

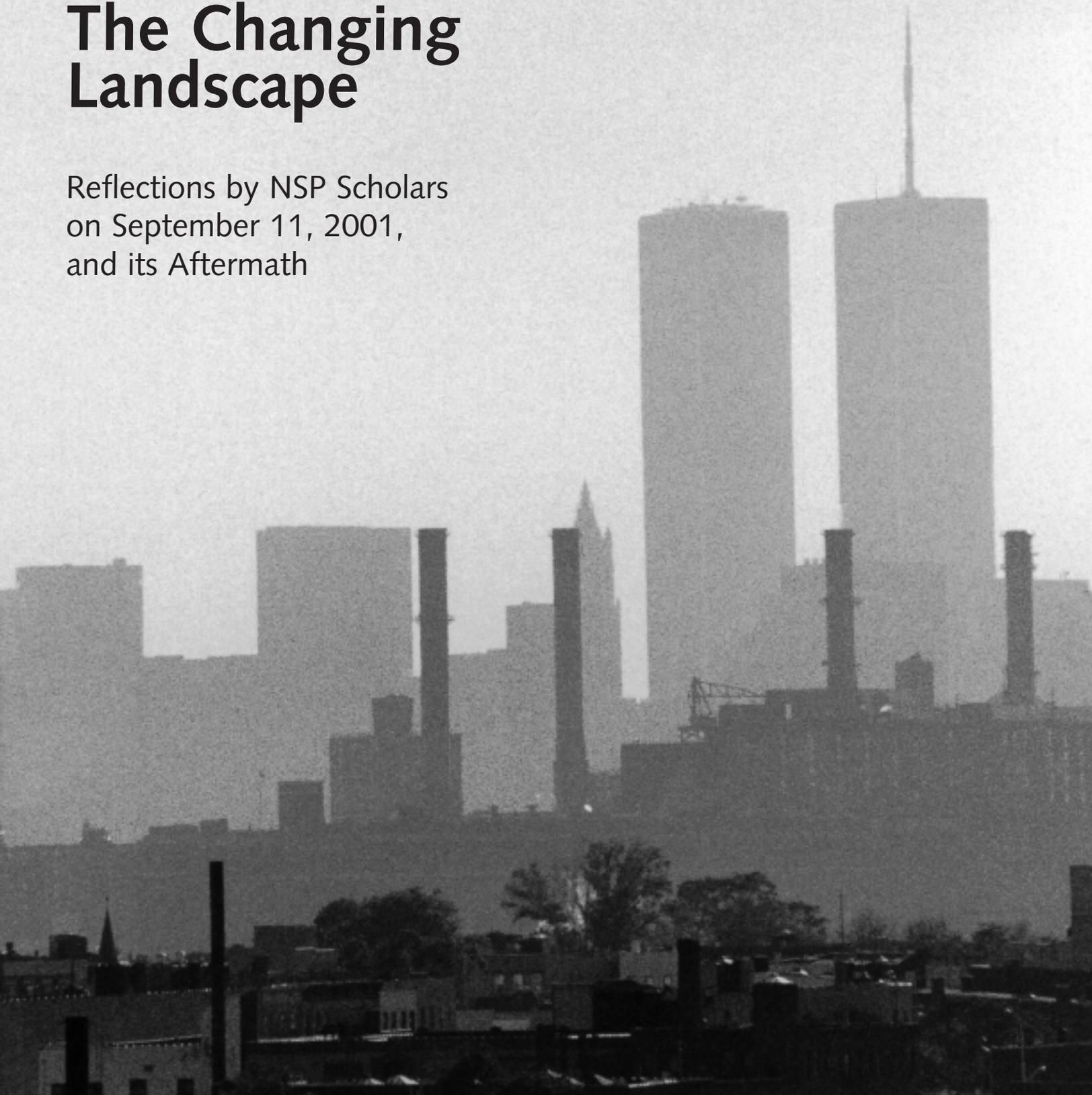
Special Issue • November 2001

ScholarForum

The Journal of the Open Society Institute's Network Scholarship Programs

The Changing Landscape

Reflections by NSP Scholars
on September 11, 2001,
and its Aftermath



The Changing Landscape

In the wake of attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon it is clear that we are as interdependent a world as ever. In the US, the terrible loss of life has shattered long-held assumptions of safety and security, and everyday acts—from boarding a plane to riding the subway to work—are tinged with an unfamiliar anxiety. We have been transported to a world familiar to many around the globe but long absent here, a world filled with the menace of unseen enemies.

In New York City the attacks were personal and immediate. From the window of my apartment in lower Manhattan I watched with dread as the second plane hit the WTC, and then in horror from the street below as the first tower collapsed into dust. I knew, as did those around me, that we were witnessing the deaths of thousands of people. Our hearts stopped—the world ended. Later, from the relative safety of my roof, I stared at the great clouds of debris lifting into the air and engulfing the changed city.

In New York the destruction is seen and felt firsthand, yet this is a shared experience, witnessed by people throughout the world through the stark immediacy of modern media. It is a conflict for the 21st Century, captured and reproduced in lurid and excruciating detail—making it evident, as one NSP scholar puts it, “that there is no *other place* on the planet anymore”.

The scholars of the Network Scholarship Programs are uniquely positioned to place these events in a global context. This special issue of Scholar Forum provides an opportunity for NSP grantees and alumni to voice their opinions and to work through the jumble of emotions that the attacks and the subsequent US actions in Afghanistan have raised. The articles speak to the often-blurred distinction between personal reaction and political conviction. Many of the writers have lived in the United States and express feelings of sorrow and solidarity with the US, but also profound reservations regarding the US government’s response to the attacks. Many attempt to understand the underlying issues that may have given rise to the present crisis. There is an overall sense that much could be learned from these events, and a frustration that perhaps little will.

The importance of inter-cultural exchange programs is especially evident in the shadow of the last two months. At the Network Scholarship Programs we are more committed than ever to our programs; indeed, we feel a renewed sense of urgency around our work. As always, we invite all readers to contact us with comments and suggestions at scholar@sorosny.org.

Alex Irwin
Network Scholarship Programs
New York

The Open Society Institute’s **Network Scholarship Programs** fund the participation of students, scholars, and professionals from Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mongolia, and Burma in rigorous, competitive academic programs outside of their home countries. The goals of these programs are: to revitalize and reform the teaching of the social sciences and humanities at higher education institutions; to provide professional training in fields unavailable or underrepresented at

institutions in the countries served; and to assist outstanding students from a range of backgrounds to pursue their studies in alternative academic and cultural environments.

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tions and organizations active in more than 50 countries worldwide that supports a range of programs. Established in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros, OSI is based in New York City and operates network-wide programs, grantmaking activities in the United States, and other international initiatives. OSI provides support and assistance to Soros foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, South, Southern and West Africa.

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Acts of injustice done

Between the setting and the rising sun

In history lie like bones, each one

W. H. Auden, *The Ascent of F6*

At the moment that two airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City, I was walking the streets of Lublin, Poland.

Never would I have dreamed that such a thing was happening had I not met a friend at my favorite intersection. I was convinced at first that he was joking about the terrorist attacks; after all, I had only recently arrived home from a long stay in the US. I do not need to explain how I felt returning home and switching on the BBC. Even now, after a month has passed, I find what has happened hard to believe. It is beyond belief in fact; and I find myself rejecting the concept altogether. The reality of it seems too cruel to confront.

Politically, the 11th of September has great significance. The world's only superpower was directly attacked by a nebulous entity, not a state. Terrorist groups constitute a part of transnational reality, characterized by a growing number of non-state actors. Uncertainty has appeared in American households. With enemies such as these, it will be difficult for the United States to maintain the myth of its almost unlimited power.

Terrorism is not restricted to Islam. One has only to think of the IRA, Tupamaros, ETA, or Red Brigades. Further, unconventional, and brutal actions taken by extremist groups are by no means a novelty in today's world. Yet, despite having held numerous meetings devoted to this issue, the international community has as yet found no way to effectively fight terrorism. Some countries, of which the US is certainly one, have been breeding and supporting ruthless extremists for many years, using them as tools for balancing their influence in remote parts of the world like Afghanistan. Today, these same people who were fighting in Afghanistan, or the former Yugoslavia, are turning their anger toward the Western world, of which the United States is seen as the leader. In history, as the American expression has it, "what goes around, comes around."

For many years, Western countries have been selfishly

extending their influence over the other parts of the globe. A shameless process of colonization, including the (deliberate or not) destruction or corruption of indigenous cultures, is very much a part of our civilization. A lack of esteem for other cultures (if not an outright contempt) is still the apparent subtext in the agenda of the cultures that comprise what was once known as "Christendom." Blind belief in the infallibility of such concepts as democracy, the free market, globalization, or the independent mass media, stand behind the foreign policy of the United States (the irony that the West's sense of superiority has shifted its foundations so effortlessly from Eternal Truth to cheap consumer goods seems not to trouble anyone very deeply). The cost that Americans are having to pay for being an active superpower is proving to be very high indeed.

The most important question to be asking at this moment is what we can learn from this tragedy. Politicians need to be prudent and make their decisions with proper consideration. The international community needs to be conscious of the fact that neither prejudice nor aggression will be adequate to bring about a solution. Yet, I sense that it is wishful thinking to hope for this kind of self-reflection. Most likely, the cooperation of the international community and its declarations of unity are only a veil, one that is being used to cover another immoral agenda driven

"September 11 may cause a shift in the international order, but it will not change human nature, affected as it is by a taste for power."

by the concept of "real politics." September 11 may cause a shift in the international order, but it will not change human nature, affected as it is by a taste for power.

History is a vicious circle. Again and again there are millions of innocent victims. Again and again we find no panacea for terrorism and violence. So it seems, will it ever be.

Anna WITESKA, Poland

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It seems that life is becoming calmer here. By here I mean New York City, Columbia University, and International House where I live, the places that have become my temporary home.

At first it may seem that nothing has dramatically changed here, but I know that people have changed and that they are still thinking about the tragedy of September 11.

Many rumors and speculations were and are still spreading around here, which makes one feel insecure, frightened and not in control of one's life. Words like weapons, retaliation and bombing are used often, too often.

I can recall the first days after the tragedy. The radio kept broadcasting interviews with officials and people in the streets. People kept talking about revenge, a possible military response, and that the attacks would not be forgiven

"When buildings at the site were collapsing, we uptown were advised to close our windows, as the wind might bring asbestos dust."

nor forgotten. What happened did not make people reflect on the world, but rather stirred up feelings of hatred and revenge. Is it not common sense to understand that world leaders are not doing enough, that there are unhappy and desperate people willing to take desperate measures?

More than a month has now passed.

Immediately after the attack, lower Manhattan, which was always full of people, looked like a ghost town. Nobody aside from rescue workers was there. When buildings at the site were collapsing, we in the uptown area were advised to close our windows, as the wind from downtown might bring asbestos dust. I could smell chemicals in my room, and I live more than a hundred blocks away from the tragic area, so I can only speculate what it was like down there.

There were people who made racist remarks about Islam and about the Muslim countries possibly involved in the attack. Mosques received threatening phone calls, and there were Muslim cabdrivers who were dragged out of their cars and beaten up. Most of the Hot Dog carts owned by Arabs were nowhere to be seen on the streets around Columbia campus for several days after the attack. People were angry, afraid and upset.

Emotionally, it is difficult to cope with what happened. At first everybody was shocked and cried. Initially the focus was on the collapsed buildings, and then the unbearable reality struck—thousands of people lost their lives there and more will die in Afghanistan. Concern about how the events will unfold and affect Uzbekistan, my home country, makes me ask myself when all of this is going to be over.

I still haven't gone downtown, closer to the crime scene. I have mixed feelings about going. On the one hand, I have the unique opportunity of seeing the area at close range, but I am also afraid of the emotions the scene will evoke. I feel fortunate to have once visited one of the twin towers, although only on the first floor—I thought that I would have two years to visit the top observation floor.

The area around the World Trade Center was amazing; there were flowers, a stage with free concerts, and always lots of people. What is there now?

It is up to us to decide how we want to go on with our lives, and in which world we want to live. We need to decide today, because tomorrow might be too late.

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September 11 affected not only the United States but many other countries around the globe. As a citizen of Uzbekistan, I have lately been thinking a great deal about my country.

Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan and is now an ally of the United States. It was clear why the United States would ask for Uzbek support. The United States is now using the South of Uzbekistan in its war strategy. Today America needs Uzbek support and is friendly but what happens after the United States finishes its mission? If the terrorist groups are destroyed, that is fine. If not, Uzbekistan may be a target of Osama bin Laden's terror. If this happens, how will the Russians and Americans respond? The terrorist attacks of September 11 may also affect the religious people of Uzbekistan. Muslims could suffer from police regulations. I think the government of



Ground Zero, September 13, 2001
photo: Alex IRWIN

Uzbekistan will take a thoughtful and effective course of action, which will prevent the Islamic population from being a target for harm and misunderstanding, but this will be a real test, not only for Americans, but for Uzbeks as well. I pray to Allah to help America and Uzbekistan and other nations in the struggle against terror. Help us for the sake of peace.

How will this event shape the attitudes of Americans toward Muslims and, by extension, towards me? First I am sure I will need to explain Islam's true face to Americans whenever I have a chance. It is important to give a clear picture of the basics of Islam. From the first days following the attacks, I was asked many questions about Islam and especially the term Jihad. We had many formal and informal discussions and reflections. The students of Fairfield University, where I am

currently studying, were truly interested in my thoughts and knowledge. It was interesting and pleasant to sense the warm attitude students had toward what I was talking about. I realized that people here at Fairfield University are intelligent and brave. They were not overcome by the terrorist attacks. They continued to teach, study, and learn. I was invited to share my knowledge, thoughts and feelings. After every meeting I received warm applause and most importantly, friendly handshakes. I met new people who became my friends. I believe friendship is a step toward peace.

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Ayesha, a twelve-year-old Afghan girl, was walking home when she saw a missile drop from a military plane. She was very close to her house, and was knocked out by the explosion. She fell unconscious...

The tragedy that struck the US on September 11 is utterly inhumane. Having lived there, having friends there, and as a human being, I mourn with America. I unconditionally condemn this extremist act of violence. Uncompromisingly, the terrorists have to be punished—terrorists, not civilians.

The high rhetoric of the “war against terrorism” cannot justify bombing innocent people in Afghanistan. Civilian lives are equally sacred in New York and Kabul. The terrorist actions of a small fanatical group of people have been placed on the whole Afghan nation, although the Bush Administration claims otherwise. The White House is setting a dangerous precedent for “retaliatory militarism”—an act of punishment

as official state policy. Will the world community now approve the bombing of the Basque region in Spain for ETA terrorist activities in Madrid? Or the bombing of Northern Ireland while hunting for IRA leaders?

We are told that the US air strikes are targeting exclusively military targets, but the news after the second raid is depressing. A United Nations office in Kabul was bombed, resulting in the deaths of four people. A populous area next to a military hospital in Kabul was also hit by a missile, although fortunately no civilian deaths were reported. The effectiveness of the military campaign is highly doubtful for me, as its success will come with huge human losses.

It is increasingly difficult to take sides in this conflict. Questions of being “either with us or against us” are not that easy, Mr. President. What is certain is that violence begets violence. The vicious circle of bloody retaliations will continue until we realize that “an eye for an eye keeps the world blind” (Ghandi). With its B-2 bombers and “smart missiles”, the US government will only create a new generation of fanatics ready to

give their lives and take hundreds of others. Like those on September 11...

When Ayesha became conscious, she found herself close to her house, amid the remains of a destroyed building and surrounded by choking smoke. In a panic, she ran to look for her mother. She found her body under the collapsed roof. Ayesha started looking for her little brother—she was trying hard to hear his voice, to hear something, somebody alive. Suddenly she heard a strange noise—something heavy fell from the

“Will the world community now approve the bombing of the Basque region in Spain for ETA terrorist activities in Madrid?”

sky. She went closer—it was a humanitarian package dropped by a US plane. She did not take the package. In anger she picked up a stone and with all her rage and despair threw it to the skies—towards the US military plane that had killed her family.

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Poverty and global economic inequality, in addition to religious, ethnic, social and political issues, are responsible for the rising specter of terror in the world.

Poverty and inequality breed disenchantment, resentment, despair, and anger. Those feelings eventually lead to growing violence against the perceived culprits—the rich, the more powerful, the West. Poverty and income inequality thus provide a fertile ground for global terrorism.

The world's prosperity is being divided less and less equally. In 1960 the ratio of the most affluent twenty per cent of the

world's population (calculated as GDP per capita) to the bottom twenty per cent was 18-to-1; but by the end of the 1990's the ratio skyrocketed to 40-to-1. The rich are hardly trying to change that. The share of economic aid to poor countries never comes close to the one per cent of GDP once recommended by

"Poverty and income inequality provide a fertile ground for global terrorism."

GDP represents one-fourth of the world's total, spends less than 0.2 per cent of its GDP on aid.

In the next twenty years the world's population will increase by another two billion people. Almost all of these people will be born in "developing" countries. The developed world, for its own benefit, has to seriously engage in fighting global inequality. Increased aid will not be enough. Trade, not aid, is the solution. Poor countries can help themselves, but they need access to world markets for their mostly agricultural products. The hypo-

critical West declares that helping poor countries is a predominant concern, yet at the same time it protects its own markets in the name of preserving national employment, thus effectively killing the chances of self-development for poor countries.

Fighting poverty and global inequality is of course not the only solution to the eradication of terrorism. Poverty does not explain the terrorism of ETA or the IRA where ethnic, religious and political aims play a major role. Hence, "full stomachs" in poor countries may not solve the scourge of terrorism. Nonetheless, rising economic prosperity would surely help.

Terrorism may now be our ever-present companion. It will be one of the features of the new world, post-September 11. Planes, tanks, soldiers, and secret intelligence will not be able to hunt down every terrorist. This is impossible. Yet, we should not stop fighting—fighting also against poverty and economic inequality. If we succeed, we will live in a safer, if not entirely safe, world.

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The solutions that are achieved by bombing, sending troops, threatening your enemy with military might are deceptive.

If you are stronger, you can frighten and oppress the enemy, but you still have an enemy who will find ways for revenge. The only true solution is turning your enemy into your friend. Why don't we take a look at the situation not from the "war" point of view, but from the "peace" point of view? That would

take a lot of time. But the results would be much better.

I suggest that the governments of all countries create ways that would lead to understanding between nations, countries, beliefs—between all people. One way is to create more exchange programs for students and scholars. The money that is spent for education—whether education of your own citizens, or the exchange of ideas with foreigners—is the best long-term investment. It is good to send humanitarian aid to underdeveloped countries in the form of food, clothes, money, and other material things, but the best way would be to create opportunities for educating people.

But such an approach takes much more time and thought than finding an object for retaliation, or tightening security, although I don't deny that these are necessary things to do. My suggestion to governments is to start a "Long-term Worldwide Education Policy". I would like to see countries united in the effort to improve education and understanding and not in the effort of a "war on terrorism".

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What was the objective of the September 11th attacks? To give the obvious answer—the Western economy, the American government and military—is no more than to restate the list of targets.

The military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, says that attack is the only means of winning a war—and its objective must be to eliminate the enemy's forces. In this instance it was clearly not the case: for although it may have caused havoc, the attack could not disable American power.

Then perhaps the real objective was not material, but psychological? This is what Mr. bin Laden claims now: to have horrified the American nation. Yet again, shocked as it may be, America seems farther than ever from having its morale shattered. On the contrary, the subsequent outrage has easily turned into a determination verging on jingoism. Historical cases prove this, as after Pearl Harbor in 1941, or the Falkland Islands in 1983, and also that terror attacks (like bomb raids against British and German cities in WW2) are unlikely to break a nation's spirit.

However, there is an objective the attack has achieved, and one that must have been its primary purpose, namely that of starting a war. To attack national symbols, rather than forces, can be a military disaster (like Moscow 1812 or Stalingrad 1943). But there is hardly a more effective way of provoking a reluctant enemy into a war, and eventual self-destruction. If involvement in a war in Afghanistan toppled one superpower, some may imagine it can topple the other. Thus the attack can be understood from a strategic perspective as an opening for a long war.

War was inevitable since war is impressive, and makes the perfect headline. The headlines of major newspapers have been performative statements: once they pronounced there was a war, there indeed was a war, and Mr. Bush and everybody else (including the authors of dictionaries, who will have to redefine 'war') had to comply. It has become a transfer of power, as it is no longer politicians, but editors, who decide on war. Moreover, it is a case of Baudrillard's simulacrum: a real event can only achieve its actual objective by the means of the mediating media event. The media projects upon the real event: eyewitnesses of the attack were saying, live, that it was 'like a movie'. One of the first experts to be interviewed was...Tom Clancy.



U.S. flag in an Arab neighborhood of Brooklyn
photo: Olesia FALENCHOUK

The real and the reporting are intertwined, which served as a weapon in this provocative attack. But this also gives hope that the war will be shorter than Mr. bin Laden would like. Because what we need to win it is not an actual victory on the Afghan battlefield; it is enough if the army provides us with a powerful enough headline, like 'Bin Laden Dead'. The attack has succeeded in creating a war, but the response will, by the same token, succeed in creating an end to it—if not in bringing about peace.

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The events of September 11, 2001 were more like a movie clip than reality, reminiscent of a fragment from the latest Hollywood movie. But this sensational film will not be shown at any Lithuanian movie theatre this year, nor next year.

The world quickly realized that the fire was real, the aircraft were real, the shattered peace was real, and the attempt

upon people's lives was also real. Even thoughts about World War III sounded real in that moment. The terrorists themselves seemed not to perceive the difference between reality and their own fanatical vision.

After that eventful day the common suffering of America and especially the serious loss of lives, consolidated the country's patriotism. It is a pity that misfortunes are what unite people. Observing the American tragedy, Lithuanians were reminded of 1991 when our people died fighting for our country's independence. We remembered how people from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia united and stood hand in hand in a live chain from Vilnius all the way to Tallinn in an 800 kilometer Baltic Route, expressing a strong desire to be indepen-

dent. The loss in the United States united not only Americans, but also Europeans, who were ready to protect the values of democracy and civilization. The day after the tragedy, Lithuanians hoisted state flags with mourning ribbons to express their sympathy for the American people. September fourteenth was declared a day of mourning in Europe. Lithuanians joined other European countries for a minute of silence in honor of those lost after the terrorist attacks and once more hoisted the state flags. We can only hope that this "world famous movie" will have a happy ending.

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I never thought that I could cry over the news as I did on September 11, 2001. The bodies of the Towers collapsed as if giants were fainting. In seconds the glamorous buildings were down in ruins. People were yelling. Apocalypse today.

Americans were confident in the power of their state and their justice. It was probably the first time they realized that at times even the state cannot protect them. Do people really think about why it happened? I don't mean the direct reason of individuals wanting to attract people's attention and demonstrate their power, but more complex reasons. I believe that

there is much envy towards US prosperity. The US is so influential in world economics and politics, and there are many who resent it.

After the attacks one of my teachers came to class and offered to discuss the situation. Most of the students stayed silent and seemed uninterested, and then one student said that at last the US was seeing what it's like to live in the real world. He said that although he was sorry for all the people killed, the US should be put in its place. I was shocked, but it got even worse when the teacher said that she agreed with the student. I argued that for reasons of humanity the act was not right in any way, but I did not persuade her. Unless we rid ourselves of envy towards other's success such things will happen all over the world. Indifference gives power to terrorists.

Hanna ASIPOVICH, Belarus
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On the Friday after the attack I went with my friends to an independent movie theater. We saw "The Time of the Drunken Horses"—a recent Iranian production that happened to be one of the first movies ever shot in Kurdish

The plot was simple and realistic, the nature merciless, the people poor, and we felt sorry for the parentless family of teenage smugglers. For the last couple of years, the Muslim world has been very popular among Polish liberal students who have supported the just causes of Chechens and Palestinians, traveled to India through Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, and turned Syrian water bones into a favorite pastime at parties. As we were leaving the theatre, our sympathy for the Kurds joined our immense irritation at the Polish media, which acted as if the hijacked planes had hit Warsaw and not New York. We found the reaction of the "average citizen" somewhat excessive and dangerously close to brown-nosing. In general, Polish intellectuals – and we wanted to include ourselves as such – don't like the "normal folk". That

rainy night in Warsaw the "normal folk" were very supportive of whatever sort of retaliation the US would choose. And we were strictly against bombing anybody, as we knew that abrupt revenge would hurt the sort of kids we had just seen on screen, rather than the terrorists. We were chatting over beer and vodka and we made malicious comments about the relatives of one of us, who had proposed canceling their wedding because of what had happened on the other side of Atlantic.

Since that night, every day that passed without American revenge changed my attitude. The series of pathetic comments in the media stopped, the statements by President Bush seemed surprisingly reasonable for this cowboy-mannered enemy of the environment, and the Taliban proclamations of imminent jihad have weakened my understanding of Islam. The weekend that the bombings of Afghanistan eventually started, I read an article by Oriana Fallaci in the *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a Polish liberal daily comparable in quality to the *New York Times*. Fallaci was furious, outraged, and fully committed to what she wrote. Moreover, she was European and therefore more convincing than an American. A week later, the paper published an article by another liberal Italian,

Umberto Eco, and a dozen comments by Italian and Polish readers who considered Fallaci's attack against Islam and the Muslim world racist and xenophobic. I found their arguments somewhat less convincing than numerous examples from Fallaci's own experience.

A passage from the Bible says that God decided to destroy the Tower of Babel because otherwise humankind would achieve nothing. A literal analogy with the WTC makes me once more come to the conclusion that development and religious faith are incompatible; any faith, not just Islam. Look at Northern Ireland.

I remember my Bangladeshi roommate in the States, who at the beginning

"The Muslim world has been very popular among Polish liberal students who have supported the just causes of Chechens and Palestinians."

of our friendship used to pray five times a day, but over our year together the number significantly decreased, perhaps partly because of my influence. I felt happy that I had—even if unwittingly—promoted free thinking at the expense of religion.

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It is not popular now to criticize the United States, especially if one is to be included as part of the so-called civilized world.

This is particularly true after the famous call for allies that US President George W. Bush made, leaving no room for

maneuvering between being either a hundred per cent on the American side or a hundred per cent on the terrorists' side. However, I believe that I am not alone in expressing reservations about the US reactions to the terrorist attacks of 11 September.

The attacks themselves, insolent and massive, were an open insult to American intelligence and security services. The failure of these organizations poses hard questions and helps to

explain in part why the war against Afghanistan actually began; as the inability to trace the culprits, not even to clearly identify them did not eliminate the public desire for retaliation.

Why Afghanistan? None of the terrorists in the hijacked planes was an Afghan. This is a strange war, a tribute to political

“The Taliban, known for its vulgar interpretation of Islam, is now likely to gain increased popularity in the Islamic world as the number one US enemy.”

ambitions and public sentiments, adding more devastation to a devastated land. It is not the Taliban who will suffer the most, but the people of Afghanistan. The outcome of this campaign is that the Taliban and Osama bin Laden may actually gain ground. The Taliban, known for its vulgar interpretation of Islam and violent actions and policies, is now likely to gain increased popular-

ity in the Islamic world as the number one US enemy.

Even if I put morality aside and consider American interests above all else I still feel that this war is being poorly managed. A massive, relentless, and immediate response was needed to show the world that the disturbed giant was ready to retaliate with enormous power once interfered with. In this sense, the war in Afghanistan which started almost a month after the attacks took place, was a bit too late, a bit too aimless, and will not get to the roots of the terrorist problem. In the meantime, America's long-lost international image as a just and morally civilized country suffers further damage no matter how justified and widely supported this war is.

Retaliation should be aimed at individuals, not countries (imagine the USA bombing Sicily to retaliate against the Mafia), employing no double standards, and delivered by secret forces. For so called civilized countries this is a test of their civility.

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Memorial in Union Square, NYC, September 14, 2001



September 11th. A déjà vu for me. The shock, the grief, the anger. I started asking myself why and how all over again. Exactly as I had since my earliest childhood.

When did this evil start? When will it end? I've been living with these questions for so long, I don't think it will ever stop.

I remember being safe when I was five. War was in the past. And then I witnessed my country falling apart. I witnessed mass graves. Was it genocide again? It was difficult enough without war—the poverty, the unemployment, the corruption. Most of all it was difficult to see my parents spending sleepless nights, worried about my future.

It takes a moment to start—the disbelief, the shock. I remember feeling helpless and trapped. In my own world, I was aware suddenly that I might not be able to fulfill the dreams that I wanted so badly—not under that piece of bloody sky. There is not a reason good enough to begin a war.

I remember my brother packing in the middle of the night and running to hide in a friend's house because they were mobilizing young people. I remember calling all my friends to check if they had hidden as well. I remember celebrating my close friend's birthday one night and finding out the next morning that they came and took him. I remember him showing me the holes from the bullets on his jacket when he returned three months later, alive. He didn't talk for a month. "Don't ask me anything", he said.

I would go out for a walk and all I saw were guns and olive green uniforms. Suddenly foreign troupes were all over the place, foreigners who didn't have a clue about my life but were sent to watch over me. I saw more of them than I saw my friends.

War is about the people. It's about taking away your wishes and dreams and expectations. It's about endless fear for the ones you love. It's about taking away your tomorrow. I learned to live for the next morning. I would get up, turn on the TV and check. "Six soldiers were killed last night..." I wondered what their favorite food was. What their favorite color was. I wondered whom they thought about last... exactly as I did on September 11th. Déjà vu.

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When Francis Fukuyama wrote his influential book "The End of History?" in 1989, the biggest threat to world peace (i.e. American-Soviet rivalry) was gone for good, thus rearranging the world order and eliminating serious danger for years to come.

The author proclaimed the final stage of political development to be western liberal democracy, and viewed it as a model for all countries to follow. Now, after the attacks of September 11th, no one would reasonably defend this thesis. Fukuyama failed to notice cultural differences between countries and did not foresee the potential difficulties in introducing democracy around the world. It is precisely these difficulties and differences that I see as



A View from Brooklyn, September 11, 2001
photo: Bill COVELL

crucial factors behind the terrorist attack.

To say that great world cultures differ from each other significantly is as banal as it gets. Yet the actions (among them, military actions) that the US has taken internationally over the past fifty years have completely neglected this plain truth. In Cambodia and Vietnam the number of innocent citizens killed by the American army was at least twenty times higher than the number of victims from the WTC attack. This has led indirectly (and sometimes directly) to a growing atmosphere of anti-Americanism in international relations. The US was excluded from the Civil Rights Commission at the United Nations earlier this year, anti-globalization demonstrations have been clearly aimed at the expansion of the American

corporate world, and a recent conference in Durban on racism was very anti-American in its political climate. The final step was what we saw on TV. Sure, the attacks were terrorist in nature and no doubt organized by terrorists. But perhaps, in a more symbolic way, they were also the voice of about 80% percent of the world's population living in extreme poverty, dying of hunger and tropical diseases with no hope for better days. Unheard before, this voice finally articulated its interests, and its reluctance to everything that has to do with democracy, pop culture, Christianity, the list goes on. Needless to say, such problems cannot be solved by bombing Afghanistan, even if this bombing can somehow be justified. Killing Mr. Bin Laden will surely heal wounds, at least

in the short term, but the same problems may come back like a nightmare again and again, increasing the fears of American society, which has never experienced such a traumatic shock.

The recent events have made it clear that new ways of dealing with the world's diversity and inequality are badly needed. If they are introduced and applied in international relations, we may well speak of the beginning of a new history. So far, we are stuck somewhere between the old end and the new beginning. It is up to us how long this transition will last.

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The best journalist is able to report professionally during a time of tragedy.

On the day of the terrorist attacks on America, the best Ukrainian media professionals were those who were able to provide the most exhaustive information. As a result, Ukrainians had the opportunity to be as well informed and aware as Americans. As soon as the reports were translated, we got a sense of the attacks in their global dimension. The efforts of Americans to provide open communication were not in vain. The United States has obtained support from the countries that formerly belonged to the opposing camp.

In the last decade many people in Ukraine have developed strong emotional ties with the United States. The view of the

ruins in Manhattan was especially painful for us alumni for whom New York will always be a “moveable feast”, a miraculous reminiscence. This happened not only in America, to Americans, it happened to the globe. There is no “other place” on the planet any more. There is no “strange” place. Our cherished personal conflicts, individual traumas, tragedies and struggles seem to be much smaller than before. When we see a man whose face is covered in blood who just came out of the flames and can’t believe he’s alive, we discover again that life itself is of great value. Paradoxically, tragedies often carry messages of love.

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The morning of September 11th started off like any other day as I sat down to answer e-mail and return voice messages. Little did I know that approximately 60 blocks away, Tower I of the World Trade Center had already been hit by an airplane.

As the events unfolded that morning, feelings of fear, anxiety and disbelief overcame me as they did many Americans. While many were wondering how this could be happening, I was wondering if my friends who worked in the World Trade Center made it out safe-

ly. One by one, throughout the day, most of my friends checked in to report their safety. By 11:00pm, however, I failed to reach four of my close friends. They are still reported “missing”.

The loss of my close friends to the September 11th tragedy has been difficult on many levels. I lost a friend from high school, a friend from college, my father’s best friend, and a good friend’s father. Normality has become a distant memory. On my daily commute home I am constantly reminded of my lost friends as I look to lower Manhattan to see floodlights helping rescuers search for life. At this moment in the United States, there seems to be a great divide: peace or revenge? Sadly and understandably, most Americans, including my friends and family are siding with revenge. I find myself unable to commit to either side. Feelings of anger and disbelief consumed me at my friend’s memorial service. I could not help but want to seek revenge for the unanswered loss of my friend’s life. These feelings do not come easily as I have dedicated my life to

learning about new cultures in order to gain a better understanding of the world. Although this tragedy has destroyed my faith in humanity, my dedication to helping create civil societies is still pulling me to help make sense of this tragedy. While I do not have any answers, I find myself trying to fight my feelings of anger and focus on lessons that can be learned. While working in an international organization it has always been apparent that many Americans lack knowledge of world cultures. This event can serve as a catalyst for Americans to continue to learn and understand more about the world. It is easy to immediately pass judgement without understanding; however I hope more Americans will want to understand why this tragedy has occurred. I know that my friends would have wanted their deaths to result in peace in the world and restored faith in humanity.

Alicia ERICKSON
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Tribeca, 9:45 AM, September 11, 2001
photo: Alex IRWIN

Terrorism is used as a tool to further political objectives or to make political bargains. But what we saw on September 11 did not have a clear political agenda that went with it.

It was a deliberate attempt to destroy lives. There was no demand or bargain made by the perpetrators, and therefore it has to be dealt with in a different way. There is no one with whom to negotiate. The only available means to deal with it is to root out the terrorist network before its members commit another crime.

Peace advocates have argued that military action will only aggravate the situation and that peaceful means should be pursued with the view of bringing those responsible to justice. However, examples in history have shown that sometimes peace can only be brought about by using the same methods as those who destroy the peace. What would the world look like today if Nazism and Adolf Hitler had been tolerated and not responded to with war by the rest of the world? We are facing the same challenge as fifty years ago, although it may have a different face.

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Hatred founded on ignorance, distorted religious interpretations, blind jealousy, and helplessness are what I view as the reasons for the attacks.

Hatred and helplessness are one of the most dangerous combinations—fraught with huge potential for destruction.

America has already chosen its

response: strike back to kill those responsible for the atrocity. But how effective and suitable will this “eye for an eye” solution be in the long run? Circumstances have pushed the US to use force against Afghanistan. People in America are looking to their government for protection and revenge, while the Taliban are defiant and unwilling to cooperate. The American reaction can be called justifiable—but is it really? What is America seeking? Appreciation or a more aggravated and sophisticated hatred? Peace or more anxiety and blind vengeance? Given the recent developments in the region and the reaction of some Muslim countries, the answers to

those questions are, unfortunately, quite clear.

I am not an American but I love this country. I am grateful to it for giving me a lot of wonderful friends and exciting opportunities. To see something you care about getting destroyed is extremely painful. I am afraid that one mistake has been already made and it is irreversible. America, although equipped with the best human and technological resources in the world, has succumbed to a provocation deliberately carried out by a group of unsophisticated maniacs and has created yet another nourishing ground for hatred and anger. The price may be very high:

a political redistribution of power, economic recession, instability, fear, hatred and helplessness among Americans in

“A worldwide anti-terror association could have been formed to respond to the violence. The USA should not be leading the anti-terror military campaign.”

the face of an invisible and merciless enemy.

Could America have handled it differently? Yes. The whole world was watching the country, trying to predict

its next move. Almost everybody was willing to help one way or another. That world initiative should have been given more emphasis. A worldwide anti-terror association could have been

formed to respond to the violence. The USA should not be leading the anti-ter-

ror military campaign. Somebody else (UN, NATO, etc.), but not the American people. The US should have restricted its response to economic, financial and ideological measures. Now the US government has much more uncertainty and misery to deal with than before the retaliatory attacks. As long as hatred exists and escalates, America and its people will never feel secure again.

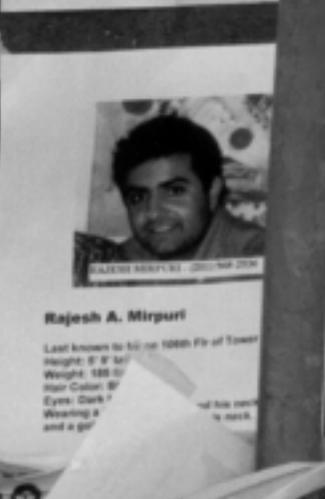
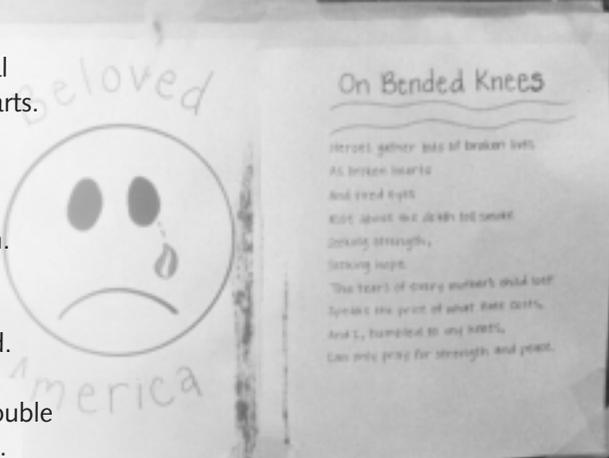
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September 11, 2001

Freedom, you've been threatened,
Your postulates have fallen into parts,
You've lost in all the treacherous upheaval
Two mighty twins and many peaceful hearts.
One can destroy a building by fire,
One can wipe out a city or a town,
But a releasing powerful desire
Can never be suppressed or broken down.
I pray for you, all innocent and parted,
I cry with you, all mournful and deprived,
I challenge you, all cruel and cold-hearted.
We're injured but we certainly survive.
We've seen a lot and we have been in trouble
And therefore so strong we have become.
And now all our efforts we must double
And say together 'we shall overcome'.
The unity, the wisdom, and the power
Are all the treasures that we have to save
And preach them every day and every hour.
Let freedom lead the nation of the brave.

Vitaly SHIAN, Ukraine

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How do you refer to it? Attack on America? September 11th? Terrorist Act? Are you even able to say "terrorist" out loud in the presence of strangers?

As the nation awoke from its initial shock, psychologists, specialists, and friends gave advice on how to cope with trauma, the outpouring of emotions, and physical reactions. "Spend time with family and friends, assure each other that your world is a safe place. Seek support, call hotlines... you must express your feelings," they said. Daily talk shows covered topics such as grieving for victims and how to reassure children of their wellbeing. Even news agencies took on the responsibility of social workers by providing their audience with positive news and dramatic accounts of survivors.

People stood up and came together. Oversized banners read "God Bless America." The Flag, red, white, and blue swept the States like a tidal surge. Anti-war groups flowered, calling for international aid instead of bombing. Others sought revenge, using a famous quote

from a Western: "We will smoke them out." Heated debates by the office water cooler or at dinner with acquaintances brought the development of new theories, seeking to answer the usual "How? Why? When?" As confidence rose, pulses quickened, voices strengthened and a nervous excitement could be felt in the air.

But what happens when the Flag is not your flag? Muted by the social guidelines of your culture and way of life, you quietly turn inwards for reflection and self-examination, leaving yourself to face comments that trivialize your reactions. What do you say when you don't consider death to be the end of life? What if there is no God or higher spiritual being, should you still wish God Bless America? Where do you turn when you learn that your friend escaped unharmed, causing you to smile and celebrate in the somber crowd? Are you therefore cold hearted or emotion-less?

The two towers no longer peek over Manhattan's skyline, forever changing the world-famous sight. How do I refer to it? I'd rather not talk about it.

Inga PLATAIS
New York
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September 11, 2001 marks a seismic change in the configuration of international politics. There have been numerous talks about the cause of the terrorist attacks, ranging from blaming U.S. international politics, to assigning the acts to the realm of barbarism and religious fanaticism.

While there may be some truth to these explanations, it is important to

regard the event from a perspective that takes into consideration its historic complexities, rather than to look for simplistic explanations. Globalization can be seen as a central factor from which these events have emerged. Celebrated by some, condemned by others, globalization is definitely the dominant rhetoric of our time. In the new political configuration of globalization one should expect that warfare—a state that has perpetually characterized humanity—will have new dimensions.

There is an undeniable symbolic link between this attack and the anti-globalization demonstrations of Seattle and Genoa. They all point to a dismantling of the nation as an administrative and political unit, accompanied by a simultaneous increase in emphasis on nationalism. National enemies are not identifiable, creating the question: against whom should one declare war? International territory is still divided between nations, but the network of interests are no longer only nation-

ally defined. Groups are defined beyond national borders; and although their territorial placement may not be haphazard, they cannot be identified solely with the geographic location they occupy.

This situation has caused a diffusion of violence within global networks. Up until now the nation-state had a monopoly on "legitimate" violence, and legitimate warfare took place between nation-states. In the context of the privatization of security within states, and the dismantling of the importance of borders between states, how are we going to define legitimate violence? Will there be an international order that retains this privilege? How will we make sure that these networks will indeed secure a just distribution of violence?

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Firefighter photo: Olesia FALENCCHOUK



Scholarships and Fellowships with NSP

The Network Scholarship Programs offers the following scholarships and fellowships. Programs are offered only in certain countries; please visit the NSP website for details and for application information.

www.soros.org/netprog.html

American University in Bulgaria:

Each year, NSP funds scholarships for four years of undergraduate liberal arts study at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG), located in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

CNOUS-OSI Program:

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DAAD-OSI Program:

A joint scholarship program in Germany for Central Asian graduate students and junior faculty.

Edmund S. Muskie/ Freedom Support Act (FSA) Graduate Fellowship Program:

Approximately 375 Muskie/FSA fellowships are awarded annually, with fellows from the former Soviet Union placed in one to two-year Master's level professional degree (and non-degree) programs at selected US universities in a variety of fields.

Faculty Development Program:

Each year for up to three years, faculty fellows spend one semester at a US university and one semester teaching at their home universities (social sciences and the humanities only).

Global Supplementary Grant Program:

This program offers supplementary grants to students from selected countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union to pursue Doctoral studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at accredited universities in Western Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America.

Mongolian Professional Fellowship Program:

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The program awards grants for one

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Supplementary Grant Program—Burma:

Partial scholarships awarded to Burmese students worldwide who are currently unable to pursue their studies in Burma.

UK Scholarship Program:

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The Undergraduate Exchange is a one-year, non-degree program for students enrolled in a university in Eastern and Central Europe, parts of the former Soviet Union, and Mongolia.

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