

Are the Events of 9/11 Still of Central Importance to a Climate-Stricken World?

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The question in my title will, generally speaking, be viewed from different perspectives by different age groups:

- If you were born in 2001, you are now 15 years old, and all your life the horrific events of 9/11 have been drilled into your mind. The pervasive media words “ever since 9/11,” coupled with long-lineup airport security checks, never let you forget that Middle East terrorists killed 3,000 Americans by attacking the Twin Towers. However, you may have learned in school that more than 10 times that many people are killed on U.S. roads each year – more than half a million road deaths since 2001¹ – and wondered to yourself why such upheaval over one event has dominated the news all your life.
- If you were born in 1991, you are now 25 years old. You and your peers may have seen evidence in the alternative news or on YouTube that 9/11 did not happen the way the media reported it. You may also have wondered why 2,600 architects and engineers² are challenging the official story, and why the 9/11 Consensus Panel of 22 international professional researchers³ has refuted 48 points of the official claims. But your immediate life and future plans are very absorbing, and questions about evidence that points away from the Middle East are not being raised in the media. Indeed larger questions of how wealthy Western countries sustain their vast material advantage over poorer countries are seldom raised and remain generally outside your awareness.
- If you were born in 1981, you are now 35 years old, and likely in full-stride with work and a young family. You remember the horror of 9/11 when you were 20 years old, and continue to be bombarded with news of the many horrific terror attacks – always attributed to Muslim fanatics – since the

Boston Marathon of 2013. But perhaps you or a friend spotted an article in *The Guardian*, reporting that “nearly all of the highest-profile domestic terrorism plots in the United States since 9/11 featured the “direct involvement” of government agents or informants.”⁴

However, you probably didn’t have time to pursue this. It takes long hours to make ends meet these days. Since you were 20 in 2001, domestic wealth had already shrunk about 7% by 2011.⁵ You hear about the 1% who are edging out the 99%, but you are working hard and don’t have much time to think about it.⁶

- If you were born in 1971, you are now 45 years old, and are astounded by how much the “war on terror,” often attributed to a “clash of civilizations,” has taken over the news. You may remember that 9/11 was not treated by the United States as a crime – which would have required investigation, criminal prosecution and law enforcement – but rather as a war against freedom, democracy, and the Western way of life. Because it was treated as an act of war, a military aggression was mounted against Afghanistan and Iraq without an investigation.

Such questions may nag at you occasionally, but you’re now fully into mid-life responsibilities, and any time you have left over is needed for rest and recreation. But deep down, you’re worried about the direction things have taken and the world your kids will inherit.

- If you were born in 1961 or earlier, you are now 55 or older, and the orderly world you grew up in has changed beyond recognition since 2001. If you can stand to turn on the news at all, you worry mostly about climate change and how your grandchildren will fare. You may have read that climate change is already killing far more people than terrorism does.⁷

Global warming may seem an order of magnitude more important to you than the media ranting about Muslim terrorists – who are so foreign to your lifelong experience with the human spirit (and foreign to Muslims you actually know), that you turn off the news again.

One thing is clear for all age groups: If you are reading this article now, 15 years after 9/11, you are questioning the events of that day.

To help understand why the event still sits uneasily with so many people – while its touted offspring terror retains a death grip on the evening news – here are two statements from responsible people who have closely examined the 9/11 evidence.

The first statement, written in 2008, is from Lt. Col. Shelton F. Lankford, US Marine Corps (ret.), who took an oath of allegiance to defend the U.S. Constitution when he signed up for military duty. The tragedy he expressed after learning the evidence about 9/11 speaks volumes about its importance:

“September 11, 2001 seems destined to be the watershed event of our lives and the greatest test for our democracy in our lifetimes. The evidence of government complicity in the lead-up to the events, the failure to respond during the event, and the astounding lack of any meaningful investigation afterwards, as well as the ignoring of evidence turned up by others that renders the official explanation impossible, may signal the end of the American experiment. It has been used to justify all manner of measures to legalize repression at home and as a pretext for behaving as an aggressive empire abroad. Until we demand an independent, honest, and thorough investigation and accountability for those whose action and inaction led to those events and the cover-up, our republic and our Constitution remain in the gravest danger.”⁸

In 2015, when Lankford’s independent investigation still had not come, editor and writer Tom Englehart wrote:

Fourteen years of wars, interventions, assassinations, torture, kidnappings, black sites, the growth of the American national security state to monumental proportions, and the spread of Islamic extremism across much of the Greater Middle East and Africa. Fourteen years of astronomical expense, bombing campaigns galore, and a military-first foreign policy of repeated defeats, disappointments, and disasters. Fourteen years of a culture of fear in America, of endless alarms and warnings, as well as dire predictions of terrorist attacks. Fourteen years of the burial of American democracy. . . . Fourteen years of the spread of secrecy, the classification of every document in sight, [and] the fierce prosecution of whistleblowers. . . . Fourteen years of our wars coming home in the form of PTSD, the

militarization of the police, and the spread of war-zone technology like drones and stingrays to the “homeland.” . . . Fourteen years of the expansion of surveillance of every kind and of the development of a global surveillance system whose reach . . . would have stunned those running the totalitarian states of the twentieth century.⁹

Yet here we are in 2016, at the fifteenth anniversary, still captive to a questionable war on terror that every day takes priority in the news over the looming catastrophe of climate change.

Meanwhile, what all age groups can understand is that the energy we need to live our privileged lives – oil – is what nations are ultimately fighting over.

Perhaps we should look more closely at the fact that 9/11 conveniently produced public consensus to create “regime change” in the oil-rich Middle East. And the fact that climate science denial supports the transparent lies of 9/11: Both allow the heavily subsidized fossil fuel industry to continue to seek oil in the Middle East, while destroying domestic ground water and agriculture with fracking.

The deceptions of 9/11 and climate denial thus originate from the same source: power and profits from energy dominance in a world of grossly unequal wealth. Widespread recognition of the falsity of both deceptions is central to the future welfare of civilization.

If our world is to recover its natural balance, the science on both 9/11 and climate change needs to rise to prominence in the minds of people of all ages, and then sanity must be demanded of the corporate media.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_motor_vehicle_deaths_in_U.S._by_year (as of August 29, 2016).

² Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth (ae911truth.org).

³ The 9/11 Consensus Panel (consensus911.org)

⁴ Spencer Ackerman, "Government agents 'directly involved' in most high-profile US terror plots," *The Guardian*, July 21, 2014 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/21/government-agents-directly-involved-us-terror-plots-report>).

⁵ Marina Vornovitsky, et al. "Distribution of Household Wealth in the U.S.: 2000 to 2011," "Median household net worth decreased by \$5,046, or 6.8 percent, between 2000 and 2011." (<https://www.census.gov/people/wealth/files/Wealth%20distribution%202000%20to%202011.pdf>).

⁶ "The share of America's wealth held by the nation's wealthiest...peaked in the late 1920s, right before the Great Depression, then fell by more than half over the next three decades. But the equalizing trends of the mid 20th century have now been almost completely undone. At the top of the American economic summit, the richest of the nation's rich now hold as large a wealth share as they did in the 1920s." Inequality.org, a project of the Institute for Policy Studies (<http://inequality.org/wealth-inequality/>).

⁷ Rebecca Leber, "Obama Is Right: Climate Change Kills More People Than Terrorism," *New Republic*, February 11, 2015 (<https://newrepublic.com/article/121032/map-climate-change-kills-more-people-worldwide-terrorism>).

⁸ "Senior Military, Intelligence, Law Enforcement, and Government Officials Question the 9/11 Commission Report," January 14, 2008 (<http://patriotsquestion911.com/>).

⁹ Tom Engelhardt, "Mantra for 9/11 Fourteen Years Later, Improbable World," September 8, 2015 (http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176041/tomgram%3A_engelhardt,_exceptional_pain_dispensed_by_the_indispensable_nation/)