

INTRODUCTION: 9/11. THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF TERRORIST ATTACKS

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Abstract: This special issue explores the socio-political consequences of terrorist attacks. The first two articles examine the impact the events of 11 September 2001(9/11) had on cultural discourses in the West. What are democracies' reactions to a terrorists attack? Following the 9/11 attacks, most people would expect the government to pass legislation that would restrict individual liberties and give the authorities wide powers to track terrorists and its supporters. Then, the next two articles examine the different ways the 9/11 attacks influenced contemporary American foreign policy. In the last article, William Messmer and Carlos Yordan look at the United Nations' reactions to the 9/11 attacks and the Security Council's establishment of new global counter-terrorism system.

Keywords: 9/11, USA, United Nations, socio-political consequences, cultural discourses, contemporary American Foreign Policy.

This special issue explores the socio-political consequences of terrorist attacks. The first two articles examine the impact the events of 11 September 2001(9/11) had on cultural discourses in the West. In the first of these articles, Christine Mueller evaluates "Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero", a documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting System on Americans' reactions to the 9/11 attacks. Mueller explains that the film pushes the audience to reflect on their own personal attitudes, showing in many instances that Americans' views were not in line with the national culture's support for religious pluralism. Her analysis of viewers' reactions to the film demonstrates that documentaries can be a healing mechanism, helping a nation deal with the national trauma caused by major terrorist

attacks. In the next article, Alec Charles demonstrates that the 9/11 attacks have had an impact on contemporary block-buster, science fiction movies and popular television shows – just as the Cold War had an impact on the films and television shows of the day. His research emphasizes the multiple ways the attacks have influenced these movies and television shows. For instance, some narratives legitimate "jingoistic paranoia", others call for more tolerance and cultural understanding.

What are democracies' reactions to a terrorists attack? Following the 9/11 attacks, most people would expect the government to pass legislation that would restrict individual liberties and give the authorities wide powers to track terrorists and its supporters. Gabriel Rubin's article shows that this is not generally the case. Analyzing two case studies, the 1997 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City and the 2005 attacks on London's transportation system, he concludes that the executive's ability to push for counter-terrorism legislation is challenged by public opinion, political divisions in the legislature, and other societal forces.

The next two articles examine the different ways the 9/11 attacks influenced contemporary American foreign policy. Erica Resende's article looks at the ideological debates that shaped the Bush administration's preemptive doctrine, more commonly known as the 'Bush Doctrine'. Carolin Goerzig's analysis maintains that the Bush administration's "global war on terror" is misguided. By emphasizing preemption, the United States pushed for strategies that have not decreased the risk of terrorism, but which have increased its likelihood. Thus, Goerzig argues that the "global war on terror" is a risk paradox – as the United States tries to secure its interests,

it incites terrorists and it motivates them to carry out more wanton acts. In the last article, William Messmer and Carlos Yordan look at the United Nations' reactions to the 9/11 attacks and the Security Council's establishment of new global counter-terrorism system. Their piece explains why the Security Council did not set up new intergovernmental organization to deal with terrorism and why it preferred to create a decentralized, state-centered system.