, which Obama says he will leave next year - sort of declaring victory but surely not unrolling the "Mission Accomplished" banner that Bush foolishly hung out in 2003. To some pundits, the present situation looks more like a 21st century version of Vietnam.

So on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 the U.S. has prevented further terrorist attacks, a major accomplishment. The voters have given up the generous personal liberty and freedom they had before Ground Zero, but have shown they will unite and sacrifice with boundless good will for the right reason. Even as this is written, blogs are recalling the lines to give blood, thousands of small donations and unpaid rescuers, from steelworkers to surgeons, who showed up from everywhere on Sept. 12 to stay as long as needed. The nation's ability to sacrifice for the right cause and leader is deeply embedded.

But Obama is now one of the most unpopular presidents in modern history and his opposition is even more disliked. Polls show Americans are tired of spending and intervening in others' regional wars - not because they are isolationists but because they see vast problems at home.

The existing situation in Afghanistan isn't a foreign policy choice for Obama but an economic one. After seeing costs of \$800 million for the intervention in Libya, plus new requests of \$160 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, his ability to sell more intervention is over. He won't get re-elected unless he can forcefully produce results rather than administer soothing rhetoric. The lesson on this 10 year anniversary may be that the U. S. needs to repair itself first, while keeping a guiding, rather than intervening, hand in the world's affairs.

Arab Spring to Wahabbi Winter

M.D. Nalapat, Director, Department of Geopolitics, Manipal University

Ten years on, and two trillion dollars and counting, is the world a safer place for the NATO partners? The security of NATO members has been at the core of actions taken by its components – principally the U.S. – since 9/11. While the absence of a terror attack on the U.S. has been taken as proof of the success of the War on Terror, the truth is that such a criterion is too restrictive to reflect reality. Also, the spawning of newer mutants of terror organisations may have created a base within the U.S. that could host future action.

The change that has come about is this: the complex of ideologies (and organisations owing fealty to them) that get clubbed together as “Al Qaeda” has morphed; from a grouping directed and motivated by a few individuals, it is now disaggregated. The steps taken by the true heroes of the War on Terror - the U.S. Treasury Department and the FBI - to identify and disrupt funding networks for terror organisations has made the former big spenders (on jihad) go into the woodwork to avoid detection. Over the decade, they have been replaced by thousands of smaller contributors, funding a miscellany of organisations across the world, instead of a small number of groups. Many of these funders are camouflaged as “human rights” or as “democracy fighter” organisations. Very often, they have a small number of non-jihadi sympathisers as office-bearers, so that their core ideology gets concealed. As the Libyan overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi and the events in Egypt that culminated in the forced departure of Hosni Mubarak have shown, Wahabbis have mastered an argot that wins them a support base within the populations (and chancelleries) of the NATO members.

In Gateway House as well as in other sites, this columnist has been wary of the Arab Spring from the start, seeing in the ferment a near-inevitable Wahabbi winter. Today, events in Egypt are demonstrating the truth of the view taken six months ago, that the core of the ideology behind the protests is Wahabbi, magnified in lethal power by getting fused to public discontent over the rising prices of essential commodities. The forecast that the Wahabbi nature of the unrest would become evident by October is now materializing with the attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo. Should an election take place, the balance of power within Parliament in Egypt would shift overwhelmingly towards Wahabbi groups who would be about as sympathetic to the NATO powers as the Taliban is, although they may show this distaste in less robust forms than that particular cohort.

Over the 1990s, this columnist has witnessed the methodical manner in which the Wahabbis of the Kashmir Valley have used the language of democracy and human rights to co-opt liberals such as Arundhati Roy to their side. Diplomatic pressure on India to make terminal concessions to the jihadis in Kashmir is not as strong now as it used to be during the Clinton years. But today, the NATO powers ignore the plight of religious minorities and moderates in Kashmir (for example, the destruction of several Hindu houses of worship by the Wahabbis) in their eagerness to back an agenda – that aims to make Kashmir a state where Wahabbis will enjoy the religious supremacy they do in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Those backing the numerous pro-jihad organisations in Kashmir never stop to read the numerous tracts brought out by the very individuals who claim to be “fighting for democracy” in Kashmir. This shows an obsessive desire to cleanse the state of “impure” influences (i.e. those not sanctioned by the Wahabbi theology, such as politicians opposed to Wahhabi supremacy) and when relating the rest of India, talk of a determination to “bring back the glory of Mughal rule” over the country. Arundhati Roy may not know this, but that period was not a particularly liberal one in Indian history.

In Libya, the Wahabbi core of the opposition to 'apostate' Muammar Gaddafi has mimicked the message that has served their counterparts so well in Kashmir. They speak of "democracy versus dictatorship" and of "modernity versus autocracy." All this when the so-called National Transitional Council (NTC), of presumed democrats, has been appointed by Nicholas Sarkozy and has about as much popular resonance as the "Iraqi" groups set up while Paul Bremer was Proconsul of the country some years ago. The reality is that the NTC has zero control over the youths with guns on the streets in Libya. As soon as NATO helps them to complete the task of eliminating Gaddafi remnants from the entire country, these youths will form their own leadership councils, several of the members of which will soon get active in ensuring that Libya becomes a jumping-off point for jihad in Europe. In empowering the Wahabbis in Libya, NATO has dug a huge hole in the future security of Europe, the way the Brzezinski-Casey strategy of creating a jihad force in Afghanistan has blown back across the globe.

As in Kashmir, the briefest of glances at the NATO-backed tracts that enabled a defeat against Gaddafi will reveal their mindset. Such samizdat has been circulating across Libya and the Arab world for decades, and few contain any suggestion that Libya ought to become a democracy. Instead, the emphasis is on the "impure" and "impious" nature of a leader - Colonel Gaddafi - who allows women to go about unveiled and refuses to make (the Wahabbi version of) Sharia the law of the land. The writings of several of the "military commanders" (as distinct from the politicians placed there by Sarkozy) of the Libyan revolt against Gaddafi speak of the need to create a society run under religious law; where women will be shown their place, as will all those not Wahabbi, including more than two-fifths of the tribes in Libya. Now that almost all of Libya has been "liberated," we will see the impact on women and minority rights of the control of the "democrats" enabled to victory by NATO. Only a minority of tribes is active in the battle against Gaddafi, but as these are being backed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar (the way the Taliban was), they are considered kosher by NATO. Within a year, the folly involved in this war will get revealed in a way that will embarrass David Cameron as much as the Iraq war affected Tony Blair.

But by that time, it would be too late for Europe. NATO would have created a state where the instruments of coercion are largely controlled by those who have been trained by their Wahabbi ideology to see the West as sinful and evil. And also as the successor to the Crusaders who took back the conquests of the earlier followers of Islam. While Gaddafi was able to keep such groups largely in check, they have now broken free, and the consequences will soon become obvious.

Europe must also learn the lessons from the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan: George W. Bush and Dick Cheney lost the War on Terror almost as soon as they began waging it in 2001. The first error was to be blind to the fact that the endemic focus of the jihadi infestation was Pakistan, including significant elements of its military. As the Soviets discovered in the 1980s, any action in Afghanistan is pointless without simultaneously tackling the root of the problem, which is Pakistan. By teaming up with the very force that was the principal backer of the Taliban, Bush and Cheney doomed NATO to failure in the battle against that force. Also, by not moving more decisively on Saudi Arabia to shut down the education and propaganda networks of the Wahabbi International, Bush and Cheney ensured that the ideology known as "Al Qaeda" would continue to find adherents across the globe.

The War on Terror has further Wahabbed the Ummah rather than empower moderates. It has helped create an economic crisis that is sapping the will of the NATO powers and their ability to respond to future threats. Most ominously, by its continued credulity in the camouflaged jihadis, NATO is empowering its future foes in the Arab world as recklessly as the Central Intelligence Agency did in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

9/11 America: Dignity, Democracy and Fear

Seema Sirohi, Journalist and Analyst

Something essential has changed in America in the ten years since terrorists hijacked passenger airliners and crashed them into the World Trade Center, shattering that sense of invincibility forever.

As Americans remember the 3,000 victims in ceremonies big and small, they are aware that their great country that John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan were fond of calling a “shining city upon a hill” can be breached. Even though there hasn’t been another terrorist attack on the “homeland” – a term suddenly invading the lexicon post 9/11 despite its creepy historical baggage – Americans feel vulnerable. They have been recounting their stories on radio and television for the past week, talking openly as only the Americans can, digging into their wounds, exploring and excavating their innermost fears and healing.



Negative views of Muslim Americans have continued to rise over the past decade. The community has been under the national microscope. It first tried to hide, and then come out; it struggled within itself and against stereotypes to assert its right to be a part of the American fabric

Countless stories of bravery have been meticulously documented by now, each person identified and accounted for. Fire fighters and police officers who went into the collapsing towers to try to save lives are heroes and family members left behind have fought back to fill the void left by the loss of loved ones. There is no alternative but to move on. The dignity of ordinary Americans is impressive as they learn to live in a changed, more depleted, economically weaker America, an America reeling from the cost of two wars launched in the name of 9/11 and a recession caused by the shenanigans of the all-too-clever Wall Streeters, greedy bankers and a disappearing regulatory structure.

Americans feel vulnerable. They worry about the economy and they worry about their security. With terrorists striking other countries since 9/11 – notably India and Britain – it is no surprise that 59 percent of the Americans believe that terrorists will find a way to attack the United States in the future. According to a recent Gallup poll, they are roughly split on who is winning the “war on terror” – America or the terrorists. The killing of Osama bin Laden by U.S. Navy seals inside Pakistan in May after a long, arduous hunt gave a temporary sense of relief but not much more.

Negative views of Muslim Americans have continued to rise over the past decade. The community has been under the national microscope. It first tried to hide, and then come out; it struggled within itself and against stereotypes to assert its right to be a part of the American fabric. No one can deny that America has done a better job than most other western nations of absorbing and accepting Muslim immigrants but there is also a tendency to paint with a broad brush, losing the distinction between the moderate majority and the extremist minority.

Last year a controversy over a proposed Islamic Center by a Muslim cleric near Ground Zero in New York fanned those divisive flames. The families of 9/11 victims felt a mosque close to where the towers stood was like rubbing salt into their wounds. Now some members of the Christian right and a few politicians are worried that Sharia law may soon surreptitiously take

over America. More than 12 states have devised “pre-emptive” legislation outlawing Sharia in state courts. At least three have already approved, conveniently ignoring the First Amendment, which already prohibits courts from using religious codes.

In the decade gone by since 9/11, the power of the state over its citizens has expanded dramatically, collapsing the cherished circle of individual freedom somewhat. The balance between freedom and security is sadly altered. America today is a snooping, listening, watching society where an old man who forgot his cell phone in the Mall of America on a table remains on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) watch list simply because he is Muslim. He and his son bear the ordeal quietly.

At airports, there is patience on display as everyone sheds shoes, watches, jackets, bracelets before standing in front of machines that can see through all your flaws. Most absorb the intrusions stoically.

Dana Priest, a Washington Post investigative reporter and co-author of “Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State” has revealed the growth of a terrorism-homeland security complex, which has become so large, so unwieldy and so secretive that no one really knows how much it costs. “Not only does the government find it difficult to get its arms around itself, it doesn't know what's inside, it doesn't know what works, it doesn't know what doesn't work. And nobody still, 10 years later, is really in charge of those questions,” she says. There are 3,984 federal, state and local organizations working on domestic counter-terrorism. The annual budget for the US intelligence community has tripled since 9/11. Some estimates say that more than \$1 trillion has been spent by federal, state and local authorities on security since the attacks.

America conducts its counter-terrorism activities emboldened by the Patriot Act, passed within three weeks of 9/11 in an extraordinary display of unity between the legislative and executive branches. It gives powers to the FBI that in ordinary times would shock and embarrass Americans but today the only opposition comes from a few civil libertarians. The FBI can get records without judicial oversight. It can get phone records from companies, list of websites visited by suspects from internet service providers and financial records from businesses through administrative subpoenas and without a warrant. Librarians can double as snitches. In one of the most disturbing manifestations of a post-9/11 mindset, torture was redefined as “enhanced interrogation technique.”

Who would have imagined such wordplay in the land of the free? It is chilling, especially when vocalized through the mouth of former vice president, Dick Cheney, who has justified, rationalized and augmented every “un-American” technique lustily. Will this national security state shrink back to its original dimensions in the foreseeable future? Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said a firm “No” in answer to the question.

Would it then be fair to conclude that Osama bin Laden’s deluded, last-century warriors have caused America to go back in time in its passionate respect for human rights? Perhaps only for a short period.

Mafia-Nation: State Capture by Criminal Syndicates

Sarah Chayes, International Journalist

Gateway House interviews Sarah Chayes, Foreign Press Club and Sigma Delta Chi award-winning former reporter at National Public Radio, on the anti-corruption and democracy movements around the world as a response to governments turning mafia syndicates. Chayes reported from Kandahar from 2001 on, and has lived there since, building civil society institutions, authoring a best-selling book, "The Punishment of Virtue, Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban," founding a cooperative that produces luxury skin-care products for export (www.arghand.org), and advising the US military on Afghan governance as well as the Arab Spring, among other topics.

GH: The Afghanistan project started out in 2001 with great optimism and hope about checkmating Al-Qaeda's brand of terrorism, as well as rebuilding a nation. Ten years later, has that fructified as planned?

Sarah Chayes: It seems to me that there have been significant concrete gains against the physical manifestation of Al-Qaeda terrorism, not the least of which the localization and killing of Osama Bin Laden. During the decade it took to achieve that goal, a lot was learned about the structure and organization of that association, and its collaborators and imitators; and a lot of progress was made in disrupting and breaking down these networks.

On the other hand, I don't think nearly as much progress has been made in reaching a deeper understanding of the motivations behind transnational terrorism, or even behind the conflict in Afghanistan. It was as though the heinousness of the acts was all we had to know, not what might drive men to commit them. So some of the very gains mentioned above inadvertently exacerbated local conflicts, not to mention resentment of the United States among a broad swathe of people around the world.

In Afghanistan in particular, the U.S. refused to consider the potential consequences of empowering a collection of repudiated warlords and major criminals in late 2001 as proxies against the Taliban, and then upholding and supporting these men in positions of power in the Afghan government. They exploited Americans' single-minded concern with terrorism to obtain a virtual blank check from their US partners regarding how they treated their citizens, so long as they appeared to cooperate in fighting (militarily) terrorists. The result was a gradual mafiaization of the Afghan government, with power and profits shared among a few interlocking – but also competing – networks, money moving upwards in the system, in return for permission to extract resources and protection from legal or regulatory repercussions.

I was experiencing this from the grass-roots level for years – and experiencing the rising frustration of the Afghan people at what amounted to the capture of their state by criminal syndicates under the eyes of the international community – but I didn't begin thinking about the phenomenon in a systematic fashion until about 2009, when I began working on anti-corruption strategies for the command of the international forces, in Kabul. Then I began to understand how structured this corruption had become. Still, I was primarily focusing on the case of Afghanistan. I was completely taken aback when I presented a discussion of this phenomenon, complete with a slide sketching out how the system works, and was greeted by a standing ovation from several hundred international high-ranking military and law enforcement officers at a symposium at the Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany, in early 2010. Several came to talk to me afterwards and practically chorused: "You just described my country."

Then I realized we were faced with a global phenomenon.

GH: How is this phenomenon manifesting itself?

Sarah Chayes: The people experience it as a constant requirement to pay money in order to get public officials to perform their duties (or to induce them not to perform them). In Afghanistan – one of the poorest countries on the planet – two separate studies in late 2010 estimated the total amount of money extorted by way of this “petty” corruption to be between \$1 and \$2.5 billion per year. The payment requirement is usually accompanied by physical or psychological humiliation – a slap in the face, or a swipe at your vehicle with the stock of a rifle to break the windshield if you fail to comply – and utter impunity for the offending official. The result is an acute sense of injustice on the part of ordinary citizens, who see not just themselves hurt and disadvantaged, but also assets that they consider part of their national patrimony, such as mineral wealth, land, or development resources, going straight into the pockets of a privileged few, while they and their neighbors are suffering on the margins of survival. Particularly galling is the fact that such activities go on in societies that claim to be governed by constitutions, codes of laws developed by representative institutions, and judicial bodies to enforce those laws. This type of mafia government makes a mockery of such institutions and of modern notions of rule-based government and equal justice under the law.

If the reason-based rules that have been evolving since the Enlightenment no longer provide people with a reasonable hope of redress of legitimate grievances, then it should be no surprise that they turn back to (their interpretation of) God

I always knew such behavior was not part of the “culture” of South Asia, as so many Westerners argued to me. But what I didn't fully understand until 2009 was the degree to which this activity is structured and systematized, not just the ad hoc salary-padding of a few bad apples on the police force, for example. Rather, a portion of the bribes extorted on the streets is required in kickbacks by superiors, as the price for the job, or the position on a lucrative street corner, or a juicy judgeship. These are structured, vertically-integrated networks, whose objective is the extraction of resources. They're really only masquerading as governments.

GH: How is the public from both developed and developing countries, responding to it? The Anna Hazare movement? The Arab Spring – is it a related response or an indirect outcome of 9/11? How will these new phenomena change our world - which new era will we enter?

Sarah Chayes: Initially, when I gave that talk at the Marshall Center, and I examined the countries from which my most enthusiastic listeners came from – Nigeria, some of the ‘Stans, etc. – I noticed a clear correlation between mafia government and violent religious extremism. And I realized the sense in such a match: If the reason-based rules that have been evolving since the Enlightenment no longer provide people with a reasonable hope of redress of legitimate grievances, then it should be no surprise that they turn back to (their interpretation of) God. And an angry god at that, who in their view encourages the expression of violent outrage. It was a pretty distressing picture.

But then the Arab Spring erupted – presaged, let's not forget, by Kyrgyzstan. From Morocco to Syria and beyond, rigorously nonviolent popular uprisings made public corruption the center of their demands. I saw Moroccan demonstrators carry brooms to demonstrations. Tunisian taxi drivers would spontaneously point out public lands that had been expropriated by the Ben Ali clan for their private use. Egyptians have obtained the trial of top officials on corruption as well as murder charges, while the military leadership continues to seek to evade the relatively respected civilian judicial institution.

And then Anna Hazare came to the fore in India, bringing tens of thousands of people to the streets to demand a proper, truly independent anti-corruption authority, with the ability to hold government officials accountable for their use of public assets for private gain.

(Ironically, a structure very similar to the joint provincial ombudsman committees I tried to get international officials to establish in Afghanistan. Many of them derided the idea as “alien to local culture.”)

Here was an entirely different – and far more constructive – response to mafia government than violent extremism. What is fascinating about these movements has been their local specificity. While the grievances have been almost identical across a dozen nations, local solutions proposed by activists are different. In some countries, the public has been driven by lack of response from the government to demand regime change. In others, such as Morocco and perhaps Jordan, the public is asking for quite sophisticated transformations of their constitutional orders. When I asked a teen-aged girl why she was demonstrating in Rabat, Morocco, on March 20, she said: “I think the prime minister should be directly elected by the people, and it should be he, not the king, who appoints the cabinet.” That’s not regime change, that’s constitutional reform. In India, the demand is different yet: it is the reinforcement of existing mechanisms of checks and balances.

Where this leads really depends on how successful all these vibrant, inspired, courageous, untried populations are in recapturing the public space from over-entitled, out-of-touch elites, how deft in building institutions of accountable and truly representative government, and how vigilant in monitoring application of principles and in protecting their new political institutions from diverse forms of autocracy that will endeavor to move back in.

Perhaps the biggest surprise for me has been the lack of contagion in the West. Surely the 2008 economic slump was caused in part by some of these same types of corrupt behavior, with business elites slipping the reins of reasonable regulation, anemic accountability, and short-term profit even at the expense of the world economy continuing to reap massive rewards. While some of those suffering the brunt of corrective measures for these crises, such as young people in Spain, have launched their own movements, I find western publics to be surprisingly apathetic as mafia government creeps into their own systems.

GH: Can developed-world democracy model be a viable alternative?

Sarah Chayes: Of course! All the ‘developed-world democracy model’ really adds up to, is the application of a set of principles, which I truly take to be universally valued: citizens get some real say in their collective destiny, the rules that govern society are applicable to all, opportunities are distributed with rough equality, mechanisms exist for the redress of legitimate grievances, institutions are structured so as to provide independent checks and balances on power, and mechanisms exist for the alteration and improvement of the system according to these principles.

What worries me the most is money. Money’s ability to concentrate power is the factor that has most vitiated the developed-world democracy model as far as I can tell. So the future of all of the current experiments in remaking democracy will depend on the people’s ability to constrain the power of money.

Imagining Terror

Jonathan Yang, Summer Associate, Gateway House

I was ten years old on the morning of 9/11. We still went to school that day. Our teacher had written upon the board Franklin D. Roosevelt's quote after the attack on Pearl Harbor, marking "a date which will live in infamy." She knew we couldn't fully understand what that meant.

Now, ten years later, most of what I can remember of 9/11 is the sense, however distant, of a brush with evil. It was no ordinary crime; it brought about vivid horrors for which no education is required to grasp; The orange flame and awful black smoke, bodies falling, the ravenous cloud of debris that suddenly roared down out from the sky to chase each tower to the ground.

Beyond that, change would soon sweep through the politics and people of my country, and the world would have to wait. The most lasting world events of my own childhood would only be learned through study, in the years ahead through the recorded memories of others.

9/11 left my generation with an understanding of terrorism built upon the foundations of pain, revulsion, and dread. As more information came with time, imagination filled in what memory could not. For the scale of his inhumanity, Osama Bin Laden became the embodiment of evil; a demon who came to stay. Terrorism was an elemental force that lurked everywhere, that weighed upon us as something that could pour forth through any breach.

Just a few months ago, I was in Mumbai during the July 13th bombings. Leaving the office with some friends, we had parted ways with others who were getting on packed commuter trains for their nightly commute. Shortly after, hearing only that an explosion had gone off in Dadar, I felt for the first time the sharp, clenching dread of wondering whether I had just lost a friend (thankfully, I did not).

Yet what struck me far more was the reaction that I saw in the following days—or rather, the lack thereof. Trains that would have been deserted following such an attack in the US were packed with Mumbai commuters the very next morning. What I initially assumed was spirited resilience soon revealed itself to be something else: a weary resignation to violence, all too familiar to those around me.

Many speak nowadays of the innocence of America shattered by 9/11. Yet it is clear to me that so much of it still remains. Despite the singular horror of 9/11 and the smaller incidents that have occurred since, death and destruction are thankfully not yet our daily reality. We speak of terrorism as something that can be vanquished, with the fervent determination of a people for whom the pain is still fresh and jarring.

Ten years later, our abstraction of the human phenomenon of terrorism –both in our relative insulation from continued violence and the way in which we think about the threat—no doubt frustrates our allies who view the world from a position not quite so removed. Yet that lingering innocence, that instinct to think of terrorism as something akin to communism and fascism, allows us to muster the indignant resolve that has kept the US in the fight against it.

In the past ten years, that innocence has proven to be the source of both hope and misadventure. As we enter the next ten years, it remains to be seen whether that innocence can even persist, or if it should.

