

# Before & After US Foreign Policy and the September 11th Crisis

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Americans were uniformly shocked by the lethal ferocity of the September 11 attacks. Around the world, people and governments were appalled at the human carnage and extended unstinting sympathy—but many made it clear that their sympathy for the victims did not equal support for Washington's response to the terror attacks.

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Phyllis Bennis

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"Before & After" examines the role of US foreign policy in the terrorism/anti-terrorism crisis that began - -publicly - with the attack on the World Trade Center, but which in fact has roots that began long before that September day. It dissects not only the specific Middle East policies long identified with public opposition in the region (for example: support for Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, economic sanctions responsible for widespread deaths of Iraqi civilians, and support for repressive monarchies and dictatorships throughout the Arab world), but also provides context to these issues and the legacy of US unilateralism.

The book traces the decisions made by the Bush administration in the wake of the September 11 attacks, analyzes the choices ignored, the options discarded, and the international laws violated—and the likely consequences.

Review by Lynn Kaplanian-Buller, The American Book Center

'Why do they hate us?' was an often-read heartfelt plea of many Americans after the tragedy of Sept. 11th. Bennis says 'For generations Americans believed themselves immune from any repercussions of their government's actions. Nothing US policymakers did around the world would ever have any serious consequences on their lives at home.' So although the world was united in shock at the scale, the audacity, the cruelty of the attacks, only Americans were also surprised, as distinct from shocked, 'that such an act might be contemplated or attempted.'

'The surprise itself might have been anticipated. For a country that prides itself on openness, Americans have a remarkably narrow world view. Most Americans had never considered that there might be people around the world who blame their government - and them - for ongoing devastation and for immediate crises in countries on the other side of the globe.'

'Beyond the broadest, most general concerns, few international developments reached the center of US public discourse in recent years, while newspapers and television stations slashed their news budgets and shut down bureaus around the world.'

Is it any wonder that the sudden recognition 'that not everyone in the world sees America as Americans like to think of themselves and their country: generous, fair, democratic, open-minded' rent a hole in the feeling of immunity so commonly assumed? The author explains in scope as well as in detail some of the reasons the rest of the world, while shocked, were not wholly surprised at the attacks which took place on that fateful day.

Anyone who wonders how the Middle East can still bear such heart-wrenching proof of international policy-makers' inability to sort victims from the victims of victims while leaving perpetrators unaccountable, should read Bennis' historical synopsis of US policy in the Middle East in chapter two. Very clearly written, she shows how the groundwork for present-day confusion was laid after the First and Second World Wars, and has not been untangled since. The promises made simultaneously to Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and to the organizers of Jewish immigration into Palestine by France, England and the United States, set the region on a seemingly endless struggle over who has the right to be here, who was duped, who was double-duped. (Isn't it curious that Germany is never mentioned in the list of countries responsible for the present mess?) That the ongoing human tragedy does not seem higher on the priority list of the nation who could sort this out causes pain and desperation for all concerned. That Washington follows its own unilateral interests becomes quite clear.

Bennis calls for a multilateral challenge centered in the United Nations to the Bush governments' empire-like unilateralism in order for an international, more civil society to emerge. Since the American political right wing perceives the United Nations as an agent of Satan, this is not likely to happen under the present administration. This book is a sure incitement to dialogue on many fronts – and the lady has done her homework.



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Before and After: US Foreign Policy and the September 11th Crisis. ISBN. 156656462X (ISBN13: 9781566564625). If you are looking for a simple breakdown of the relationship between the US and the Middle East over the last 100 years, read Chapter 2 titled "Long Before". This chapter is why I recommend this book. Ten years after 9/11, we can begin to gain some perspective on the impact of that day's terrorist attacks on U.S. foreign policy. There was, and there remains, a natural tendency to say that the attacks changed everything. But a decade on, such conclusions seem unjustified. September 11 did alter the focus and foreign policy of the George W. Bush administration. It reconfigured and hugely augmented the United States' foreign aid commitments, increasing economic assistance, for example, from about \$13 billion in 2000 to about \$34 billion in 2008. The administration fought disease, becoming the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. September 11, in short, galvanized the Bush administration and prompted it to shift its focus. What were the main concerns regarding to US foreign policy before the attack and how did this change? Also it is important to recognize the actions taken after the attack. According to a survey realized to American people titled Americas place in the world, There was no single issue or concern dominant before 9/11. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism was one of the major concerns in US foreign policy in addition to other global problem such as infectious diseases and international stability. Another major concern for the American people was China, which was a problem that n... American Allies also offered support to the US after 9/11 in fighting against al- Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. This help was removed as the US turned to Iraq. This book gives us the chance to understand US foreign policy and begin to change it. Becoming informed is the first crucial step. I can't recommend it highly enough. This book will tell you everything that you truly need to know about recent U.S foreign policy as it relates to September 11th and our involvement with Mideast countries and events. To read this book is to understand how the dominating focus of the current Bush administration is to protect and expand our oil interests in the Mideast. Any civil or international interest or action that might possibly distract from this dominant Read Full Review.