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Discourses on the “War on Terrorism” in the U.S. and its Views of the Arab, Muslim, and Gendered “Other”*

Mervat F. Hatem

The events of September 11, 2001 were horrific attacks against innocent Americans who were engaged in the routine activities of going to work and/or traveling to various regional destinations. It is possible, however, to repudiate these actions and still criticize the public discourse on terrorism offered by President Bush that splits the world into “good vs. evil” and “us against them.” Initially, this construction might have expressed the feelings of a wounded American public that was too overwhelmed for words and explanations. Since then, the discourse that developed to explain the “war on terrorism” has reinforced this absolute view of the world through recalling the old Orientalist discourse that defined the enemy in ways familiar to the American and international publics. Orientalism split the world into the “Occident” vs. the “Orient,” positing “essential” differences between the two that were too radical to be overcome. In this discourse, Islam, Muslims, and Islamic cultures were represented as an inferior “Other” whose irrationality, backwardness, and violence reinforced the superiority of the West, which stood for rationality, enlightenment, progress, and civilization.¹

This discourse underscores a major paradox about the war on terrorism. The events of September 11 showed the implications of a globalized world, with its easy movement of people, financial resources, and access to knowledge/technology, making even the world’s only superpower vulnerable to acts of aggression. Yet the use of an archaic discourse, with its intellectual roots in the seventeenth century and which privileged religious imageries and concepts, successfully mobilized support without offering a way of understanding the specifically global aspect of that phenomenon. This discourse also has no way of offering effective responses to the economic and political tensions that contributed to these events. In a press conference held on September 17, 2001, President Bush offered an example of this disconnect between the global reality of the war and what can only be described as the primitive intellectual attempt to come to terms with it. He explained that the U.S. was facing a new type of enemy, one that has no borders and with an extensive network. While he was clear that the “war on terror-

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ism” represented a new type of war, his representation of this enemy did not go beyond describing it as a barbarian whose objectives were incomprehensible.² Variations on that theme have since dominated the public discussion of these events and the war.

A second paradox about the September 11 events and the “war on terrorism” that underscored its global character was that the nineteen men who allegedly conducted the attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon belonged to several Arab authoritarian states which, with the exception of Lebanon, are all loyal American allies. All nineteen were Muslim Arabs: fifteen from Saudi Arabia, two from the United Arab Emirates, one from Lebanon, and one from Egypt. Hence the enemy did not belong to one nationality or nation-state. A discussion of the policies of these various states, their relationship to the US, and how both factors contributed to transforming these dissidents into transnational actors capable of inflicting large-scale damage on the U.S. government and people in response to U.S. support of their country’s regime has not been widely or successfully attempted. Interestingly enough, the U.S. “war on terrorism” did not target any of the countries to which these hijackers belonged. Instead, the war was fought in Afghanistan, whose government played host to many dissident Islamist groups.

The U.S.-led “war on terrorism” has two battlegrounds. The first is the home front, starting after September 11. To ensure “homeland security,” the largest detention of Middle Eastern, Arab, Arab-American, and Muslim men in U.S. history was set in motion. Only later did the war shift to the second battleground: Afghanistan, where Osama Bin Laden, the presumed mastermind behind these operations, was sheltered by the Taliban regime.

This article focuses on the consequences of the “war on terrorism” for Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims, as well as for the rest of the American public. I trace the early evolution of the globalized Orientalist public discourses developed to justify the “war on terrorism” as the first war fought in the twenty-first century. Next, I show how the war and its discourses have been used to justify the denial of citizenship rights to a large group of U.S. citizens. For the rest of Americans, this discourse curtailed freedom of speech, especially as it related to questioning the war, its scope, targets, and the tools used against the enemy both within and outside the U.S. The war was also used to encourage Middle Eastern states to do the same with regard to the public debate and those it suspected of terrorism. The result was that the war that was fought in the defense of freedom curtailed the rights to due process, freedom of association, and freedom of speech in the U.S. and abroad.

Finally, I show how this public discourse developed a feminist Orientalist strategy and agenda that pitted American women against their Muslim sisters both inside and outside the U.S. While the U.S. Department of Defense sought to present itself (and the U.S.) as the advocate and protector of women’s rights in Afghanistan and in the U.S., this claim was contested by military women on the right who took the department to task and showed its application of a double standard regarding the dress code required of military service men and women stationed in Islamic countries. This use of feminism in the service of the war effort and to reinforce Western superiority was contested on the left by women peace activists on college campuses who used “veil

days” to declare their solidarity with their Muslim sisters, who were the visible victims of anti-Muslim violence. Finally, while the media coverage of the home front during this war on terrorism offered American Muslim women with Islamic modes of dress an opportunity to publicly represent themselves in various ways and to give Islam in the U.S. a distinctly “American” content, it also served to misrepresent the diversity of the community and maintained its separateness as an “other.”

Globalizing the Orientalist-Religious Discourse in the Service of the “War on Terrorism”

A discourse is an interpretive framework that explains the history of shared meanings and ways of explaining the world and one’s relationship to it. It helps us understand the power of representation and the way it influences how we act in and upon the world. An examination of the policy statements offered by President Bush, and to a lesser extent Attorney General John Ashcroft (who presided over the large-scale internment of Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern men in this country), shows that they rely very heavily on an Orientalist-religious discourse and its metaphors to define the war in ways familiar to most of the American public. In the days that followed September 11, an emotion-laden religious discourse was used to give solace to a wounded nation at the expense of Muslims and Muslim Americans. It was later followed by a globalized Orientalist discourse that reflected strategic concerns as well as *realpolitik* in the mobilization for the war.

The first injection of religion into the public discussion that followed September 11 was not by the president but by Reverend Jerry Falwell, who, two days after the attacks, offered his own religious interpretation of these events on a TV program hosted by fellow evangelist Pat Robertson. Falwell suggested that the “terrorist attacks reflected God’s judgment on a nation spiritually weakened by the American Civil Liberties Union, the providers of abortion, supporters of gay rights and federal court rulings on school prayers. . . . God, angered by the secular groups, lifted a curtain of protection and allowed the terrorists to strike.”³ The White House criticized this statement not because of its content, but because of its divisive nature at a difficult time. Falwell was given advance notice of the White House statement and its content, reflecting the administration’s friendliness to his constituency and its views of the world.

A day later, President Bush used his visit to the Washington National Cathedral as part of a “national day of prayer and remembrance,” to make a statement about the war to come. This was an interfaith service that included a Protestant minister, a Catholic cardinal, a rabbi, and a Muslim imam, the latter for the first time in a government-sponsored event. President Bush’s political sermon at this event offered the earliest discursive formulation of his “war on terrorism” at home and abroad. The following are excerpts of that sermon:

Just three days removed from [the September 11] events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history, but our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil. War has been waged against us by stealth, deceit, and murder. . . . This conflict was begun on the timing and the terms of others. It will end in a way and at an hour of our choosing. [. . .]

God's signs are not always the ones we look for. We learn in tragedy that his purposes are not always our own. . . The world He created is [however] of moral design. . . It is said that adversity introduces us to ourselves. This is true of a nation as well. *In this trial, we have been reminded and the world has seen that our fellow Americans are generous and kind, resourceful and brave [. . .]*

Today we feel what Franklin Roosevelt called the "warm courage of national unity." This is the unity of every faith and every background. This has joined together political parties and both houses of Congress. . . Our unity is a kinship of grief and a steadfast resolve to prevail against our enemy. And this unity against terror is now extending across the world [. . .]

*In every generation, the world has produced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America because we are freedom's home and defender and the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time [. . .]*⁴

Many analysts highlighted the fact that President Bush used the pulpit to deliver a war speech.⁵ In it, he represented the enemy as "evil." It was the historical responsibility of the U.S. to rid the world of that evil and restore God's moral design. In facing adversity/the enemy/evil, the nation was able to assert to itself and to the world its own goodness: brave, kind, resourceful, and generous.

Like Falwell, President Bush referred to God's signs. Even though it was difficult to figure out what they were, God's moral design of the world offered an important key. The restoration of the divine/Christian moral order along with the adversity represented by these attacks by the adherents of another religion reminded the world and Americans of their superiority as generous, kind, resourceful and brave people.

National unity was put in the service of the war, bringing together people of different faiths, backgrounds, and political parties in Congress. The evocation of President Roosevelt in that discussion provided a reference to another war (the Second World War) fought by the U.S. and which Americans identify as a "good/moral" war. It represented the challenge faced by another generation of Americans in the defense of freedom just as the war on terrorism was to serve as this generation's defense of that political ideal. The service ended with the singing of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with its threat of the "terrible swift sword." Most of those who reported and commented on the service felt that the ceremony was used to declare war on the enemy and that the service itself made the country feel that it was already at war. This church ceremony offered the earliest significant example of the mixing of religion and politics in the discussion of the positive values that the U.S. stood for versus the negative values associated with the enemy.

What about the symbolic inclusion of a Muslim cleric in this government-sponsored event? On the one hand, it offered a visible and formal recognition of Islam as another monotheistic religion in the U.S. along with Judaism and Christianity. It symbolically served to dissociate Islam from the violent actions of some of its adherents. In exchange, it expected Muslims to unite behind the flag in the fight against other Muslims in the future "war on terrorism."

Two days after the interfaith event, in an informal chat with reporters, President Bush made the first public association between the war on terrorism and the war against

Islam. He described the war effort as a "crusade" that pitted "us" against "them," giving the conflict a clear religious dimension.⁶ The description explicitly conjured the old rivalry between Christianity and Islam, with an old cultural and political history. In this new war, the very large and diverse Islamic world was presented as homogeneously at war with the U.S. The Bush doctrine, as it came to be called, argued that there was no difference between the terrorists and their home countries even though the latter were often politically hostile to the agendas of the former. "If you harbor them, feed them, house them, you are just as guilty and you will be held to account."⁷ Here, the U.S. was clearly encouraging these states to move against some of their citizens in the name of this new global agenda. Worse, when President Bush was asked if he wanted Bin Laden dead, he invoked old "out west" posters which said "Wanted Dead or Alive."⁸ The "war on terrorism" discourse dispensed with legal niceties and embraced the lawless motif of the Old West.

In an attempt to restrict the damage of this description of the war, the White House hastily and cynically arranged a visit to the Islamic Center in Washington D.C. on September 17. The President used the occasion to denounce a rash of domestic attacks on mosques, Islamic businesses, and average Muslims. In that visit, he stated that the focus of U.S. efforts was the terrorists, not Muslims. He was also quoted as saying "Islam is peace. These terrorists do not represent peace. They represent evil and war."⁹ He added that "those who feel like they can intimidate our fellow citizens to take out their anger do not represent the best of America, they represent the worst of humankind and they should be ashamed of that kind of behavior."¹⁰

While the visit and these comments were taken by representatives of Islamic organizations as a step towards discouraging the spreading anti-Muslim violence in favor of religious tolerance, most commentators agreed that realpolitik was behind them.¹¹ The visit and the comments were part of an instrumental attempt to neutralize the effect of Bush's description of the war as a crusade and its effect on the successful building of an international coalition in which Arab and other Muslim states were to play significant parts. The beginning of the Justice Department's sweeping detention of Muslims showed that Bush's distinction between Muslims and terrorists¹² was an academic one. The use of government power to intimidate Muslims provided evidence of the cynicism of the official declarations claiming to support tolerance and respect of the rights of Muslim citizens.

The French president, Jacques Chirac, who visited Washington D.C during this time, was equally cynical in his advice to President Bush about the discourse that should be used in explaining the "war on terrorism." He warned against the war being perceived as a battle by one country, the U.S., against the rest of the world. He stressed the importance of the U.S. building an international coalition that brought together all the civilized countries against the terrorists. He suggested that the description of the war as a "crusade" led the U.S. to fall into the trap set by Bin Laden who presented the war as a conflict between Christianity and the Muslim world.¹² French preference for the use of "civilization" to represent the West and its allies in this war was another Orientalist derivation that posited the same division of the world into camps, but stressed a more secular aspect. Unfortunately, the underlying religious content of this

European civilizational discourse was made clear by the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, who publicly declared that Western civilization was superior to that of the Islamic world and urged Europe to reconstitute itself on the basis of its Christian roots. He added that the "West must trust in the supremacy of its values, especially its respect of human rights and religion."¹³

In addressing a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush gave the most specific description of the enemy by giving it a name and detailing the military and political strategies the U.S. would use against it, both at home and abroad. To encourage global mobilization for the war, the speech used two separate discourses to address the two audiences crucial for the success of the war. It retained the primary distinction between the West, its values and institutions, and a new radical Muslim enemy opposed to them. It continued to make the secondary instrumental distinction between the evil Muslim terrorists and a peaceful Islam as a means of organizing an international alliance including Muslim states to defeat the Taliban. While the need to think strategically made some accommodation with a domesticated Islam necessary, the globalized Orientalist discourse did not break with the key assumption that separated the Orient and the Occident and what they stood for. The following excerpts from President Bush's address to a joint session of Congress demonstrate this:

Americans are asking, who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all pointed to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organization known as al-Qaeda. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya and responsible for bombing the USS Cole. [. . .]

Al-Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money, its goal is remaking the world and imposing radical beliefs on people everywhere. [. . .]

The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars. . . . It is a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam. . . .

This group and its leader, a person named Osama Bin Laden, are linked to many other organization in different countries. . . . There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries. [. . .]

The leadership of al-Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of the country. In Afghanistan, we see al-Qaeda's vision for the world. Afghanistan's people have been brutalized—many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough. [. . .]

The United States respects the people of Afghanistan - after all we are currently its largest source of humanitarian aid, but we condemn the Taliban regime. It is not only repressing its own people - it is threatening people everywhere by sponsoring and sheltering and supplying terrorists. By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder. [. . .]

I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It is practiced by many millions of Americans and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists

are traitors to their own faith, trying to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends, it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists and every government that supports them. [. . .]

Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated. Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate . . . [our] democratically elected government. . . . They hate our freedom. . . . They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa. [. . .]

Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign. . . . We will pursue nations that provide aid as safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or with the terrorists. . . .

This is not just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is a fight of all who believe in progress, pluralism, tolerance, and freedom. . . .

I ask you to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith. . . .

The thousands of FBI agents who are now at work in this investigation may need your cooperation and I ask you to give it. . . . We will come together to give law enforcement the additional tools it needs to track down terror here at home . . .

The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war and we know that God is not neutral between the two.¹⁴

The president first addressed himself to the American audience, providing them with the name and the agenda of their enemy. According to him, the group responsible for the attacks of September 11 was al-Qaeda, a loosely constructed terrorist network that straddled more than one nation-state. Because it was implicated in operations against the U.S. in Kenya, Tanzania, and Yemen, it was already perceived as a group of murderers. Al-Qaeda represented a form of Islamic extremism that was intent on shaping the world according to its radical views. They had operated in more than sixty countries. Their agenda was represented by the policies of the Taliban regime, which persecuted men and women alike. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan and sheltered, sponsored, and supported al-Qaeda as enemies of the U.S. The cause of al-Qaeda's anti-Americanism was not seriously explored in this speech; rather it suggested al-Qaeda was simply committed to driving the U.S. and Israel from the vast regions of Asia and Africa.

Next, President Bush addressed his second audience made up of Muslims in Afghanistan and the rest of the world. He said that the U.S. respected the Afghan people and cited U.S. humanitarian aid to Afghanistan as an indicator of that respect. Clearly, respect here was not between two equals. The Afghan people were the object of U.S. benevolence. While he declared that the U.S. respected the Islamic faith, he offered as a passive marker of that respect the fact that there were millions of Muslims who

practiced that faith in the U.S. The other “good” Muslims that he referred to in this discussion were those who lived in countries that were friendly to the U.S. and who did not challenge its interests. He used Muslims’ belief that Islamic teachings were “good and peaceful” to declare the perpetrators of September 11 as **evil or violent** Muslims who had blasphemed the name of Allah. In using **the name of Allah twice** in that sentence, he not only reinforced non-Muslims’ language difference but also their religious differences. It was as though Allah was not the same God as the Christian or Jewish God, one who also abhorred violence.

Bush hoped to separate al-Qaeda and the Taliban from the Muslim world and the Islamic religion. As evil forces, the argument went, they were engaged in violence, had blasphemed the name of Allah, and hijacked a peaceful Islamic religion. They hated the U.S. because of its democratic form of government and its freedoms. In this way, they were heirs to other murderous **ideologies of the twentieth century**. In this fight, God was on the side of the U.S.

In this part of the analysis of al-Qaeda and of their relations with the rest of the world, we see President Bush placing September 11 in the context of globalization and global world politics. As the supposed enemy of the U.S., the paramount power of a global world, they became the enemy of civilization and of the world, including Muslim states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. While the governments of these states were already friendly to the U.S., the president was inviting the many “Westernized” Muslims to join the West in the condemnation of al-Qaeda, the Taliban regime, and the **September 11 attacks**. Bush described the “war on terrorism” as a fight of all who believed in **the universal** ideals of progress, pluralism, tolerance, and freedom. It was a war that **transcended** the boundaries of the nation-state and religious or political differences. The speech ended with a simultaneous call for tolerance in the U.S., so that no one was singled out for unfair treatment, and a request that Americans give law enforcement agencies all the help they would need in tracking terrorists. This was an excellent demonstration of the contradictory uses of these universal principles and **discourses: they were** used to encourage tolerance of others and also the engagement in **surveillance** against other citizens to help the state.

In the State of the Union address to Congress on January 29, 2001, President Bush offered another articulation of this globalized Orientalist discourse, **its religious metaphors**, and its use of superior Western values in order to explain **the war** and some of its outcomes.¹⁵ He added a long list of Binarisms to describe the **antagonists** in the war. **The conflict** pitted good vs. evil, light vs. darkness, civilization vs. barbarism, **freedom vs. oppression**, just cause vs. outlaw regimes, security vs. danger, and peace vs. **terror**. In contrast with these generalities and absolutes in the description of the parties to the conflict, the president was very specific in his description of the changing U.S. definition of its security in a global world. The U.S. could no longer feel protected by geographic barriers, like the oceans, that separated it from the rest of the world. Its security had to be assured by action abroad and increased vigilance at home. Homeland Security required improved intelligence collection and sharing, expanded patrols of the borders, and reliance on the eyes and ears of alert citizens.

The global enemy remained Islam, Muslims, and Islamic states. He specifically **refined the targets** of the international war effort as “the terrorist underworld, including

groups like Hamas, Hizballah, Islamic Jihad and Jaish-i-Muhammad,” and countries like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea which represented “the axis of evil.” This discourse was silent on the many innocent Muslims who became the victims of the war in Afghanistan and the “war on terrorism” in the U.S. The civilian casualties of the war in Afghanistan were mentioned in very few media reports. In most of these reports, the Pentagon refused to confirm the number of people killed or else contested the incidents and the figures. There was slightly better coverage of how Arab and Muslim Americans and people of Middle Eastern descent represented a different type of casualty of the war on terrorism in the U.S. There were virtually no accounts of the harassment of ordinary Arab or Muslim Americans, the unfair detention of many people reported by their neighbors or co-workers, the disruption of their family lives, or the indiscriminate deportation of hundreds using flimsy excuses like traffic or old visa violations.

The president also used gender to discuss how the events of September 11 and the war in Afghanistan offered a nationalist representation of the best things about the U.S. and the liberating outcomes of U.S. policies. The “evil” that was done on September 11 targeted the U.S. as the unilateral power of a globalized world and reinforced America’s image of its superiority through the actions of its citizens, particularly its men.

None of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September 11th, yet after America **was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves**. We were reminded that we are citizens with obligation to each other, to our country and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate and more about the good we can do. . . . In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of the firefighters, the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what is a culture of responsibility.¹⁶

The “evil ones” reminded America of its mettle, what it stood for and why it was superior. Despite the losses and the damages it suffered, the U.S. needed the constant struggle against these forces to exhibit the best it had to offer **to itself and to the rest** of the world. As part of this war effort, the U.S. looked in the **nationalist mirror** and saw itself represented by the brotherhood of the heroic fire fighters at home and the sacrifices of U.S. soldiers overseas.

In another nationalist narrative, American soldiers liberated **Afghan women** from the oppressive Taliban. “[A year ago], the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. **Today women** are free and are part of Afghanistan’s government [represented] by the **new minister** of women’s affairs, Dr. Sima Samar.”¹⁷ Here was the familiar lofty Western self-representation as bearing **liberation to Muslim women** from their oppressive Muslim men and culture.

The State of the Union address was followed by comments and remarks by other policy makers and public figures that showed the limits of attempting to religiously globalize the war. It also revealed how Muslims and Islam did not receive the respect that President Bush invoked in his address to the Muslim world. Attorney General John Ashcroft, when addressing a group of Christian broadcasters in Nashville in

February 2002, argued that the war on terrorism was rooted in a faith in God that unified Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the effort. The war helped to bring into focus the “way of God and the way of the terrorist.” While claiming to emphasize the unity of the believers regardless of their faith in the war, he offered a comparison between Islam and Christianity that reiterated the inferiority of the former and the superiority of the latter. “Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends his son to die for you. The conflict that confronts us is not Christian versus Muslim or Muslim versus Jew. This is not a conflict based in religion. It is a conflict between good and evil. And as President Bush has reminded us, we know that God is not neutral between the two.”¹⁸

Despite Ashcroft’s wish to build a community of the faithful engaged in the war on terrorism, the continued presumption of Christian superiority and Muslim inferiority undermined that goal. His discourse dealt with Islam and all Muslims as homogeneous and undifferentiated. The interpretation and views of one group of Muslims, like those who were believed to be responsible for September 11, were used as a basis for the characterization of both the religion and all its adherents. The inferiority of Islam was “demonstrated” by the willingness of these men to die for God.

The religious broadcaster Pat Robertson considered the idea of a community of the faithful that included Muslims fighting terrorism to be unthinkable. He used the contempt of a few Muslims for U.S. policy to speculate on the motives of all Muslims who settled in the U.S. He thought that one reason why they would settle in the U.S. was “possibly to spread the doctrine of Islam.” He went on to say that “Islam is not a peaceful religion that wants to coexist. They want to coexist until they can control, dominate, then if need be, destroy.”¹⁹ What Robertson’s comments added to the religious discourse on the war of terrorism was the suspicion and fear of Muslims. As far as he was concerned, they were a threat to Christianity in the U.S. The Muslims were religious rivals who could not be trusted.

The aforementioned religious discourses used by U.S. policy makers and public figures fell back on partisan representation of Islam to assert the continuing opposition between Christianity and Islam and to claim a Western moral edge. While this discourse was successful in mobilizing U.S. citizens for the “war on terrorism,” it did so at the expense of a greater understanding of Islam and of the Muslims in their midst. It avoided any serious discussions of the impact of U.S.-led globalization and the increased U.S. influence in the Middle East since the Gulf War as direct or indirect explanations of September 11. The public elaboration of the nature of the “war on terrorism” as a war without borders avoided any discussion of U.S. global policies or those of its allies and how these might explain some of the underlying causes of September 11. It defined terrorism as a security concern, not a political or economic problem whose causes needed to be investigated. The most that this discourse offered was that September 11 was a manifestation of lax security at home and abroad. A serious examination never took place regarding the fact that a group of professional, middle-class men from the Middle East attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (symbols of U.S. economic and military dominance) to protest their own governments’ policies and close alliance with the U.S.

The shift from old-style Orientalist discourse to globalized Orientalism in the explanation of the war on terrorism was a response to the changing needs and the focus of the war. The emotional, crudely religious and divisive view of the world first served to reassure a wounded public with a familiar explanation. As the preparation for the war in Afghanistan began and the need for the mobilization of the Muslim world in support of the war asserted itself, there was an attempt to globalize Orientalism. The new discourse sought to isolate the Muslim enemy within that part of the world, to activate U.S. global networks of support and to resurrect the universal principles that historically gave the West its appeal and support. It appealed to the large Western audience that existed both inside and outside the boundaries of “the West.” This included large and important political segments in Islamic societies.

The use of universal principles and values like pluralism, freedom, and tolerance appealed to those specific segments and also provided Western societies with a short-hand articulation of *realpolitik* in this context. The latter offered the veneer of unity to very diverse economic and political systems for a higher global purpose: fighting “terrorism.” It also contributed to a sloppy, but approximate, universal definition of the enemy—in this case Islam and Muslims. According to this view, there was no difference between Islam and what Muslims did. There was also no difference between the interpretations of one group of Muslims and the views of all Muslims. If pushed to its logical conclusion, this assumption provided Westernized Muslims, the logical allies of the West, only one option: to repudiate their own religion and compatriots to be included in Western global networks and agendas. It was not clear how this would serve the interests of the West or of that group.

The “War on Terrorism” and the Erosion of Democratic Practice in the U.S. and Abroad

John Ashcroft proposed a three-pronged strategy to fight terrorism at home: a “legislative package to expand the powers of law enforcement to fight terrorism,” immediate disruption and prevention of terrorism, followed by a long-term effort to throw terrorists “off keel.”²⁰ President Bush approved this strategy and suggested including the attorney general’s office, the CIA, and the FBI in the national effort to protect the U.S. from further attacks. The goal was to preempt “future attacks, instead of the traditional emphasis on investigations, gathering evidence and then prosecution.” He also supported a legislative package to Congress “requesting legal authority for the FBI to track, wiretap and stop terrorists.”²¹ The President remained actively engaged in the pursuit of the national “war on terror,” grilling Ashcroft and the FBI director, Robert Mueller, on the status of their multiple investigations. He supported the new focus of law enforcement even though it raised questions about the tradeoffs between stopping the terrorists and the protection of civil liberties.²²

During that same period, Arab and Muslim businesses and mosques became targets of violent attacks. In the six weeks that followed September 11, the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee reported 400 violent incidents against Muslims. Six of those incidents resulted in death.²³ They were followed by widespread forms of discrimination against Arab and Muslim Americans in employment, housing, and police harassment.²⁴ In the previous year, the FBI had reported 33 anti-Muslim hate

crimes across the country, including aggravated assault but not murder. They reported 250 incidents since September 11 against Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians including numerous assault and fire bombings. There were also many contested cases of hate crimes, including the murder of a Christian Egyptian shopkeeper, which the FBI refused to classify as such.²⁵

President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft condemned these acts of violence against Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Americans. Attorney General Ashcroft was quoted as saying "We must not descend to the levels of those who perpetrated [the September 11 attacks] . . . by targeting individuals based on their race, their religion, or their national origin."²⁶

Ironically, the Justice Department and other law enforcement agencies quickly became involved in large scale racial profiling of a new group. African-Americans and Latinos, long-time victims of racial profiling, were joined by Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim Americans whose religion and national origin made them the targets of new forms of institutional discrimination by law enforcement agencies. As the primary suspects of terrorism, they were detained by these agencies, which then refused to release any hard facts regarding their numbers, their identity, or names. This reluctance suggested that the numbers of those victimized by these practices were large. Secrecy was maintained regarding who was detained, how many were being held and on what basis, and what kind of judicial review was available.²⁷ These were questions that the Justice Department refused to answer. Those who were detained were denied contact with their families and only allowed a few brief visits from their lawyers. They were kept incommunicado, denied exercise, and given limited opportunity to shower.²⁸

Finally in January 2002, the FBI acknowledged that it had 722 suspects in detention and released their national origins. This number did not provide any clues about how many were detained since September 11, how many were released or how many were deported. The numerical breakdown of the 722 by national origin revealed the very broad definition used to identify which ethnic groups were held as suspects in the "war on terrorism." Arab Americans who traced their places of birth to any of the nineteen states that belong to the Arab League were at the top of the list. In January 2002, there were ninety-eight Egyptians, thirty-nine Yemenis, thirty Jordanians, twenty-eight Saudi Arabians, twenty-one Moroccans, fourteen Tunisians, thirteen Lebanese, twelve Syrians, seven Algerians, six Mauritians, two Palestinians from the occupied territories and twenty Palestinians from Israel, three Eritreans, three Kuwaitis, three Iraqis and one each from the UAE, the Sudan, and Libya under detention. The only Arab states that did not have some of its citizens detained were the tiny states of Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. Next, the list of detainees included people from the greater Middle East. It included 242 Pakistanis, fifty-one Turks, nine Iranians, six Afghans and six men from Bangladesh. Finally, there were Muslims and non-Muslims from all over the world. They included six from Mexico, four from France and Sri Lanka, three from Germany, Russia and Spain, three from Tanzania and the United Kingdom, two from Albania, El Salvador, Kenya, Senegal, Trinidad, and Zaire; one from Australia, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech republic, Honduras, Indonesia, the Ivory Coast (Catholic), Nepal, Singapore, South Africa, Venezuela, and even one of unknown origin.²⁹ The "war on terrorism,"

which was described as a war without borders, reflected this fact in the nationalities of those detained as suspects.

In this kind of setting, no Arab or Muslim American was safe from discrimination, including one of President Bush's secret service agents, Walid Shater, who was bumped from an American flight to Dallas because the pilot did not want him on board. No amount of reprimand from President Bush was going to make things easier for Arab and Muslim Americans as long as what was being said did not correlate with the institutional practices of the powerful law enforcement agencies approved by the president and attorney general.

Finally, the drop in the number of hate crimes against Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern Americans in the months that followed the attacks was replaced by alarmingly high levels of workplace discrimination against members of these groups. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported that it received 166 complaints of illegal discrimination from members of these groups between September 11, 2001 and December 6, 2001. This was more than double the number of complaints it received the previous year during the same period (sixty-four).³⁰ This indicated that more institutional forms of discrimination were used to target these new groups.

A more genuine response came from ordinary Americans who extended private and public support to the Muslim and Arab Americans in their communities. Some sent cards, flowers, or money to those who were victims of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab violence. Local women offered to do shopping for Muslim women who were too afraid to leave their houses. Men and women participated in candlelit vigils around mosques designed to represent community support for the rights of Muslims to worship in safety.³¹

The polarized public discourse reflected by the adage that "you are either with us or against us" put a lid on any dissenting views nationally and internationally. American intellectuals of Middle Eastern descent, who attempted to discuss and explain the failures of U.S. policy in the Middle East as background for understanding September 11, were accused of serving as a mouthpiece for the terrorists.³² Other Americans who questioned the civil rights implications of the government's response found an equally hostile public reception. For example, the commencement speaker at California State University in Sacramento was heckled, booed, and forced off the stage by the graduating class before she finished a speech that was critical of U.S. policies.³³ Only those who spoke in defense of official policy were tolerated. This undermined the principle of academic freedom inside and outside the classroom.

The restricting of public and intellectual debates and the denial of civil rights to groups that share an ancestry with the "enemy" represented another paradox in the "war on terrorism." Before September 11, the U.S. had been trying to persuade the rest of the world, especially the developing world, that globalization operated best within a liberal/democratic context. The "war on terrorism" led the U.S. to significantly retreat from its own mantra nationally and internationally. For example, the U.S. asked the visiting prince of Qatar, headquarters of the satellite television station al-Jazeera, to restrict its critical coverage of the war because al-Jazeera represented opposing views and aspects of the war that the American news media preferred not to cover, e.g., the

high number of casualties among Afghani civilians. The U.S. also supported greater repression by Arab governments such as Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, whose human rights records were previously criticized by the U.S. State Department, in the quest to cut the local roots of terrorism. More recently, the U.S. announced that rather than interrogate the Arab supporters of al-Qaeda who were arrested in Afghanistan, it would send them back to the Middle East for these governments to use any necessary means to get information regarding their activities.

The "war on terrorism" disrupted the link between globalization and increased democratization. Nationally, the emphasis on security contributed to curtailing the civil rights of Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern citizens of the U.S. Internationally, the war on terrorism led to widespread support of authoritarian states and practices. The U.S. could no longer continue to prod these regimes to embrace democratic practices as it became overtly apparent that democratization would present obstacles to the prosecution of the terrorists.

Feminist Orientalism in the service of the "War on Terrorism"

Gender made a brief but significant and politicized appearance in the early public discourse on the war on terrorism. Gender was used in familiar ways to characterize the "liberality" of the "Occident" vs. the "backwardness" of the "Orient" in their cultures' respective treatment of women. This served as another way to politically delegitimize the enemy (the Taliban regime and its al-Qaeda supporters). It was also used in some new ways as a basis for searching for a global consensus on the rights of women.

Before the war in Afghanistan began in October, President Bush's address to the joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001 cited the Taliban's denial of women's right to education and the harassment of men based on the length of their beards as examples of the repressiveness of the regime that was a haven to the terrorists. This was the first gendered shot in the U.S. propaganda war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. After the war started, the Bush administration used gender as part of the effort to contrast the Taliban's record to that of the U.S. It was signaled by the unusual insertion of Laura Bush into the political discourse of the war. Up until then, she had limited herself to what one reporter described as "the comforter-in-chief" of the American public and the families of the victims through visits and public messages that advised families to talk to their children. In a dramatic shift from that role, Laura Bush, who had described herself as interested in the "traditional" concerns of women, delivered the presidential weekly radio address in November 2001. The following are excerpts:

Good morning. I'm Laura Bush and I'm delivering this week's radio address to kick off a world-wide effort to focus on the brutality against women and children by al-Qaeda terrorist network and the regime it supports in Afghanistan, the Taliban. . . . The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists. Long before the current war began, the Taliban and its terrorist allies were making the lives of children and women in Afghanistan miserable. Seventy percent of Afghan people are malnourished. One in every four children won't live past the age of five because health care is not available. Women have been denied access to doctors when they

are sick. . . . [They] face beatings for laughing out loud. Women cannot work outside of the home, or even leave their homes by themselves. [. . .]

The severe repression and brutality against women in Afghanistan is not a matter of legitimate religious practice. Muslims around the world have condemned the brutal degradation of women and children by the Taliban. . . . They do not conform with the treatment of women in most of the Islamic world where women make important contributions in their society. [. . .]

Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror, not only because our hearts break out for women and children in Afghanistan, but also because . . . we see the world the terrorists want to impose on us. . . . Fighting brutality against women and children is not the expression of a specific culture; it is the acceptance of our common humanity - a commitment shared by people of good will on every continent. . . . Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan are no longer imprisoned in their homes. . . . The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights of women.

In addition to eliciting horror at the Taliban's denial of some basic rights to women, the address sought to represent and to underline an existing global consensus on what were acceptable standards for the treatment of women and which the Taliban did not meet. Their severe repression of women was not a matter of "legitimate religious practice." Muslims everywhere condemned it and these practices did not conform to the treatment of women in Islamic societies.

The address ended, however, by reiterating one of the oldest Orientalist clichés about the relationship between the West and Muslim women. Bush told her listeners that Western military gains freed Afghan women from imprisonment in their homes! In his later State of the Union address, President Bush repeated this claim. While Afghan women were not allowed out of their homes without the *burqa* under the Taliban regime, this was not the same as being imprisoned in their homes. Laura Bush also claimed that the U.S. forces that overthrew the repressive Taliban regime liberated Afghan women. More accurately, the liberation of women was one effect of the bigger fight between Taliban and American men. President Bush also took pride in how American soldiers fought to free Afghan men and women. Whereas American men/soldiers were represented in these active heroic roles, Afghan men and women appeared as the objects of their benevolence.

Here, I would like to introduce the notion of "feminist Orientalism," a term that Joyce Zonana coined to characterize a specific and widespread Western feminist strategy that displaced the oppression of women onto "Oriental" or "Islamic" society and in this way avoided an examination of how "Western" or "Christian" society produced its own forms of gender oppression. This strategy affirms feminist belief in Western superiority and uses it to push for change as part of a "conservative effort to make the West more like itself." Because of its Orientalist assumptions about the East and the West, it did not lend itself to genuine or equal alliances among women of different cultures.³⁴

The Pentagon crudely participated in this propaganda war. For example, it was widely accepted that Victoria Clark was chosen to be the Pentagon's spokeswoman in order to contrast the status of women in the U.S. with that of women in Afghanistan.

This strategy of using women to score public relations points did not stop one senior administration official from stating that “right now we have other priorities [than women’s rights] in the future government . . .” He then added: “We have to be careful not to look like we are imposing our values on them.”³⁵ This was an interesting statement that reflected the cynicism of the Pentagon. Women’s rights and issues were put in the service of the war effort by serving to delegitimize the enemy and score points in the propaganda war. At the same time, women’s issues were simply not one of the priorities for the U.S. administration regarding Afghanistan. To appease what could be a critical internal audience, especially the women’s lobby, the administration used the politically correct argument of “cultural relativism,” i.e., “we” should not impose our values on “them.” This was clearly an attempt to have it both ways: claiming superiority for the U.S. government as the advocate of the rights of women, but also continuing to devalue these rights in its war agenda. Also, note here that Laura Bush’s claim that there was a global consensus on the rights of women as key and important was gone. One was back to the argument that these were our particular national values and we should not impose them on others.

In this propaganda campaign, the Pentagon was put on the defensive by Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Martha McSally. She filed a lawsuit against the Defense Department (with the help of the Rutherford Institute) accusing it of discriminating against American servicewomen. McSally, who was stationed in Saudi Arabia, pointed out that while **servicewomen were ordered to wear the local ‘abaya**, a head-to-toe robed garment, servicemen were not expected to adhere to local dress. McSally claimed that wearing the ‘abaya, which she viewed as Muslim dress, also violated her rights as a Christian. She went on to ask Leslie Stahl on *60 Minutes*: “how can we require the very women that are fighting the war to free these [Afghan] women to wear these clothes?” When Stahl asked her to show the viewing audience the ‘abaya, she refused, making it clear that she found it to be a loaded symbol of oppression.

The ‘abaya was an article of clothing that served as a powerful symbol separating the East and West, Islam and Christianity. In asking for the elimination of the double standard in the way military servicemen and women are treated, McSally appealed to the military establishment to shed this Oriental practice and to be true to its Western heritage. She was not interested in a radical critique of either the military establishment or other inequalities that lower-ranking military women faced. As a high-ranking military woman, she was appalled by a practice that made lower-ranking men derive leverage from Saudi cultural practices. She also rejected any possible analogies between “these [oppressed Afghan/Saudi] women” and Western women like herself.

In response to negative publicity that tarnished the Defense Department’s projected image as an advocate of women during the “war on terrorism,” the Department introduced a half-hearted change of the rules. A military directive stated that “wearing of the ‘abaya in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged . . . For men there is no longer any requirement to wear civilian clothing to cover their uniforms.”³⁶ The result was not the outlawing of the ‘abaya; servicewomen were strongly encouraged to wear it. Was the wearing of the ‘abaya a representation of an Oriental/Saudi custom or just another manifestation of the pervasive double standards

used in the treatment of American servicemen and women? It was both. The Saudi practice intersected with the patriarchal tendencies of the U.S. military, thus explaining the double standard. In choosing to blame only the Saudis, like McSally did, without a serious discussion of the forms of gender inequality that exist within the U.S. military, one became a proponent of feminist Orientalism.

If McSally’s lawsuit represented the reinforcement of the feminist Orientalist strategy for change, then the adoption of the Islamic mode of dress by non-Muslim American women in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and states in the South offered a rare expression of their solidarity with American Muslims. The development of what came to be known as “Veil Days” first occurred in Ann Arbor, Michigan.³⁷ It emerged as a response to the fear experienced by women who wore the Islamic mode of dress in the wake of the September 11 events. Anti-Muslim violence during this early period singled out these women as an easy and visible target. A general fear prevailed among women, especially immigrants.³⁸ Some took off their headdress (the *hijab*) to protect themselves. Muslim Imams supported them in this action by invoking the Islamic principle that necessity was an excuse for engaging in forbidden actions. Other Muslim women chose to remain sequestered in their homes, refraining from the routine tasks of shopping or to taking their children to school. On the Ann Arbor campus, some Muslim women who had not worn the *hijab* before September 11 donned it in defiance and to show their pride in their religion. Muslim men, members of the male branch of the Muslim Students Association (MSA), organized themselves into groups that walked Muslim women to and from their classes and homes.

The earliest show of American support to these Muslim women came from their women neighbors who volunteered to do their shopping and other errands. Eventually, American peace activists (one from Dearborn, one from Detroit, and one from Ann Arbor) met with the Muslim Sisters, the women’s branch of MSA. They suggested that all the above were not an adequate answer to the security and protection of Muslim women. If people were attacking them just because of who they were (women) and how they were dressed (Islamically), then there needed to be a more visible show of solidarity that would also provide an effective way of putting an end to the violence. They suggested that there be national *hijab* days in which non-Muslim women put on the *hijab* and in this way confuse the attackers. Meanwhile, the president of the University of Michigan, Lee Bolinger, and the mayor of the city of Ann Arbor, attended the Friday prayers at the local mosque to show their support of Muslims and to condemn the anti-Muslim violence.

This was not an easy decision for Muslim women. First, they feared that the imams would object. The imam of Dearborn, where the largest Arab American community with a sizable number of Muslims is located in Michigan, issued a ruling that declared the idea was an honorable one and again invoked the principle of necessity allowing one to engage in unorthodox things. The president of the MSA informed the Sisters that he would support whatever they decided. With these religious and institutional matters settled, some of the Sisters had other concerns. They felt that allowing non-Muslims to wear the *hijab* compromised its sanctity and purity. It was, after all, a formal public symbol of Islam. Others argued that it was good to let American women

to put on the *hijab* and to see that it did not change who you are and to sensitize them to what Muslim women go through, from the stares to the disrespect. After a lot of debate, a consensus was reached that it was a necessary measure for the protection of Muslim women.

In discussing the calendar for *hijab* days, both female peace activists and the Sisters made sure that it included Yom Kippur to allow some Jewish women to join. For female peace activists, whether Christian or Jewish, there was the cultural and emotional difficulty of taking on this very loaded symbol of the oppression of Muslim women. It challenged the belief in the radical difference between Western and Islamic cultures and the roles that women played in these cultures. The decision was made to get together every Friday, which is the Muslim day of prayers, at the central meeting point on campus and to give away *hijabs* donated by shopkeepers in Michigan to any woman who asked for one and to help her put it on. No one was turned away.

For veiled Muslim women, this was a decision to recognize the differences between them and other American women and also to work towards alliances that bridged those differences. For lesbians, for example, who identified very much with Muslim women who were discriminated against because of how they looked and what they had on, this was an opportunity for dialogue in which the Sisters were clearly ahead of MSA and the community. By taking on the *hijab*, American women treated it as an article of clothing and not the loaded sign of oppression. They consciously treated and accepted it as a sign of cultural difference. In putting it on, they sought to transform its meaning from a marker that separated American and Muslim women into a sign of solidarity between these two groups of American women. In responding to American male hostility towards women, especially Muslims, they were declaring that they were all Muslim and veiled! This was a very powerful message to send during a national "war on terrorism" that undermined to a very large extent the civil liberties of Muslims by law enforcement agencies. I should also mention that many of these peace activists distributed roses to Muslim men at the end of the Friday prayers at the mosques. This too transformed the American women's attitude towards Muslim men as a group that represents the most objectionable attitudes to women.

Finally, the media coverage of the Muslim community during the war was predictably very skewed. Only religious women were covered as the public face of American Muslims. The assimilated Muslim women who did not look very different from other American women were not included. This was a selective attempt to represent the community as different and separate. As a very diverse group, the Muslim community in America ranges from 2.5 to 7 million, and is evenly divided among three main ethnic groups: about 30 percent are African-American, another 30 percent are South Asian, and approximately 30 percent are from the Middle East. Analysts agree, however, that it is the fastest growing faith in the U.S. In many of their interviews with reporters, American Muslims, both men and women, were engaged in integrating the American and Muslim parts of their identity. Many developed a Muslim identity that had an American cultural and political content. For example, Pakistani high school student Fatima Saqib was a tennis star who competed wearing pants. She was homecoming queen who went to the prom with a female friend. Her mother took treats to her son's

school as part of her explanation of Ramadan and how her son breaks his daily fast.³⁹ A young African-American woman confidently asserted, "I love Islam and anything in this country that is not contrary to my religious beliefs."⁴⁰ A young African-American man suggested that being an African-American Muslim was like being black twice, i.e., fighting both racial and religious prejudice.⁴¹ A third argued that blaming September 11 on Islam was like "blaming Christianity for what the Ku Klux Klan did throughout the South, hanging people, burning their houses, and sticking a cross on their lawn and burning it."⁴²

The discourses on the "war on terrorism" and the reactions to the war by men and women showed that gender was a contested arena in an increasingly globalized world. Feminist Orientalism was put in the service of the war effort by different state institutions and the individuals who were associated with them. Just as the war and its discourses contributed to a reaffirmation of the old divide between the Occident and the Orient and their respect or lack thereof for women's rights, these discourses also included the contributions of American peace activists and American Muslim women, who chose to **creatively engage their differences in expressions of solidarity**.

Conclusion

The presumed decline of the state in an increasingly globalized world must be questioned after an examination of the United States government's discourses and practices that followed September 11. Even if one accepted the contention that the U.S. was the only state with which no other state could compete in the international system, it was clear that the U.S. depended on the mobilization of other states to wage war on an enemy that was not represented by any single state. This enemy used the information and communications technology of an increasingly globalized world to make itself difficult to attack.

The "war on terrorism" brought out the authoritarian and reactionary potential of global politics both at home and abroad. The first victim of the war was the civil rights of Muslim Americans in the U.S. and other Western states. The effect of increasing the power of law enforcement agencies and the new orthodoxy regarding the subordination of freedom to security concerns would have implications for all Americans. The U.S. also extended its support for these authoritarian policies to many states of the Middle East, who were thus given license in their continuing persecution of Islamist groups as the enemies of Islam and Western civilization. This was a very powerful discursive strategy that sought to isolate these groups and to deny them important sources of support.

The discourses of the "war on terrorism" showed the willingness of the U.S. government to mix religion and politics, a combination it had always considered to be a sign of political underdevelopment. Religious symbols, metaphors, and churches served as means for mobilizing the American public to go to war. This mix sought to appeal to important segments in Islamic societies to join the fight against terrorism and denounce other Muslims. The attempt to globalize the old Orientalist discourse depicted and encouraged an alliance between Muslims and Christians opposed to terrorism versus some violent Muslims who "hijacked" Islam to serve a narrow agenda. This

discourse was silent, however, on how the social and political realities of globalization created the conditions leading to the attacks of September 11.

This leads one to ponder two important questions: (1) Was the public political discourse of the “war on terrorism” unable to “keep up” with the dramatically developing globalization? and (2) Was this the reason why it attempted to imbue old Orientalist categories with new meanings? In answer, I want to suggest that there was a little bit of both in the development of the public discourses on the “war on terrorism.” This development had very little to say about the social and political consequences of globalization and how these might contribute to explaining the actions of this group of young Arab Muslims, who were clearly alienated from the official policies of their own state and its alliance with the U.S. And the attempt to transform the religious rivalry between Christianity and Islam into a civilizational rivalry fell short of discussing how the present system of global alliances unites important segments of different civilizations and generates local tensions that serve the interests of some and alienate others. The events of September 11 represent the boiling point of some of these local tensions into a global form of violent protest that transcends state borders. Rather than discuss these local sources of tensions and the grievances that are generated by globalization, the discourse on the “war on terrorism” as a war without borders only deals with the problem in terms of security. It offers national and global security responses to what is diagnosed as the dangers of globalization. Until the public discourse moves from moral indignation to an analysis of the social and political consequences of globalization and its impact on the North and South, as represented by the events of September 11, 2001, our ability to comprehend and to deal with the causes of terrorism will remain limited.

ENDNOTES

* This paper was first presented at the conference on “Afghanistan and Beyond: Women’s Activism in Times of War” organized by the Five College Women Studies Research Center on March 7-8, 2002 at Mt. Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

² *The New York Times* (18 September 2001), p. B4.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The Washington Post* (15 September 2001), p. A13.

⁵ *The Washington Post* (15 September 2001), p. B9; *The Washington Post* (January 30, 2002), p. A12.

⁶ *The Washington Post* (1 February 2002), p. A16.

⁷ *The Washington Post* (30 January 2002), p. A13.

⁸ *The Washington Post* (1 February 2002), p. A16.

⁹ *The New York Times* (18 September 2001), p. B4.

¹⁰ *The Washington Post* (18 September 2001), p. A23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, *The New York Times* (18 September 2001), p. B4; Jim Sleeper, “Review of The Cold War and the Color Line,” *Washington Post-Book World* (February 3, 2002), p. 5.

¹² *The Washington Post* (2 February 2002), p. A12.

¹³ *The New York Times* (27 September 2001), p. A8.

¹⁴ “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People.” At www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/20010920-8.html.

¹⁵ *The Washington Post* (30 January 2002), p. A16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *The Washington Post* (20 February 2002), p. A2.

¹⁹ *The New York Times* (23 February 2002), p. A8.

²⁰ *The Washington Post* (31 January 2002), p. A14.

²¹ *The Washington Post* (1 February 2002), p. A16.

²² *The Washington Post* (3 February 2002), p. A15.

²³ *The Washington Post* (26 October 2001), p. A2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *The Washington Post* (20 January 2002), p. A14.

²⁶ *The Washington Post* (15 September 2001), p. A9.

²⁷ *The Washington Post* (15 October 2001), p. A1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. A13.

²⁹ *The Washington Post* (19 January 2002), p. A12.

³⁰ *The Washington Post* (12 December 2001), pp. E1, E4.

³¹ *The Washington Post* (6 October 2001), pp. A1, A6.

³² *The New York Times* (29 September 2001), pp. A13, A15.

³³ *The New York Times* (21 December 2001), p. B1.

³⁴ Joyce Zonana, “The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of *Jane Eyre*,” *Signs* 18:3 (Spring 1993), pp. 593-94.

³⁵ *The New York Times* (27 October 2002), p. B9.

³⁶ *The New York Times* (25 January 2002), p. A6.

³⁷ The analysis of the events that led to and the discussions associated with “Veil Days” in Michigan was provided by a participant who preferred to remain anonymous.

³⁸ Interview with a witness to these events who also participated in the organization of “Hijab Days” and who tried to theorize their meaning. The interview took place in Ann Arbor, Michigan on 24 March 2002. The witness preferred to remain anonymous.

³⁹ *The New York Times* (1 October 2001), p. B7.

⁴⁰ *The New York Times* (5 October 2001), p. 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Amrita Basu, “Introductory Remarks” to “Afghanistan and Beyond: Women’s Activism during Times of War.” ♥