The Aftermath of September 11th in the United States and the Arab World: Public Opinion, Behavior, and the Response

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Honors Thesis
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PASS WITH DISTINCTION
TO THE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE:

As thesis advisor for **Amanda Wilcox**, I have read this paper and find it satisfactory.

Thesis Advisor

2-24-03

Date

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It was a beautiful day for late December. A cloudless blue sky drove the
temperature to just over seventy degrees as I stood waiting on the curb outside LAX
International Airport. I was in town to cheer the Cougs in their Rose Bowl battle against
Oklahoma, but, little did I know, I would also learn a lesson about the ongoing battle of
immigrants from the Middle East to be accepted into American culture since the terrorist
attacks of September 11th. After a short time standing on the sidewalk, a large, yellow
taxi pulled to the curb to pick me up. The driver, who appeared to be of Middle Eastern
descent, exited the car to help me with my luggage. “Good afternoon,” he said with a
hint of an accent, smiling as he opened the passenger side door for me. As I sat down in
the back seat, I noticed the very patriotic choice of decorations and accessories in the
front of the vehicle. An American flag covered the passenger-side sun-visor. American
flag stickers lined the dash. I wondered if this was a typical interior design theme for LA
cabs.

The driver began speaking to me. “Welcome to California,” he said, “What
brings you here?” I explained to him my intentions of watching the Cougars bring home
a long-awaited Rose Bowl victory. We continued with small talk and I told him about
my undergraduate experiences at WSU and my intentions to continue my studies to
eventually earn a Master’s degree in Middle Eastern Studies. “Ah, yes,” he said, “That is
good that you support yourself. You should not rely upon your husband to take care of
you.” He then mentioned he himself had come to the US from Iran thirty years ago, to
study at the University of Kentucky. He talked of his first days in the US, and his initial
shock at the liberalism of American culture. “My roommate, he liked to smoke the,
the...marijuana. And he always had girls in the room. This was quite strange to me. But
of course, it was the seventies.” The conversation continued, and turned to President
Bush’s “War on Terror.” I asked the driver what he thought of Bush’s policies.

“You know, I don’t think he is actually running the country. Now Cheney, and
Bush’s father, they are running the country. This war, this war will be for Bush’s father.”
Then he quickly, almost defensively, added, “But, you know, September 11th, that was
terrible. It is so sad. Those people who did that should be stopped.”

He paused momentarily, and then continued, “Extremists like that, they make
everyone look bad. They make it difficult for people who love America.” I could hear
the emotion in his voice; obviously, he had had to defend his loyalties before. "These attacks have made things difficult for a lot of people here who are just trying to live good lives. I came here thirty years ago. I love America. I am an American."
1. Introduction:

September 11th will forever go down in history as a day in which many innocent were killed, injured, and corrupted with the realization that complete safety and security was a mere illusion. Not only did the attacks on the World Trade Center shake the faith of Americans in their safety on home soil, they also jeopardized the safety and security of Arabs and Arab Americans living in the United States. The safety of Americans abroad, particularly in the Arab world, also was called into question.

But perhaps one of the most unfortunate results of the September 11th attacks was the growing of the already-present rift between the people of the United States and the people of the Arab world. Although tensions certainly already existed between the two very different cultures, when the time came to find a scapegoat for the atrocities of one of the worst terrorist acts in history, many on both sides were eager to place blame on one another for the attacks. The escalation of this long-standing culture clash caused by September 11th resulted in negatively altered perceptions in both image and public opinion on both sides. Because of the attacker’s religious justification for their acts, the American public mistakenly drew a link between Islam and violence. Conspiracy theories and rumors about the attacks quickly spread throughout the Arab world, placing blame on everyone from the U.S. government to the Jews for the destruction of the towers. Sadly, these post-September 11th perceptions resulted in an unprecedented level of backlash discrimination and violence affecting not only Arabs and Americans, but other ethnic groups, which had certain characteristics which led the opposing side to mistakenly believe they were taking actions against a group whom they perceived to be
the enemy. All the hatred and violence did not spiral out of control, however. Thanks to efforts by the U.S. government and other organizations, violent and hate-related acts aimed at Arabs and Arab Americans decreased markedly after their initial post-September 11th increase. But, despite this seeming improvement of relations between the Americans and Arabs, tensions between the two cultures still remain strong. The U.S.-led war on terror is great cause for concern within the Arab world, as well as the U.S.'s policy towards Israel, which has always been a major point of contention with U.S. foreign policy for Arabs.

But just how much were the opinion and behavior of both sides impacted by September 11th? And, by how much? Also, what actions were taken in response to these opinions and behaviors? Conventional wisdom suggests that opinions and behavior of both groups towards one another became extremely negative. In order to test this hypothesis, I examined numerous sources. To determine the effects of the attacks on public opinion, I consulted four major studies. In investigating Arab opinion of Americans after September 11th, I relied upon a recent study by Dr. James J. Zogby\(^1\), entitled, "What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs, and Concerns," in which Arab opinion towards other countries as well as opinion towards U.S. policy in the Arab world were reported. This unprecedented study of public opinion in the Arab world, incorporated surveys in eight Arab countries, from a total pool of 3,800 Arabs (please see footnote 5 for sample sizes, dates and margins of error from each country). In examining Arab

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\(^1\) Author James Zogby has conducted extensive research on Middle East issues, U.S.-Arab relations and the history of the Arab American community, and writes a weekly column for the major Arab newspapers. He is founder and president of the Arab American Institute. He has also written several reports for various governmental vessels, including a submission to the United States Civil Rights Commission on hate-based incidents between September 11th and October 10th, 2001.
opinion, I also consulted “What the World Thinks in 2002: The Pew Global Attitudes Project” which included opinion polls taken in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon on numerous U.S. and American-related topics (please see footnote 15 for specifics on sample size, dates and margin of error). The Pew Research Center for The People and The Press, the organization responsible for the study, is headed by Madeline Albright, and has been involved in the administration of numerous public opinion polls. In particular, “What the World Thinks” is part of the greater Pew Global Attitudes Project, in which 38,000 people worldwide will be surveyed to determine the effects of globalization, modernization, rapid technological and cultural change, and the September 11th terrorist attacks on global values and attitudes.

To survey American public opinion about Arabs and Arab Americans, I enlisted both a recent Gallup poll survey measuring Americans’ views of other countries as well as a study by The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations3 and the German Marshall Fund of the United States4 pertaining to American opinion of U.S. foreign policy post-September 11th. The Gallup poll included results from not only the most recent survey, taken in February 2003, but also opinions from 2002 and 2001 before September 11th (please see footnote 21 for dates conducted, sample size, and margin of error). The Chicago Council Study examined American attitudes towards Arabs as well as Muslims.

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3 “The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) is one of the largest independent, non-profit international affairs organizations in the United States... The Council’s goal is to further awareness and broaden understanding of international relations and foreign policy.” The CCFR has conducted quadrennial public opinion surveys in the U.S. since 1974. From the Chicago Council’s website, “About the Council: The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.” http://www.ccrf.org/about/about.html.
4 The German Marshall Fund of the United States is a non-profit organization which promotes cooperation between the United States and Europe through the study of international and domestic policies, supporting comparative research and debate on policy issues, and assisting policy leaders. The German Marshall Fund was created through a grant from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan aid. From the German Marshall Fund of the United States website, “The German Marshall Fund of the United States.” www.gmfus.org.
were also profoundly affected by a change in American sentiment after the attacks. To
gauge the effects of September 11th on behavior, I consulted periodicals as well as
government documents, such as Dr. Zogby's report to the United States Commission on
Civil Rights on the rise in hate-based incidents towards Arab Americans immediately
following September 11th. I also examined the websites of activist groups dedicated to
creating a better understanding between Americans, Arabs, and Arab Americans.
2. Arab Opinion of Americans and the United States Since September 11th:

Arab opinion of Americans, the United States, and its actions has certainly taken a downward turn since September 11th. In a recent and unprecedented study by Dr. James Zogby, founder and president of the Arab American Institute, the Arab world was polled on its views of other countries in the world. The United States did not fare well in this survey. As shown in Figure 1, the United States was second only Israel in low rankings in the favorable view column.

The highest ranking the United States earned was a forty-one percent favorable rating from Kuwait, which seems a bit odd as the United States liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation a little more than ten years ago. Morocco gave the U.S. the next highest favorability rating at thirty-eight percent. While this may seem to be a fairly high number compared to countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia (at eleven percent and twelve percent, respectively), it is still important to note that the vast majority of people in Morocco (sixty-one percent) view the US in an unfavorable light. Finishing up the approval ratings, thirty-four percent of Jordanians polled viewed the U.S. favorably, followed by twenty-six percent of Lebanese, sixteen percent of Arab Israelis and fifteen percent of Egyptians. One may attempt to conclude, from this information, that perhaps it is simply Western culture that the Arabs polled in the study were not fond of; after all, the UK received fairly low marks as well. However, this theory is invalidated when one examines the favorability ratings of other Western nations such as France and Canada, which both, overall, received much higher ratings than did the United States. This, as Dr.
Fig. 1: How Arabs View Other Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance (4+)</th>
<th>Lebanon</th>
<th>Jordan</th>
<th>Kuwait</th>
<th>Saudi</th>
<th>UAE</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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Zogby notes, shows that the Arab view of the United States is not related to Western culture, but more contingent upon U.S. foreign policy towards the Arab world.

But what, in particular, about U.S. foreign policy towards the Arab world is the cause for such high unfavorability ratings? Many Arab countries see severing ties with Israel as the best way for the U.S. to improve relations with the Arab world. In a recent Zogby poll of the Arab world, it was discovered that 21.2% of Lebanese questioned felt

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5 Zogby, James. *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Concerns.* Zogby International/The Arab Thought Foundation: Washington, D.C. 2002. p. 61. This poll was conducted from mid- to late April, 2002. Sample sizes and margin of error for each country polled are as follows:

- Egypt: n=600 (adults, mostly in Cairo area), m of e: +/- 4.5%
- Israel: n=400 (adult Arabs, throughout Israel), m of e: +/- 4.5%
- Jordan: n=600 (adults, throughout Jordan and particularly in Amman, Irbid, and Al-Zarqa), m of e: +/- 4%
- Kuwait: n=400 (adults, throughout Kuwait and particularly in Kuwait City, Hawalli and Farwania), m of e: +/- 5%
- Lebanon: n=400 (adults, throughout Lebanon, specifically South Lebanon, North Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, Bekaa and Beirut), m of e: +/- 5%
- Morocco: n=400 (adults, throughout Casablanca, Marrakes, Rabat, and Meknes), m of e: +/- 4.5%
- Saudi Arabia: n=600 (adults, throughout Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Abha), m of e: +/- 5%
- UAE: n=400 (adults, throughout Dubai and Abu Dhabi), m of e: +/- 5%

that the best way for the U.S. to improve relations with the Arab world would be to “put limits on Israel” and 22% said the U.S. should “sever ties with Israel.” Of the Jordanians surveyed, most chose not to respond, and of those who did, 1 in 4 said the focus of the U.S. relationship with the Arab world was centered around the Palestinian Israeli situation, and the of the 1 in 4 who did respond said that the end of U.S. support of Israel would help to improve relations with the Arab world. In Saudi Arabia, almost one half of those polled focused their response on U.S. policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. And finally, in Egypt, more than one half of those polled suggested that, in order to improve its relations with the Arab world, the United States should change its policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

These numbers seem to correlate well with some of rumors circulating in the Arab world immediately after the September 11th attacks. One of the more prevalent rumors centered on the “4,000 Jew theory.” According to this theory, on the day of the attacks, 4,000 Jewish World Trade Center workers called in sick, presumably because they had been alerted by the true perpetrators of the attacks, which, according to the story, could have been Israel or the media. Another anti-Semitic theory about the cause of the attacks was stated by a mullah at a rally in Pakistan, “Al Gore, a die-hard Jew, might have taken revenge.” Adding fodder to these conspiracy theories is the denial of the American version of these events. According to one Gallup poll taken in the winter of 2001-2001, eighty-six percent of Pakistanis and eighty-nine percent of Kuwaitis did not

7 Zogby, James. What... 83-84.
8 Zogby, James. What... 85.
9 Zogby, James. What... 87.
10 Zogby, James. What... 90.
12 Schaffer.
believe that Arabs were responsible for the attacks\textsuperscript{13}. Similarly, according to the same Gallup poll, sixty-one percent of Muslims (polled in Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia) stated that they did not believe Arabs carried out the attacks on September\texttextsuperscript{11th}\textsuperscript{14}.

But, despite very strong feelings against the United States as a nation and its close ties with Israel, the Arab world still has some positive feelings towards Americans and American culture. In a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center for The People and The Press\textsuperscript{15}, chaired by Madeline Albright, Arabs polled responded not quite as negatively as in the Zogby poll. When polled about their views towards the United States versus Americans, Arabs in two of the three countries polled responded much more favorably towards the American people (see Fig. 2). The concept of American pop culture fared fairly well, especially among the Lebanese, of who sixty-five percent responded that they liked American pop culture. Of the Egyptians and the Jordanians polled, thirty-three percent and thirty percent respectively said they liked American pop culture (see Fig. 3). These numbers are quite good considering that in the Zogby poll only fifteen percent of Egyptians and 34 percent of Jordanians viewed the U.S. favorably. The Lebanese, Jordanians and Egyptians also thought comparatively fairly well of the basic ideas of U.S. business practice (see Fig. 4).

\textsuperscript{13} Schaffer.


Dates when the survey was conducted, sample sizes, and margins of error for each country included in the study are as follows:

Egypt: Conducted Oct. 2-26, 2002. n=1,013 (adults), m of e= +/- 3.1%
Jordan: Conducted Sept. 5-Oct. 21, 2002. n=1,000, m of e= +/- 3.1%
Lebanon: Conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 18, 2002. n=1000, m of e= +/- 3.1%
But, again, despite some promising results in this poll, much negative sentiment towards the United States was revealed. Regardless of a fairly positive outlook towards pop culture and American business practices, the Arabs polled in the Pew survey were not terribly enthusiastic about the spread of American ideas and customs. Eighty-four percent of Egyptians and eighty-two percent of Jordanians viewed this spread as bad, while even the Lebanese, who had the highest approval ratings of the United States of all three Arab countries polled, responded with a sixty-seven percent "bad" rating (see Fig. 5). Views on U.S. Foreign Policy also expose more negative sentiment in the Arab world towards the United States. When asked whether or not U.S. foreign policy considers others, the responses from each of the three Arab countries polled was overwhelmingly "no." Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt were also resoundingly opposed to any sort of U.S.-led "War on Terror (see Fig. 6)."

So, in conclusion, although some Arabs do appreciate US culture and U.S. economic practices, and Americans in general, by and large post-September 11th attitudes in the Arab world towards the United States are negative. These numbers reflect what Arabs see as a biased backing of Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and a U.S. imperialist stance on its foreign policy decisions pertaining to the Arab world.
Fig. 2: Opinion of US and Americans\textsuperscript{16}

![Graph of Opinion of US and Americans](image)

Fig. 3: American Pop Culture\textsuperscript{17}

![Graph of American Pop Culture](image)

Fig. 4: Basic Ideas about Business Practices\textsuperscript{18}

![Graph of Basic Ideas about Business Practices](image)


\textsuperscript{17} "What the World Thinks." p. 66.

\textsuperscript{18} "What the World Thinks." p. 68.
Fig. 5: Spread of American Ideas and Customs\(^{19}\)

![Graph showing spread of ideas and customs across Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt.]

- Good (%)
- Bad (%)
- Don't Know/Refused (%)

Fig. 6: US Foreign Policy and the War on Terror\(^{20}\)

U.S. Foreign Policy Considers Others:

![Graph showing opinions on U.S. foreign policy considering others.]

U.S.-Led War On Terrorism:

![Graph showing support or opposition to the U.S.-led war on terrorism.]

\(^{19}\) "What the World Thinks." p. 63.

\(^{20}\) "What the World Thinks." p. 59. No statistics available for Don't Know/Refused.
3. American Opinion of Arabs, Arab-Americans and the Arab World

Since September 11th:

Arabs have also suffered from negative sentiment in the U.S. since September 11th, although perhaps not to the same extent as American public image has suffered in the Arab world. A recent Gallup poll\(^1\) indicates that while American opinion of Arab countries and the Arab world is generally on the rise from last year’s poll\(^2\), many countries in the Arab world still receive negative or very low positive net ratings. Arab countries included in this survey are Israel, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority\(^3\), Iran and Iraq. Not surprisingly, Israel received the highest favorability rating (a net rating of positive thirty-five percent) of the above listed countries, while Iraq received the lowest (a net rating of negative eighty-five percent). Egypt and Kuwait were the only other two countries on the list to garner positive sentiment from the American public, with Egypt receiving a positive thirty-one percent net rating, while Kuwait received a positive five percent net rating. Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority and Iran all received negative net favorability ratings, at negative thirty-one percent, negative sixty percent, and negative sixty-four percent respectively (see Fig. 7). When reviewing these numbers, it is important to recognize that Israel is arguably the U.S.’s closest ally in

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\(^1\) Newport, Frank. “Americans’ Opinions of France Drop to New Low; Germany and North Korea also rated more unfavorably this year.” Gallup News Service. February 10, 2003. www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr030210.asp

Survey conducted Feb. 3-6, 2003. n=1,001, m of e= +/- 3%

Information on sample size and margin of error was not available for the two previous polling dates in 2002 and 2001.

\(^2\) Last year’s poll was the first poll taken after September 11th and therefore shows Americans’ initial reactions to the Arab world.

\(^3\) Though not a country, American opinion of The Palestinian Authority is still very valid and pertinent as it reflects American viewpoints about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
the region and that Egypt has worked with the U.S. over the past twenty years, aiding in the peace process, and also receives large amounts of aid from the United States as well. In the case of Israel, aside from joint cultural and scientific ventures, the U.S. also provides annual military and economic aid. In particular, for the fiscal year 2001, the U.S. provided $1.98 billion in military aid (with additional aid in research and development for missile defense) and $840 million in economic assistance. The United States contributes $1.3 billion in military aid to Egypt annually, as well as having given $24 billion in economic and development assistance between 1975 and 2000 through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Fig. 7: Americans’ Ratings of Arab Nations (Feb. 3-6, 2003)

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25 "Background Note: Egypt." U.S. Department of State. www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm
26 Newport.
Also of interest are comparative opinions of Americans of the Arab countries in this most recent poll, taken February 3-6, 2003, last year's poll, taken February 4-6, 2002, and the poll taken February 1-4, 2001, before the events of September 11th (see Fig. 8). After the events of September 11th, American public opinion of the Arab nations included in this survey fell, especially in Saudi Arabia and with the Palestinian Authority, which declined in the eyes of the American public by eighteen and thirteen percent, respectively. In all cases, except that of Iraq, American public opinion of Arab nations has improved from 2001 to 2002, most likely as a result of the passing of time since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. For example, Americans' opinion of Iran was at an unfavorability rating of eighty-four percent in 2002, but in 2003 Americans saw Iran a bit more favorably, with an unfavorability rating of seventy-seven percent. But, as noted above, Iraq's rating has taken a slight downward turn, from eighty-eight percent unfavorability in 2002 to ninety percent in 2003. This is possibly a result of the US policy towards Iraq and widespread media coverage of the UN inquest into Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction.
American views on Islam and Muslim people have also become much more negative since the hijackings and attacks of September 11th. According to a recent study by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund entitled “A World Transformed: Foreign Policy Attitudes of the U.S. Public After September 1127”, sixty-one percent of Americans see Islamic fundamentalism as a “critical threat to vital US interests”. The study also shows that fully forty percent of Americans believe that the events of September 11th “represent the true teachings of Islam”. But, it is also important to note that seventeen percent of Americans think the motivation for the attacks didn’t have “very much” to do with the true teachings of Islam, and another forty percent of Americans thought the attacks had nothing to do with the true teachings of Islam at all. American opinion of Arabs and Muslims has also affected attitudes towards immigration and racial profiling. Seventy-six percent of Americans (with twenty-two percent disagreeing) think that the U.S. should tighten immigration laws to restrict the amount of immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries let into the United States. A bare majority of Americans polled (fifty-four percent) also believe that airport security checks should utilize racial profiling in order to prevent international terrorism, with forty-three percent dissenting with this opinion. But, regardless of the seemingly xenophobic fears some Americans have developed since September 11th towards Arabs and Arab Americans, the majority still believe that violent conflict between American and Muslim worlds is possible, as illustrated in the American response to the idea of a “clash of civilizations.” While twenty-seven percent of Americans believe a “clash between Muslims and the

West is inevitable,” sixty-six percent of Americans believe “we can find common ground and clash of civilizations is not inevitable.”

As the polls suggest, Americans currently tend to view the Arab and Muslim world in a negative light. The results of the Chicago Council study indicate Americans are still a bit on guard about their safety when it comes to the threat of terrorism, and, as noted in the Gallup poll on American opinion, a bit wary of Arab countries. But, in spite of the negativity reflected in these surveys, it seems as though Americans are optimistic about a positive change in the relationship between the U.S. and the Arab world.

Americans do see an eventual end to this cultural standoff. One can only hope that this outlook is the first step in the amelioration of the Arab-United States relationship.

Fig. 8: Favorability of Nations Trend: American Public Opinion of Arab Nations 2001, 2002 & 2003

Egypt:

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28 "A World Transformed."
Iran:

![Bar chart showing percentages for Iran]

Iraq:

![Bar chart showing percentages for Iraq]

Israel:

![Bar chart showing percentages for Israel]
Saudi Arabia:

The Palestinian Authority:
4. Actions Taken Towards Americans and the United States in the Arab World Since September 11th:

Initially, after the hijackings and terrorist attacks of September 11th, there were mixed reactions around the Arab world. While many Arabs were horrified at the events and offered their support and prayers to the United States, others celebrated the Osama bin Laden's strike against the core of America. For instance, in Iran immediately after the attacks, protestors took to the streets with chants of "We love you America," while elsewhere in Iran candlelight vigils were held for the victims and their families. Arab leaders were also quick to offer their condolences. Among the leaders were Yassir Arafat, who offered his sympathies and said he was shocked by the attacks, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who commented the attacks were horrible and unimaginable. There were also, however, countless anti-American reactions to the attacks. Many people in the Arab world considered Osama bin Laden a hero. As was written in one editorial for the Egyptian-based journal Afaq Arabiya, an independent journal of the Muslim brotherhood:

As a lawyer, I say to Suspect No. 1, as the American government calls him: Oh Osama ... you are a hero in the full sense of the word. [You possess] all the manly virtues, those [virtues] lacking in the half-men who control the Muslim and Arab resources (i.e. Arab rulers). For this reason, you will continue to live in our hearts and in our minds ... Allah's peace, mercy, and blessings are upon you; no peace, no mercy, and no blessings on the traitors and cowards who have been blinded to the truth by the pleasures of domination. May you eradicate American and its 'infinite justice,' victory to Islam and the Muslims.

Even Egyptian state-run newspapers, subject to control by a government in which the president offered the U.S. his condolences and support against terrorism, published anti-U.S. messages after the attacks. As columnist Ali Al-Sayyed wrote in *Al-Ahram Al-Arabi* weekly:

> For many long years, America made many peoples in the world cry. It was always [America] that carried out the acts; now, acts are being carried out [against] it. A cook who concocts poison must one day also taste that poison! The world has discovered that the strength of the oppressed is great when the situation becomes unbearable... The city of globalization, with its economic, political, and military symbols, has collapsed, and the theory of globalization will be buried with the establishment of the false coalition!33

One of the more even-handed viewpoints from the Arab world which addresses possible consequences of hatred towards the United States can be seen in the article, “Why I Hate America,” by Khalid Amayreh, a Palestinian Islamist. In this article, Arayreh berates the United States, saying:

> I know that 'hate' is evil, at least a passive evil. And I, personally, really strive not to allow my deep hate for the American government and its murderous policies to be transformed from the static form to the dynamic form. However, others, who may even hate America more than I do, will not be able to exercise as much self-control, as much suppression of their grievances, and as much 'wisdom.' "...I know hate can be blind and deadly. But, I also know that 'oppression,' as the Holy Koran clearly states, 'is worse than murder'... I try to control my hate... But I know too well that I can't be free from the effect until I am free from the cause, and the cause is America's greed, rapacity and hegemony... Please, America, don't make me an Osama bin Laden!34

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Although these editorial samplings are in no way a systematic review of all editorials in the Arab world written about the United States after the attacks of September 11th, they are good examples of the anti-American sentiment which resulted from the attacks. A poll taken in Kuwait in the fall of 2002 indicated that seventy-four percent of Kuwaitis questioned considered bin Laden a hero, and sixty-six percent believed the attacks were morally justified. Clearly, Arabs in the Middle East, even those who used to view the United States in a positive light, seem to see the U.S. as an imperialistic bully since September 11th. As one Egyptian computer engineer told a reporter for The Los Angeles Times, “I’d always looked up to the U.S....I admired its democracy and general system. After 9/11 everything the country stood for seemed to disappear. It became judgmental and intolerant...I feel since 9/11 the American people, not just the American government, are against Arabs.” Some Arabs have seen the post September 11 reaction of the United States and its war on terror as a war on Islam as well. Even over a year later, at a Cairo mosque, anti-American sentiment was still strong, with an anti-American rally after Friday prayer in which the crowd shouted chanted in favor of Iraq and carried signs stating, “I love September 11.”

Feelings towards the U.S. in the Arab world have resulted in a number of reactions, both violent and non-violent. In an effort to protest the U.S.’s support of Israel, Palestinians are boycotting Marlboro cigarettes, the most popular cigarette in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and, before the boycott, seen as a status symbol. Palestinian

37 Shikaki, Khalil. “This is war on Islam: From the Arab and Muslim perspective, the American reaction to September 11 has been a catastrophe.” The Guardian. Sept. 11, 2002. 18.
activists are also targeting other U.S. made products in their protest. Activist groups in Cairo are calling for a boycott of U.S. and Israeli companies, among them McDonald’s and Kentucky Fried Chicken. The activist group responsible reasons that the boycott is necessary because “they’re killing us with our money.” There have also been incidents of violence towards Americans as a result of extremism and anti-American sentiment. Among the highest profile was the shooting and killing of American envoy Laurence Foley outside his home in Amman, Jordan in early November of 2002. A more recent violent incident was the slaying of three American hospital workers in an American Baptist mission hospital in Jibla, Yemen. Both attacks are thought to be the work of Islamist extremists.

The United States and its policies in the Arab world have driven many to desperation, as evidenced in the violent acts discussed above. Perhaps this desperation is best summed up by a Syrian poet, who wrote in response to what he saw as U.S. indifference to the Arab reality in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

Children are dying, but no one makes a move.
Houses are demolished, but no one makes a move.
Holy places are desecrated, but no one makes a move...
I am fed up in the world of mortals.
Find me a hole near you. For a life of dignity is in these holes.

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40 “Jihad vs. McWorld.”
5. Actions Taken Towards Arabs, Arab-Americans and the Arab World Since September 11th:

The United States is home to some three million Arab Americans, of which ninety percent make their homes in urban areas. There are large Arab American communities in Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Although small, this minority group became a nationwide target for violence and discrimination by some Americans after September 11th who unjustly sought revenge on innocent people.

A report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, compiled by Dr. James Zogby, lists many of the cases of discrimination and violence against Arab Americans in the month immediately following September 11th (from dates September 11 to October 10, 2001). As noted in the study, in a poll taken from October 6 to October 8, 2001, thirty-two percent of Arab Americans said they had been the victim of some form of ethnic-based discrimination during their lifetimes. However, of that group, twenty percent reported having experienced that discrimination after September 11th. Thirty-seven percent of Muslim Arab Americans polled said they had been the subject of discrimination since September 11th.

The kinds of discrimination Arab Americans were subject to in the month following September 11th were ranged from racially motivated comments in the workplace and at school to acts of violence which, in several instances, resulted in death. On September 14, 2001, in Scottsdale, Arizona, a bar posted a sign stating, “Arabs not welcome.” A co-manager later took the sign down, commenting that it was not an intelligent thing to do. One day later, in Phoenix, Balbir Singh Sodhi was killed in part of

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44 “Caught in the Crossfire: Arab Americans.” PBS Special. From website: www.pbs.org/itvs/coughtintheeclipse/arab_americans.html
a shooting rampage in which a Lebanese-American store clerk and the home of an Afghan family were also shot. At a Beverly Hills bagel shop, one female customer remarked to another female customer who was wearing a Qur’an charm around her neck, “Look what you people have done to my people.” The customer then proceeded to attack the Muslim woman. Two men came to the Muslim woman’s aid and restrained her attacker. In a more violent incident, in Reedley, California, following a series of death threats and anti-Arab statements left on the windshield of his car, Yemeni grocer Abdo Ali Ahmed, was shot to death in his shop. In Detroit, Yemeni American Ahmed Esa was fired from his job as a welder, at which he had been employed for sixteen years. When firing Esa, his boss told him, “go home, you are Arabic, you are Muslim. Go home, pray to your leader, go to your mosque and pray. I don’t want to see your face.” Finally, in Minneapolis, four Arab American men were removed from a Northwest Airlines flight and questioned by law enforcement when passengers refused to fly with them on the airplane. Though these incidents are all sad and shocking, they are merely a small sampling of the more than 600 hate crimes reported to the Council of American-Islamic Relations and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights45.

45 "Caught in the Crossfire: Fact Sheet." PBS Special. From website: www.pbs.org/itvs/caughtinthecrossfire/factsheet.html
6. Mistaken Identities: Violence Towards Other Ethnic Minorities in the United States Following September 11th:

Sadly, some American attitudes have spurred hate crimes not only directed at members of the Arab American and Muslim communities, but also towards members of other groups, which happen to have some of the same physical characteristics as Arabs and Arab Americans. The levels of violence towards these other groups increased dramatically after 9/11.

Many of the victims of the racial backlash towards Arabs and Arab Muslims have been members of the Sikh community. According to an October 12, 2001 report to the United States Civil Rights Commission by Dr. James Zogby, chairman of the Arab American Institute Foundation, on hate based incidents from September 11th to October 10, 2001, found that a number of hate-base incidents against Sikhs across the country occurred in the 30 days immediately following the September 11th attacks. As stated in the report, on September 15th, in Mesa, Arizona, a 49-year-old Indian Sikh man was shot while standing outside his gas station. This shooting was part of a rampage in which a Lebanese-American store clerk was shot at (but not actually hit) and an Afghan family home fired upon. In Los Angeles, on the evening of October 10, 2001, a Sikh Pakistani man was attacked by four men who beat and punched him while yelling “terrorist.”

Adults were not the only victims of this racially motivated violence and harassment.

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46 Zogby, James J. “Submission to The United States Commission on Civil Rights: Testimony of Dr. James Zogby (With an Appendix of Selected Hate-Based Incidents Sept. 11 – October 10, 2001).” Presented October 12, 2001.
either. In San Mateo, California, a week after the bombing of the World Trade Towers, a three-year-old Sikh girl was hit in the head by a gasoline bomb thrown through a window of her residence. In a Bridgeport, Connecticut classroom, a second-grade Sikh boy was threatened by a classmate who told him, “You better watch out – you’re going to get beat up.” The girl justified these words to her elementary school principal, saying, “He looks just like the guys they said did it on TV.”
7. Easing the Tensions: Trying to Create a Better Understanding

In order to curb the violence and discrimination, many steps were, and are still being taken to improve relations between the U.S. and the Arab world. Immediate reactions by the U.S. government, as well as several governments in the Middle East helped to limit racial incidents and levels of violence directly following the attacks. Groups from world-wide organizations to the grass roots level also worked to create a better understanding between the groups involved.

In the U.S., on the national level, much effort was made to prevent outbreaks of violence towards the Arab-American community. President Bush’s speech immediately following the attacks included several appeals to the American people not to judge their Muslim-American neighbors by the acts of radicals and to respect the fundamental principles of the United States, especially freedom of religion. As he said in his speech:

I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It’s practiced freely 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, in effect, 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... 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 U.S. government is also making efforts overseas to decrease anti-American sentiment in Arab nations. In an effort to reach out to the young Arab

audience, the U.S. government has created a radio station, currently being
broadcast in five Arab nations, which combines American pop music with news
briefs. Called Radio Sawa (the Arabic word for “together”), the main purpose of
this station is to convey a more positive, good-intentioned America to Arab youth.
The State Department has also created a program which offers scholarships to
college-age Arabs who wish to further their education in the U.S. The Middle
East Partnership Initiative scholarship program, independent from the State
Department program, also provides students from the Arab world with the means
to study in the United States. The State Department is also making efforts to
reintroduce American cultural centers within embassies so that those in the Arab
world who wish to learn more about the U.S. and its culture will have access48.

The U.S. government via the United States Commission on Civil Rights
also worked with Arab American organizations and the Ad Council immediately
after September 11th to create public service messages for television and radio. In
these ads, well known public figures such as Attorney General John Ashcroft,
Senator John McCain, pop-singer Mandy Moore and Dr. Mary Frances Berry,
chair of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) all lent their
time to promote the idea that “hate is our enemy.” Prints were also created to
coincide with the campaign, in which a night view of the Manhattan skyline is
pictured. In the place of the World Trade Towers are the words, “Hate has taken

enough from us already. Don’t let it take you⁴⁹.” This campaign proved to be quite effective, as noted by Dr. Zogby, who in his Submission to the USCCR noted, after the airing of these ads, hate crimes towards Arab Americans had been greatly reduced⁵₀.

Aside from the government’s efforts to create a better understanding between American, Arab, and Arab-American communities, there have been efforts made by national Arab American organizations and several grass roots movements to counter increasing prejudice against Muslims and Arabs after September 11th. National Arab American organizations, such as the Arab American Institute, have also made great efforts to bridge the gap between Arab Americans and the American public. The AAI has created special resources on their website discussing discrimination, tolerance and civil liberties post-9/11. It has also made available information pamphlets and packets on Arab Americans for both the American public and educators. These pamphlets and education packets aim to improve the Arab American image among the American public by focusing on the positive contributions of Arab Americans to American society and dispelling myths about Arabs, Muslims, and the Arab world⁵¹. Grass roots movements have also worked to quell misunderstandings between Americans, Arab Americans and Muslims. One such group, “Muslims Against Terrorism,” made up of young Muslim professionals in New York City who volunteer their

⁵₀ Zogby, James. “Submission…”
⁵¹ “In the aftermath of September 11, 2001.” http://www.aaiusa.org/aftermath.htm
time to educate the public about Islam\textsuperscript{52}. Among the programs this grass roots organization has developed are "adult education about Islam, children's education about Islam, Muslim education to eliminate confusion about Islam's message of peace, press education to eliminate misinformation in coverage of Islam\textsuperscript{53}.”

\textsuperscript{52} "Frontline: Muslims." Aired on PBS Dec. 27, 2002.

\textsuperscript{53} "Muslims Against Terrorism: About Us." www.matusa.org/aboutus.asp
8. Summary and Conclusions:

In summary, the results of my research show that public opinion in both the United States and the Arab world was impacted negatively after the events of September 11th. Americans viewed Arabs, Muslims, and the Arab world in a worse light than before. Arab opinion of Americans and the United States also fell, although much of this negative sentiment already existed because of the Arab world’s contempt of U.S. policy towards Israel. Of significance is the fact that the majority of negative sentiment isn’t directed so much towards Americans and American culture, as U.S. foreign policy. The results of my research also indicate that behavior was also adversely influenced by the September 11th attacks, as indicated by the rise in hate-based commentary, discrimination and violence in both the United States and the Arab world. However, evidence also suggests that in the United States, immediate responses to hate-based violence and discrimination by various groups helped to curb the negative behavior resulting from the attacks.

It is quite evident that September 11th had a negative impact on public and on behavior in both the United States and the Arab world. And, though the events of September 11th were horrific and shocking, and resulted in increased discrimination and violence in both the United States and the Arab world, perhaps some good occurred from its outcome. The extreme racially motivated acts helped to bring to a head the tensions between the United States and the Arab world which before had no personal ramifications on such a large scale. The violence has led to campaigns to create better understanding between the two cultures and to stop the hate which has seethed, unchecked, for so long. Perhaps there is no real, long term solution to the problem of
negative opinion towards each other in both the Arab world and the United States (barring, of course, as the studies suggest, the U.S.'s cessation of support for Israel). And, with the impending United States attack on Iraq, relations between Arabs and Americans could become even more strained. But the programs and organizations created to improve understanding between the United States and the Arab world are certainly a step in the right direction, and despite widespread negative sentiment and racially motivated behavior, the future relationship between Americans and Arabs has the possibility of improving.
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